



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Bronx Leadership Academy II**

**Public School 527**

**1100 Boston Road**

**Bronx**

**NY 10456**

**Principal: Paulette Franklin**

**Dates of review: May 2 – 3, 2007**

**Reviewer: John Collings**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The school shares the campus with four other schools. It has about 400 students, approximately 15% of whom are special education students and 6% are English language learners. The school has had title 1 funding for the last three years including this year. The student population comprises approximately 43% Black, 55% Hispanic, 1.5% White and 1.5% other ethnic groupings. At 81%, attendance is below city averages but above those of similar schools.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- There is a positive climate of accountability between the administration, teachers and students resulting in improved student performance.
- Students are well motivated, feel safe, happy and challenged resulting in good attention in lessons.
- There is increasing use of data to precisely identify and target student needs based on prior attainment.
- There is a good climate of reflection amongst staff for collectively identifying areas in need of improvement.
- Mutual respect between students, and students and their teachers is high.
- Teachers have high expectations of students and give clear indications of what students need to do in order to improve.
- Teachers modify instruction promptly to meet student needs, which are being increasingly based on sound ongoing assessment.
- There is increasing use of the workshop model to provide differentiation in classrooms which improves student engagement and raises performance.
- Rates of attendance are rising due to the successful implementation of new procedures.
- There is a good range of support systems to ensure students personal and academic needs are met.

### What the school needs to improve

- Improve the mechanisms for longer term goal setting and evaluation to ensure increased clarity and accountability.
- Use professional development time to further develop the implementation of planned differentiation in lessons to meet, more precisely, the wide range of student needs based on their prior attainment.
- Increase the number of science elective and advanced placement courses to ensure higher attaining students are effectively challenged.
- Develop measures to improve parental involvement in the school to engender greater collaboration between parents, students and the school.
- Increase the number of extracurricular opportunities.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a proficient school.**

This is a collegiate school where students feel well motivated, supported and where they are challenged to meet high expectations. They feel safe, respect their teachers and principal, and as a result want to achieve well and have high aspirations. They are engaged in learning and think the majority of instruction interesting and stimulating.

Overall staff are enthusiastic about the introduction of the workshop model of instruction, where work is clearly differentiated to meet each student's need based on prior attainments. This is having a positive effect on student performance. Staff continually reflect on whether their instruction is effective and strive to seek the best ways to improve student learning. Attendance is improving and there is a good range of support systems both personal and academic that parents and students use to address any concerns.

The school has developed goals, but these are not well documented or articulated through, for example, the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) or other planning documentation. The goals are reviewed, but not rigorously or frequently enough. Although there are adequate extracurricular opportunities, students would like a wider range. The school also has a limited number of elective and advanced placement courses.

#### **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 school uses data from the State and its own sound internal systems to identify the performance and progress of each student. It aggregates this data effectively to identify the performance and progress of classes and grade levels. It is aware, however, that it needs to consolidate this data into a more accessible form so that staff can interrogate it more efficiently.

Data is used to identify the progress of ethnic groups, particularly the increasing number of English language learners, and special education students. The data has been used effectively to appoint additional staff to support the particular needs of the above students. Although staff are aware of the progress of other categories of students, the school is not using data very systematically to identify quickly enough, where there may be areas of concern.

The school compares itself with similar schools and with its own past performance. It has identified from this that the progress of some students does not meet its high expectations. It has therefore initiated professional development to improve the use of differentiated instruction to ensure students are appropriately challenged with work that is based on their prior attainment. This is beginning to have a positive impact, but a full evaluation of the impact of differentiated instruction has not yet been completed until end of grade results become available.

**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 new administration, established in September 2006, has focused on initiating sufficient opportunities, through grade meetings and common planning time, to enable teachers to create cross curricular opportunities for students. From these collaborative meetings, appropriate goals and expectations are set particularly for short and medium term implementation. Longer-term goals based on the expectations of students are also identified, but these are not so clear or the expected progress towards them well articulated.

A good feature of the school is the action it has taken to overcome differences in learning capability of some students. It has been proactive and has identified a particular group of students causing concern. This process initiated an in-depth study which included obtaining external help to try to identify the group’s very specific needs, and finding ways of supporting them to improve their performance. The school also identified use of English across the curriculum as an issue, for example, the use of English in mathematics and science to interpret problems. As a result the school has planned greater opportunities for cross-curricular English and this is beginning to have a positive impact, although it is still in the early stages of implementation.

There are high expectations in the school expressed not only by teachers, but also parents and students. There are regular meetings to inform parents about student progress and there are good systems in place where teachers, for example in marking work, clearly identify what students need to do to improve. Students value this formative feedback as they feel challenged and well supported to improve their performance.

