



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Bronxwood School

Public School 112

**1925 Schieffelin Avenue
Bronx
NY 10466**

Principal: Susan Barnes

**Dates of review: October 25 - 27, 2006
Reviewer: Stuart Satinet**

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bronxwood School serves approximately 640 students from pre-kindergarten through to grade 5. It is located in the Baychester section of the Bronx and has a diverse ethnic mix. The student population is 54% Black, 43% Hispanic, with only 1% Asian and 1% White. 8% of the student population are English language learners and a further 8% are special education students. The school, which was built in 1953, and although it is well maintained, it is somewhat overcrowded, with an accommodation utilization rate of 110%. Figures for 2003-05 indicate that the percentage of students who had Title 1 eligibility was 88%, which is higher than in most City schools. Average attendance figures (90%) are below those of similar and City schools. The school has relatively high mobility, with a student stability index of 91%.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and administration monitor the performance of the school carefully and have a clear agenda to improve achievement, which they share with colleagues.
- There are clear goals for improvement, which are defined in the Comprehensive Education Plan and are discussed across the school.
- A culture is being developed where staff collaborate more and discuss teaching strategies at learning team meetings.
- There is a clear focus on learning strategies in the classroom with many displays giving clearly structured guidance.
- Clear policies and procedures have been developed for monitoring and assessing the work of students. .
- Behavior is of a very high standard, mainly because of the impact that the Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) initiative, “High Five,” has had on the tone of the school.
- Scheduling decisions and staff appointments have enabled effective intervention strategies to be used across the school.
- The principal and administration regularly observe lessons and this is encouraging a dialogue about teaching and learning.
- Significant progress has been made in setting up systems to encourage attendance and increase student engagement.
- Significant progress has been made in encouraging more parental involvement in the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Build the capacity of staff to use data to further develop their planning and teaching so that individual needs are targeted.
- Increase the range of teaching strategies used across the school to encourage differentiation, group work and active learning.
- Ensure that each student knows what he/she needs to do to get better by sharing item analysis information.
- Give specific advice to parents about the skills their children are developing and how their children can develop further.
- Develop means for gauging the effectiveness of interventions for English language learners and special education students so that the results can netter inform future planning.
- Provide more frequent opportunities for staff to share best teaching practices.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal and administration have successfully structured data collection in the school so that there is a focus on the performance of the individual student. A comprehensive range of strategies has been put in place to improve student performance, and this appears to be having an impact on teaching and learning. The tone of the school has been improved by the development of a positive behavior strategy. Although the school has effective systems in place, these have not yet had sufficient impact on the performance of students in the various State and City tests. There have been significant improvements in Math and Science performance but progress in English Language Arts remains inconsistent. The school has carefully analyzed recent performance information, made further adjustments and is well placed to make further progress.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The principal and administration monitor the work of the school carefully and regularly analyze data generated by the various standardized tests to compare the performance of students at PS 112 with students in other similar schools in the City and to check the progress of students in different groups. This data is discussed and shared with teachers, enabling effective decisions to be made about interventions and support. There is, for example, a clear focus on the development of literacy skills, and this is supported by interventions from the literacy coach and lead teachers. The school has successfully developed a culture in which the skill development of the individual student is being reviewed on a regular basis. Each student has an assessment portfolio and teachers gather data about student performance using a variety of assessment instruments. The use of these portfolios is successfully encouraging the analysis of skills in the classroom and is used to compare the relative progress of students in different classes. Teachers collaborate effectively to discuss skills development and the needs of particular students at learning team meetings. The emphasis on skill identification and development is usefully reinforced by the "skill of the week," which links to the curriculum throughout the year. Teachers record the results of various assessments carefully and the information gained informs subsequent planning. Consultants have been employed to work with teachers on the use of data and this has been effective in increasing the use of on-line data. Performance data indicates that the school has been less successful in meeting the needs of English language learners and this is a current area of focus. There is still some inconsistency in the use of data since some systems are new and practice among individual teachers varies. The school is taking effective steps to establish new strategies and initiatives but there is recognition that this is still a lot to do.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school has set clear goals for improvement in its Comprehensive Education Plan based on a detailed analysis of City and State test results combined with other information about needs. The goals have been generated through discussion and the school has an effective structure for keeping these under review at a whole-school level. There is also a well structured process for looking at the individual needs of students and particular attention is paid to improving the performance of students in greatest need of improvement. The academic intervention team operates several programs and successfully involves parents and para-professionals in developing the individual skills of students. All teachers have been involved in developing useful curriculum maps which identify the skills which will be developed during the year. This is a valuable way of identifying learning goals for individual students and enables teachers to discuss approaches to literacy and numeracy at learning team meetings. A simplified version of the map goes to all parents and is used at meetings to explain the work students will be undertaking during the year. This provides an effective way of involving parents in understanding learning targets for their children. The school has made a considerable effort to make greater contact with parents but recognises that large numbers of parents still do not engage with the school and do not yet understand that a culture of high expectations has been established within the school. Teachers have had professional development related to the use of data but its use in individual target-setting for students is still inconsistent across the grades.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

