



**Department of
Education**

Michael T. Duffy
Executive Director
Charter School Office

52 Chambers Street
Room 413
New York, NY 10007

(212) 374-5419 tel
(212) 374-5581 fax

October 21, 2009

Ms. Shirley Remenski
Board Chair
Bronx Global Learning Institute for Girls Charter School
750 Concourse Village West
Bronx, NY 10451

Dear Ms. Remenski,

On behalf of the New York City Department of Education's (NYCDOE) Charter School Office (CSO), we would like to thank you and the staff of the Bronx Global Learning Institute for Girls Charter School for your cooperation and cordiality during our Annual Site Visit on May 12, 2009.

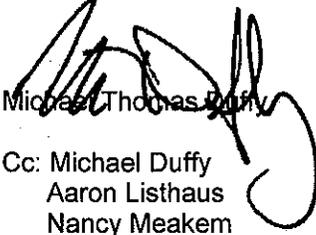
Our oversight framework is set up to ensure that we provide clear accountability and feedback to help the board and school leadership to be successful in achieving the goals of the charter. Prior to the visit, we shared our Annual Site Visit protocol documents and the Performance and Compliance standards. These standards serve as benchmarks through which the NYCDOE views the performance of all the NYCDOE authorized charter schools. The Standards are not a replacement of your individual school's goals; they encompass your charter agreement goals as one component of a detailed, rigorous, renewal-focused framework.

The purpose of our Annual Site Visit is to assess compliance with applicable law, determine organizational strengths and areas for development, and to make an on-site assessment of the learning environment in order to steer a direct course toward charter renewal. It is important to emphasize that the standards are rigorous, and are intended as leading indicators towards charter renewal, when the school must demonstrate not only that it has met the specific goals of the charter, but also that the school operates in an educationally and fiscally sound manner, and meets the requirements set forth in all applicable laws and regulations. We hope that you find the feedback helpful in setting the school's priorities and fulfilling the goals outlined in the charter.

Attached to this letter you will find a comprehensive report of our findings. Should you have any additional comments, or if you would like to submit factual corrections or a formal response to the findings presented in this report, please respond to our office by **November 10, 2009**.

Our office can be reached at 212.374.6904 for further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



Michael Thomas Duffy

Cc: Michael Duffy
Aaron Listhaus
Nancy Meakem

Quality Review Report

2008-2009

Bronx Global Learning Institute for Girls

Charter School 389

**750 Concourse Village West
Bronx
NY 10451**

Board Chair: Ms. Shirley Remenski

Dates of review: May 12, 2009

**Lead Reviewer(s): Aamir Raza, Chris Hawkins, Fred
Lisker
&
Bruce Berry (Cambridge Education)**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bronx Global Learning Institute for Girls ("BGLIG") is a charter elementary school with 101 students from kindergarten through grade 1. The school population comprises 37% Black and 63% Hispanic students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 3% special education students. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 is 90%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 88% eligibility.

The school opened in September 2008 and will expand in the future to kindergarten through grade 5. It operates a dual language program with instruction and student learning alternating between English and Spanish.

Overall Evaluation

BGLIG is a dual language school that provides instruction in all subjects in English and Spanish. The principal and teachers have established a respectful culture in the school where students feel safe, cared for and enjoy their learning. The school has established good data systems for tracking the progress of students in reading, but has yet to establish similar systems for other curriculum subjects. The teachers work well in collaborative teams to provide good support for student learning and to plan their instruction and curriculum. They use data to differentiate small group activities to match the students' achievement levels. At present, however, there is inconsistency in the rigor and challenge in student learning between classrooms.

The school curriculum provides a variety of interesting and stimulating learning opportunities for the students. As well as the core curriculum, the school provides a variety of other exciting experiences for students. These include violin, ballet, arts, sports and trips linked to curriculum projects. These activities are well supported by the various valuable partnerships that the school has entered into. The students behave well and show high levels of respect for their teachers and for other students. They are rewarded through the opportunity of being student of the week, where they exercise defined responsibilities at the start of each day.

Teachers receive good support for developing their own skills and knowledge through professional development programs. They are further supported in developing their classroom practices by instructional coaches. At present, there are insufficient opportunities for teachers to develop their dual language teaching and learning strategies. New teachers receive good support, but the school does not have an effective induction program to support them.

Although the school's charter defines long-term priorities and goals, the school has not yet developed and documented its short- and medium-term improvement plans and goals. It has not identified benchmark measures to monitor the progress the school is making in achieving its long-term priorities.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and teachers create a respectful, caring and safe environment for student learning.
- Teachers demonstrate good commitment to supporting student learning and work collaboratively to plan their instruction and curriculum.
- The school curriculum and enrichment activities create interest and stimuli for enhancing the students' academic and cultural development.
- Students behave well and show good levels of interest in their learning.
- The school has developed effective partnerships that provide opportunities to broaden students' learning experiences within and beyond the school day.