All within the school community are focused on trying to improve performance and progress and this results in a school that has a good climate for learning where students are engaged, challenged, mature and articulate.

**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.**

The school has made considerable efforts to modify the mandated curriculum to meet its needs. The interrogation of its data has allowed the school to identify issues on the use of English within other subjects, which had hitherto, impeded students’ overall performance. It has therefore given a considerable amount of attention to inter-disciplinary planning to make use of opportunities where skills and concepts learned in one subject can be applied and consolidated in another.

Teachers are held accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. This is achieved through classroom visits by the principal and through analysis of the data to identify where a particular group of students are not making the progress expected. There is a significant emphasis on adopting the workshop method of instruction within the school. This ensures there are a range of differentiated expectations of students within each class based on their prior attainment. This particular initiative is the main focus for increasing

performance and although in the early stages of development, it is having a positive impact on student involvement and achievement.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling have been well used to redress the identified needs of students within the school. For example, the school identified that the progress of English language learners and those with special educational needs were not being supported as effectively as possible. This resulted in the commitment to provide additional staffing to support the needs of these students. Early indications suggest that this is having a positive effect on improving performance.

Students enjoy school, feel engaged and challenged. This results in a mature, articulate, hard working group of students particularly in the upper grades. There are very good relationships between students, and between students and staff. This results in the teachers knowing students very well and the students feeling safe and able to approach staff with their academic and personal problems.

Students' attendance is not as good as the school would like. It has recently reviewed its procedures to improve attendance and these are beginning to have a significant effect with attendance rising over the last few months.

**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 effective procedures for appointing staff that involve a personnel committee which includes the principal, assistant principals, teacher representatives, students and, where possible, parents. Teachers are expected to understand that success in the school is judged increasingly through identification of whether students are making value added progress based on their prior attainment.

The school has made a significant commitment to professional development to support teachers in the introduction of the workshop model of differentiated teaching. This was introduced in response to a number of factors identified in data; the increasing number of students coming into the school at below grade level, the increasing numbers of English language learners and the fact that some students were not making expected satisfactory progress. These measures are beginning to have a significant positive impact.

The principal and assistant principal frequently observe classrooms and support teachers in the implementation of differentiated teaching. Teachers undergo inter-visitations and evaluate themselves, but this is not yet endemic throughout the school, although it is being increasingly included in teachers' professional development to increase their range of teaching skills.

Teachers plan in teams and make good use of common planning time particularly in interdisciplinary approaches so that knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in one subject can be enhanced and developed in another. Time is also used well to evaluate the effectiveness of this cross curricular approach in order to improve planning and implementation.

The principal, and all staff are well respected, and there is a very good capacity within the evolving administration to effect change. Overall the school runs very smoothly and there

is a positive climate of learning and purposeful instruction resulting in engaged, interested and challenged students.

The school offers a sound range of support services. There are after school programs, Saturday programs, and occasions for meetings with counselors, parent liaison and faculty advisers. It has a limited range of after school activities, such as art and sports. It has very strong links with the south Bronx churches, which have obtained a site and monies to build a new school rather than share the campus with other schools.

**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 undeveloped.**

The school has objectives and goals, but these are not well articulated in the CEP for the next year, or in longer term goals to identify plans and aspirations for the move to a new site. The system of review that is in place, is not sufficiently clear, systematic or frequent and, although the school uses data and diagnostic assessment to monitor student progress these are not well linked to school goals.

The school, however, does use data to compare student progress within and across classrooms and these assessments are used regularly to judge the success of the interventions that have been put in place. For example, the in-depth analysis of an identified group of students who are not making the progress expected.

The school uses periodic assessments from progress reports, teachers' discussions, the Princeton Review and other data to revise plans and interventions to establish where students' needs are not being met, or to maintain interventions where they have been proved successful. The school is successful in reviewing its interim goals, for example, cross curricular planning and differentiated teaching through on-going assessment. It uses this information to redress deficits in the curriculum and instruction especially where they are needed to meet students' immediate needs. The school is less clear how these intermediate changes affect longer-term goals for the school.

The school does not currently have a clear structure for goal setting and identifying successive phases of planning to meet these goals, this is largely because of the recent changes in the administrative structure of the school. The school demonstrates that it is able to modify the curriculum, instruction and staffing procedures, and resources to meet needs whenever possible, but it has not yet established the means whereby developmental goals, timeframes and success of its decisions can be easily recorded and measured.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Bronx Leadership Academy II (PS 527)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>		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"> <li>• ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students*</li> </ul>		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"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>	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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		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.

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>		X	
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>		X	
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>	X		