A program of regular meetings has been developed to facilitate ongoing discussions about curriculum developments and this has been effective in informing decisions about teaching programs. Resources are well targeted to meet the needs of specific groups. For instance, teachers were involved in deciding to adopt the Lucy Calkins literacy program because they felt it best met the school’s needs. Teachers are held accountable for the progress of the students in their charge and there are regular formal and informal observations. In addition lead teachers and coaches provide regular advice on the relative success of the teaching strategies being used. This is sharpening the focus on individual skill development. All classrooms visited in the quality review had bright displays which gave structured guidance to students and ensured that students enjoyed a stimulating learning environment. There was less evidence of displays of students’ work although some good examples were seen.

The school recognizes that it still has work to be done in developing differentiated instruction and there is insufficient small group work and active learning. It is recognised that levels of engagement with students vary and that this is partly the result of an

insufficient range of teaching strategies being used. The skills of teachers in targeting instruction at the individual needs of students are, in some cases, undeveloped. The introduction of student portfolios has been effective in starting to address this issue but the information is not consistently shared with students so they know exactly what they need to do to improve. Attendance figures show that students attend less regularly than they do in similar schools in the City. This is an issue which the school has made a high priority and policies have been revised with an emphasis on positive rewards as well as regular contact with parents and interventions. There is an attendance committee and attendance officer and there is clear evidence of early intervention proving effective in altering attendance patterns. Steps have been taken to develop a more positive culture in the school through the introduction of Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) and according to staff, students and parents this has had a significant impact on behavior. There has been an increase in the range of activities available for students and parents, and this is helping to increase engagement.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has been successful in using allocated funds to appoint specialist teachers to intervene effectively with targeted students. A team of teachers is involved in the appointment process and this is effective in encouraging collaboration. There is a well developed system for using staff strategically to provide coaching, professional development and the modelling of good practice. This is starting to have an impact on classroom instruction and is effectively developing the skills of individual teachers. A culture is being developed in which teachers discuss student performance, agree on the most effective teaching strategies and collaborate with each other to develop their practice. This is seen working effectively in professional learning team meetings where ideas about successful strategies are shared. The school recognises that it needs to extend this collaboration further so that there is a clear impact on the use of differentiation in the classroom, which is undeveloped in some cases. The school is taking steps to build on the success of the learning teams by extending the opportunities to share best practice in the classroom through a program of peer inter-visitations. The principal and administration regularly observe lessons and this has sharpened the focus on improving student outcomes. Fourth and fifth grade students recognised that instructional supervisors observe classes and check understanding. Parents commented on the accessibility of teachers and confirmed that recent initiatives had changed for the better the way the school was seen by the community. Despite the hard work of staff involved, there remain a high proportion of parents who do not engage with the school as evidenced by lack of attendance at events.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The Comprehensive Education Plan includes whole-school improvement goals which have success criteria and this is successfully used to create plans for different sections of the school. The Comprehensive Education Plan is seen as a developing document and there are effective systems in place which enable teachers to consider what is working and not working and recommend revisions to the plan. Teachers were able to cite good evidence of regular skills review based on item analysis. The process of review is supported by analysis sheets which are regularly completed and give a comprehensive picture of the skill development of individual students. Frequent meetings are held to review interventions and to decide whether adjustments are needed and these enable a range of staff to coordinate their work effectively and to focus on individual needs. Although considerable flexibility is evident in meeting the needs of individual students, the school has done less work on assessing the effectiveness of different types of intervention. The "case study" approach is not used consistently in gauging the comparative success of targeted interventions and the principal recognises this as an area of development. The large number of professionals who are involved in improving student outcomes has had an impact but the capacity to evaluate the effectiveness of each intervention is undeveloped.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Bronxwood School (PS 112)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> each student, classroom, grade level, 		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 	X		
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all other categories of interest to the school* 		X	
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		X	

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.		X	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.		X	
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.	X		
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	Ø	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.	X		
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.	X		
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.		X	
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	Ø	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.		X	
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.		X	
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.		X	
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.		X	
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	Ø	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		X	
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.	X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	