Areas of improvement

- Annualize strategic improvement plans to include measurable goals and interim checkpoints to monitor progress in reaching long-term goals.
- Improve the professional development opportunities for teachers to improve their dual language teaching and learning strategies.
- Systematize the consistency for establishing 'next steps of learning' for individual students and share these with parents to engage them as partners in their children's education.
- Introduce an effective induction program to support new teachers.
- Review the rigor and challenge in classroom learning activities to accelerate student progress.

Part 3: Main Findings

How well the school meets the Charter School Office's (CSO) evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The school uses Dibels and Idel reading assessments well to monitor the progress students are making in English and Spanish respectively. Progress in reading is monitored through a reading wall that demonstrates the achievement of students using the three categories of 'at risk', 'some risk' and 'low risk'. A color coding system presents a good pictorial demonstration of how students are progressing. However, the system does not presently illustrate the timescale over which that progress is being made. There is evidence of some students making good progress in reading in English. There is less progress in students' Spanish reading levels. End of the unit tests are used to form the basis of assessments in math. Teachers review progress and plan interventions where needed. At present, there is no systematic approach to the monitoring of student progress in math by school leaders.

The special education students receive good support for their individual identified needs, through academic intervention and specialized teacher input. As a result, the students are making progress in line with expectations. English language learners make good progress in their reading and are well supported through small group instruction. The school has identified that, in kindergarten, the English speaking girls are making more progress than Spanish speaking girls in reading. It is now working with parents more intensively to help them with strategies to support their children. Presently, the school does not monitor the progress of all the different sub-groups within the school. Teachers receive valuable training in the use of data to inform their instructional planning. The school is in the early days of developing their data systems and, as yet, does not have a systematic approach to regularly monitoring the impact of instruction on student learning.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The school's five-year Charter has objectives and goals that create the focus for driving the work of the school. It has not yet developed annualized plans to define short- and medium-term priorities and goals for improving the achievement of individual and groups of students. The school has the ambitious goal of 75% of students reaching grade level proficiency in reading by the end of the academic year. The school has not yet established similar challenging goals in other curriculum subjects. Teachers have a variety of ways for setting learning goals for students. Some teachers send information home to give the parents the opportunity to assist in their child's learning. Others have discussions with parents, particularly for those children where there are academic or behavioral concerns. Most students do not know the areas of their work that they need

to improve. The school has not yet developed a consistent system for establishing the students' next steps for learning and sharing them with students and their parents.

The principal and teachers create high expectations for students in respect of their academic and social development. These expectations are particularly strong for the behavior and conduct of the students in classrooms and around the school. The students behave well and show respect to their teachers and to one another. The school encourages parents to be involved in the work of the school and has conducted their own survey to provide parents with the opportunity to give constructive feedback. Parents regularly discuss academic or personal issues with teachers that may have an impact their child's learning.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school curriculum has dual language instruction in English and Spanish. First language Spanish students receive their dual instruction together, with a similar approach for English speaking students. Each lesson has a distinct language development component, with a high degree of focus being placed on the development of vocabulary in both languages. The 'million dollar word wall' is used to motivate students in the use of vocabulary. Students provide a word for the wall, have to articulate the meaning and use this word in a meaningful sentence. To provide excitement and fun for the children in this activity, they receive a reward of a 'Big League Dollar', which they can spend in the school's 'Big League Shop'. As well as the core curriculum, the students have a range of stimulating enrichments during and beyond the school day. All students take part in the violin program where they receive expert tuition that provides engagement, interest and a disciplined approach to learning. As part of the physical education program, students experience activities in classical ballet.

Teachers provide a safe and welcoming environment for student learning. There are high levels of respect shown by the students to their teachers and to their fellow students. Instruction is planned effectively with activities differentiated to match the students' achievement levels. However, there is insufficient rigor and challenge in some of the learning activities to create accelerated progress for the students. The school celebrates student achievement to support and encourage the students' personal and academic development. The students of the week lead activities when all the school meets together at the start of each day. There is a focus on the values and beliefs required to be a successful women of the future. The school monitors student attendance and has appropriate procedures for following up when student absence is a concern. The school accepts that more work is required to improve attendance levels.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The principal undertakes regular classroom walkthroughs to monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices. She provides useful feedback for teachers and follows up in

further walkthroughs on any areas identified as being in need of improvement. At present, the monitoring of instructional practice is not having enough impact on the consistency of rigor in some of the learning activities. The school has good support for teachers' professional development. The Victory Schools Organization provides a staff developer to work with individual teachers on their instructional planning, classroom management and areas identified for improvement. At present, there are insufficient opportunities for teachers to improve their dual language teaching and learning strategies.

