



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Jonas Bronck Academy

Middle School 228

**4525 Manhattan College Parkway
Bronx
NY 10471**

Principal: Maria T Esponda

Dates of review: February 5 - 6, 2008

Lead Reviewer: John Cassidy

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Jonas Bronck Academy is a middle school with 143 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 20% Black, 73% Hispanic, 5% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 5% special education students. Boys account for 60% of the students enrolled and girls account for 40%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 94.5%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 53% eligibility.

The school leases one floor of Hayden Hall on the campus of Manhattan College. It became an official Department of Education school in July 2005. In 2007 the school established the first collaborative team teaching class in grade 6 to support transition into middle school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is a highly effective and respected leader who communicates clear values and expectations of high standards to scholars, parents and staff.
- The school culture is characterised by mutual respect, collaborative working and professional reflection.
- A comprehensive database of information enables faculty to support classes, groups and individual scholars to improve performance and accelerate progress.
- Scholars are well supported by efficient and effective targeting of support and resources by specialist teachers, subject teachers, visiting staff and academic intervention services.
- Good use is made of a range of information to plan and ensure continuity and support for individual scholars transferring to the middle school.
- Academic and personal support provided through the advisory programme generates useful data to plan goals for scholars.
- Extensive school-based and external professional development enhances the school's capacity for continuous improvement.
- Strong partnerships add breadth to the curriculum and provide motivators and challenges for scholars.
- The implementation of an imaginative program in math, technology and literacy deepens and extends the knowledge and understanding of higher performing scholars.

What the school needs to improve

- Review and evaluate the extent of use and effectiveness of approaches to differentiation in all classes.
- Develop a consistent approach to setting scholar goals to match best practice.
- Develop and implement strategies to support interdisciplinary working across the curriculum to further enhance engagement of scholars in learning.
- Ensure goals at whole school, grade and subject level have clear and measurable success criteria that are used to monitor and evaluate progress.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient

The principal is a well respected and skilled leader of a school in which the culture nurtures mutual respect, collaboration, high standards and strong partnerships with parents and outside organizations. A range of data is skillfully used to set goals for most scholars that are suitably challenging. No child is left behind in a school community which values every scholar as an individual and systematically monitors their progress and development. Teacher accountability is high. Well planned classroom visits by the principal and focused professional development make a major contribution to building the school's capacity for continuous improvement.

Since the last review, an increased range of professional development activities, use of a wider range of performance data and the sharing of good practice across the school have resulted in increased achievement and progress particularly in English language arts. The inquiry team has taken the opportunity to further refine the generation and use of data to support well-planned improvements in instruction for its focus group. Although, some progress has been made, differentiation remains a key focus for the school. The extent and impact of approaches to differentiation, particularly on higher achieving scholars and on levels of achievement in math, have not yet been systematically evaluated.

To further increase scholars' engagement in their learning an imaginative thematic approach to interdisciplinary working across the curriculum has been introduced. The core curriculum is well established and is enhanced through a variety of enrichment and elective programs. Scholar progress and achievement are effectively monitored and reviewed and learning plans adjusted accordingly. Further work is required to ensure this systematic approach to monitoring and review is applied to all school planning including plans to support the achievement of whole school goals.

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 scholar knows and is able to do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school has well established systems for gathering, generating, analyzing and using data. The principal and faculty have a well developed understanding of the importance of accessing and using data effectively. The principal has developed a useful, well-

designed database which collates key pieces of data for each scholar. This records the range of specialist support which the scholar receives and a history of the individual assessment outcomes and progress. This important information is readily accessible and known to all teachers. Data is used very effectively by teachers to plan and target appropriate interventions for scholars who require additional support or further challenges to extend and deepen their understanding and knowledge. Several staff now actively use a variety of their own and commercially available resources to extend the range and level of detail in the data available to them. This enables teachers to refine instruction and to make rapid and relevant changes. Commendably, the principal is aware of the potential of over-testing and has started to encourage the integration of items which provide feedback on performance into lessons. Assessment activity is now used as an opportunity to reinforce learning as well as a means of evaluating it.

The principal reviews data on the performance of similar schools and this informs whole school goals. Comparisons with the school's own best performance is also used as a benchmark for improvement planning. Staff make good use of a wide range of qualitative data from parents, scholars, teachers and advisors. The advisory programme also provides valuable data to support the planning of scholars' next steps in learning and personal development goals. The most effective interventions are those which are planned to take account of the many factors which influence young people's lives. This is particularly true of interventions to support special education students, English language learners and individual scholars who are at risk of not achieving.

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 proficient.

School leaders and faculty work collaboratively to plan and set goals for scholars. Feedback from assessments makes a significant contribution to planning next steps in scholars' learning and where necessary reviewing and improving instruction. Some staff are skilled in constructing their own assessment tools to identify in some detail the strengths and weaknesses. Almost all staff are secure with the use of data to establish goals for scholars. However, the good practice in setting suitably high goals for scholars is not yet evident in instruction in all classes. Where item analysis and skills analysis are undertaken, very good use is made of the outcomes to contribute to improvements in instruction and to discuss progress with scholars and their parents. Detailed qualitative and quantitative data is regularly shared with academic intervention services. In this way setting goals and identifying appropriate support is becoming more effective. The school has made the most progress in setting goals for individual scholars. The setting of measurable whole school goals and goals for subgroups with success criteria is less well developed.