Teachers work together well in grade level meetings to plan their curriculum and instruction. Every two weeks, they review together the progress made by the students in reading. They use this information to plan interventions where a need is identified. They plan differentiated student group activities in math, based on the abilities as demonstrated in end of unit tests. New teachers receive good support from the principal and the other teachers, but there is not yet a formalized mentoring program in place for their first year of induction.

School has developed good partnerships to support the students' academic and personal development. Ballet Hispanico provides instructors to work with the students and provides some scholarships for the most talented performers. Artists in residence work in the school to support the school's arts program. The students have opportunities to take part in visits with activities linked to the school curriculum. For example, a guided tour of the Egyptian section in the Metropolitan Museum of Art gave the students the opportunity to see examples of the work they had undertaken in a social studies project. The school has high expectations in terms of student behavior and parents are required to sign their child's discipline plan. They receive training in assertive discipline procedures to help coordinate a consistent approach in school and at home. As a result, most students behave well and show interest in their learning.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The school has specific plans and goals outlined in their Charter. The principal and teachers recognize that more progress is needed in the development of the dual language and literacy program. The infusion of technology into instruction and learning activities is also a priority for the next academic year. However, the school has not yet created a short- to medium-term improvement plan with specific measurable goals for improving student outcomes. At present, there are no identified interim checkpoints for measuring the school's success in meeting its priorities and in reaching its long-term goals.

The teachers use periodic assessments well to monitor the progress of students. This is strongest in tracking the progress of students in reading. It is not yet sufficiently consistent in other subjects. They use their assessments well to identify struggling students in need of further intervention. They also use skills analysis data to inform their instructional practice to focus on the areas identified as being in need of improvement for individuals and groups of students. This often leads to a revision of the way students are grouped in classrooms and to an adjustment in instructional activities. The school has a clear vision for developing the leadership skills of girls and to enhance their skills in language and literacy in Spanish and English. The planning and goal setting to achieve this vision is not yet sufficiently rigorous to ensure that it is successfully realized.

Quality Statement 6 - Monitor Effectiveness: The Charter School Board is proactive and diligent in monitoring its effectiveness and in undertaking its administrative responsibilities. The Board is responsible for the overall direction and fiscal well-being of the school and must adopt policies and by-laws that are necessary to meet its statutory responsibilities and produce optimal academic results.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

BGLIG board is providing satisfactory oversight to the school and plans to evaluate the school leader at the end of the school year. The board receives regular updates from the school leaders and by requesting financial (YTD Expenses, Cash Flow, Budget, Variance Analysis) and other data driven (dashboard, scores, summaries, internal measures) information as it relates to the educational programs offered by the school. The school's board represents academic, legal, financial, and economic development expertise. The board has established an academic, finance, grievance and an executive committee. The board identified introduction of further technology inside classrooms, provide additional support to new teachers, and start an after school program as a high priority. The board is planning a retreat and plans to conduct board assessment before the new school year. According to the board members, the school board is planning to take action to remove members with excessive absences at the board meetings. The budget preparation process is holistic and involves board members, administrators, partner organization, teacher inputs, and school leader. Lastly, the school board lacks a step-by-step strategic plan to guide further development at the school.

Quality Statement 7 - Maintain Financial Viability: The Charter School and its Board maintain financial viability and control over the course of the academic year. However, it is the ongoing financial information (cash flow, balance sheet, statement of activities, board approved budget), that determines the fiscal health of a school and keeps it solvent in the near future and beyond.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

At the time of the visit in May '09, the BGLIG board had not contracted an audit firm to produce the school's financial statements. The school maintains necessary financial documents to facilitate decision making at all levels. The unaudited balance sheet as of March '09 casts a satisfactory financial position with liquid assets totaling \$397,187 and current liabilities of \$151,977. The statement of activities as of March '09 does not pose any particular concerns. The statement of cash flow showed a positive balance of \$192,642 at the end of March '09.

During the visit, officials from Victory Schools and school based staff were interviewed regarding the procurement process, check signing, randomly selected paid invoices, and fingerprinting documents were inspected. There are no check signers based at the school and checks come via courier services or delivered personally at the school site. At the time of the visit, there was no school level account for school's use and therefore, the school is totally dependent upon the school's partner organization, Victory Schools. The school board is aware of both issues and is working with Victory Schools to address this concern. The school lacks consistency in attaching invoices to the purchase orders

and proof of payment. Besides a word of mouth from Victory Schools, the business manager cannot verify whether an invoice has been paid.

Although the school is following its adopted financial policies in collaboration with Victory Schools, there is a clear need to strengthen internal controls and streamline financial processes. The school may also need to review the appropriate balance in segregation of duties among fiscal and operational staff. Paid invoices demonstrate that staff is following the process of purchase order approvals, ordering and receiving of goods, presence of packing slips and invoices (although inconsistent) along with proof of payment. The school has tagged its assets for inventory purposes.

These comments must be taken into account while keeping the context of charter school sector in New York. The comments reflect relatively minor issues that are not out of norm for a new charter school.

DRAFT

Charter School Office Quality Criteria 2008-2009

Bronx Global Institute for Girls

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student's progress over time.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty have...	Δ	➤	✓	+
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?		X		
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?			X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?			X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?		X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?		X		
1.6 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		X		

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty...	Δ	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timetables for reaching these goals?		X		
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?		X		
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timetables for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?		X		
2.4 involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?		X		
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/carers?			X	
2.6 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X		

DEFINITIONS

"Analyze" or "analysis" includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- 2 the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects,
- 3 the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- 4 the school's Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

"Assessment results" include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school's curriculum (including Periodic, DYQ, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

"Data-informed processes" include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

"Organizational decisions or strategies" refer to a school's use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school's structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

"Sub-groups of students" include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?		X		
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?			X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive, safe and inclusive learning environment?			X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, classroom and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?		X		
3.5 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?			X	
3.6 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness and report actual attendance data?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X	
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?		X		
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?		X		
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another's instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?		X		
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?		X		
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising, other student support services and partnerships with outside entities around stated academic and personal development goals?			X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly, encourage effective learning and effectively address discipline-related incidents?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X		
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.				
<i>To what extent do</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?	X			
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?		X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?		X		
5.4 teachers and school leaders use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures to revise plans immediately and make strategic decisions to modify practices in order to reach stated goals?		X		
5.5 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?	X			
5.6 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X		

Quality Statement 6 – Monitor Effectiveness: The Charter School Board is proactive and diligent in monitoring its effectiveness and in undertaking its administrative responsibilities.

To what extent does the Board.....	Δ	➤	✓	+
6.1 ensure effective, broad outreach to create a student body that is representative of the school's Community School District?			X	
6.2 manage any conflict of interest within the governing body and throughout the school?			X	
6.3 hold EMOs, CMOs and school leadership accountable in their positions?			X	
6.4 ensure that teachers are provided with high quality professional development opportunities to further build on their professional expertise?		X		
6.5 respond to parent, staff and student concerns/complaints?			X	
6.6 provide ongoing training for board members so that they are able to fulfill the duties of their positions?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 6			X	

Quality Statement 7 – Maintain Financial Viability: The Charter School and its Board maintain financial viability and control over the course of the academic year.

To what extent do the school and its Board.....	Δ	➤	✓	+
7.1 ensure that an independent auditor is appointed to undertake an annual financial audit, which is submitted to the OCS along with any other relevant documentation?			X	
7.2 comply with the adoption of an annual budget for the upcoming school year, which is submitted to the OCS for review?			X	
7.3 maintain an accurate balance sheet, statement of activities, year-to-date expense report and statement of cash flow?			X	
7.4 implement procedures that provide adequate internal control measures to detect and prevent financial fraud, such as bank reconciliation, revenue recognition and travel reimbursement?		X		
7.5 align financial decision making to analysis and evaluation of student achievement data?		X		
7.6 focus budget decisions on the priorities for school development and improvement?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 7			X	

Quality Review Scoring Key

Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed
---	----------------	---	---	---	------------	---	----------------

Charter School Compliance Checklist

Does the Board and the school . . .	YES	NO	In process
1. have a documented policy for suspensions and expulsions?	X		
2. maintain up to date and compliant with IDEA Regulations for IEPs?	X		
3. send newsletters and other parent communications home in the predominant languages of the school community?	X		
4. implement a comprehensive special education program that complies with applicable governing laws?	X		
5. implement a comprehensive program for English Language Learners that complies with federal law?	X		
6. publish a schedule of regular board meetings that is easily accessible to the general public?	X		
7. ensure that accurate minutes from Board meetings are maintained and published?	X		
8. ensure that proposed contracts with EMOs and CMOs are submitted punctually to the OCS for review?	X		
9. maintain a functioning parent organization?	X		
10. ensure that parents are informed of the time and location of Board meetings that are open to the public?	X		

DRAFT