In a very worthwhile initiative each grade teacher has been asked to identify three scholars to be the focus of a mini-inquiry. Teachers record in detail the progress of each scholar evaluating the impact and benefits of interventions. Lessons learned are shared at grade team meetings. Those scholars in need of greatest support receive an appropriate combination of push in and pull-out support, and extended day programs. This year the lowest third of scholars have made gains in English language arts and

math. A similar approach has also been taken with the top five highest performing scholars at each grade.

Relationships with parents are good. Parents speak positively about the communication they receive and the opportunities to raise concerns or to discuss the progress of their children. Information from parents is treated by the principal and staff as valuable data in helping ensure scholars receive the most appropriate learning experiences. Data from parents is not yet systematically integrated into the planning of longer-term goals for scholars and in particular personal and social development goals.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages scholars around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school schedule for scholars in all grades is based on an eight period day and generally provides all scholars with a broad curriculum. Greater and more targeted use is being made of technology to engage and support the needs of individual scholars and in enabling to carry out research. However, there is more to be done in promoting strategies or interdisciplinary working to ensure that scholars are fully engaged. As scholars move from grade 6 into grades 7 and 8 they experience a change in structure which prepares them for high school. The elective options in grades 7 and 8 provide additional breadth and variety to the curriculum. The Music on Wheels program is also effective in engaging scholars from all grades in playing instruments in the band or singing in the chorus. To further engage scholars in their learning the school is now trialing a thematic approach to interdisciplinary working across the curriculum.

A key focus for the school for this year is on differentiating planning and instruction. As a result of well-focused professional development activities teachers are now more aware of a range of approaches and strategies to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners. An overall evaluation of the extent of use and the impact of current approaches to ensure differentiated instruction has not yet taken place.

The school has worked hard to promote good rates of attendance through a range of effective procedures. There is an evident culture of mutual trust and respect between faculty and scholars who say they feel safe in school and are happy to be there.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The principal’s rigorous approach to classroom observation makes a significant contribution to the school’s strategy for improving instruction as it strives for continuous improvement. Formal visits are carefully planned with each teacher. Detailed records of visits, which include constructive feedback on possible improvements and praise for good practice, are kept. Feedback is discussed with the teacher and outcomes are agreed which provide the focus for a subsequent visit. Informal visits based on

'snapshot' learning walks also provide useful feedback on specific aspects of classroom practice. These enable the principal to develop a valuable and continuously updated overview of the quality of learning and teaching.

The principal has a regular conference with each teacher. These well-planned, reflective discussions focus on the school's goals and the professional development needed to achieve these. New teachers are well supported through an effective mentoring system. They also value the regular informal support from colleagues and the range of opportunities to be fully involved in collaborative activities.

Well-established and consistently implemented school policies and procedures ensure that the school runs very smoothly. The culture of the school encourages and acknowledges good behavior. It is characterised by mutual respect, collaborative working and professional reflection. Where any indiscipline occurs it is dealt with fairly and consistently. In an imaginative initiative scholars have had an opportunity to engage in conflict resolution training. This has now enabled peer mediation to be established which helps resolve issues before they give rise to indiscipline. The advisory programme is greatly valued by the scholars and provides a regular opportunity for all teachers and scholars, in mixed grade groups, to discuss academic and personal goals in a more informal setting.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for 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 proficient

The principal is a highly effective and respected leader who communicates clear values and expectations of high standards to scholars, parents and staff. The school's core values of respect, integrity and dignity are evident in all activities. The school vision is clear and is well understood by scholars and parents. Scholars' learning experiences are well aligned to their long-term goals. Qualitative and quantitative data on the progress of scholars is used on a regular basis to set short-term and intermediate goals. In the goal-setting process the principal and faculty members, through collaborative activities, ensure that goals are challenging and realistic and are built on clearly identified benchmarks. Benchmarks are well established and are used effectively to set interim and longer term academic goals and to evaluate progress in achieving goals.

The school has not given the same attention to ensuring that broader school goals at whole school, grade and subject level are similarly expressed with sharp success criteria that enable progress towards them to be monitored and the impact of strategies to be rigorously evaluated. This makes it difficult for the school to make timely adjustments to the curriculum and instruction or to plan strategically for the next round of goal setting.

The principal has established effective processes for conferencing with teachers on their professional development goals. The goals are well aligned to the needs of the teachers and the school. Information from regular discussions between the principal and teachers and the data from class visits are used sensitively and appropriately to set, monitor and evaluate progress in achieving teachers' goals. Professional development goals are also well aligned to the goals included in the school's Comprehensive Education Plan.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Jonas Bronck	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
Quality Score			X		

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	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 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?			X		
1.7 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 students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 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		

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	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, class 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 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?			X		
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X		

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	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 and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4					X

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	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 faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?			X		
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?			X		
5.7 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

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped