



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Bronx Green Middle School

Middle School 326

**2441 Wallace Avenue
Bronx
NY 10467**

Principal: Emily Becker

Dates of review: March 27- 28, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Gareth Williams

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bronx Green is a middle school with 337 students from grade 6 through to grade 7. The school population comprises 27% Black, 57% Hispanic, 8% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92.3%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 100% eligibility.

The school is in its second year of operation.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a clear vision for the school which has enabled the school to make good progress since the previous Quality Review.
- Targeted professional development makes a positive contribution to the achievement of goals.
- Staff are enthusiastic about the future direction of the school and benefit from the collaborative leadership approach of the senior staff.
- Effective support systems meet the needs of special education students and make a positive contribution to their academic success.
- The school has proficient systems to gather useful data and identify support needs.
- Leadership holds staff accountable for students' academic and personal development.
- Effective partnerships with outside entities enrich and support wider learning.
- External consultants strengthen the learning experience for teachers and students
- The skills and expertise of the new teacher mentor enable teachers to improve the quality of instruction.
- Links with network schools benefit wider school development

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen strategic planning and the monitoring and evaluation of goals, initiatives and student progress to support the school in achieving its vision.
- Improve the use of data to compare the performance and progress of different groups of students.
- Make better use of available data to differentiate instruction to meet individual needs, particularly for higher-achieving students
- Improve behavior management in order to support student learning.

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 sets high expectations for herself, the students and all the members of the community. She is ably supported by the assistant principal. Teachers collaborate well in order to achieve the school's vision and goals. Staff appreciate the collaborative leadership approach administration adopts. This has resulted in a united school community that is highly supportive of the vision expressed in the mission statement. The next step is to ensure that strategic planning is rigorous and becomes embedded in the work of the school.

Overall, students respect their teachers and appreciate their efforts in the classroom and beyond. As one student expressed, "Our teachers are always trying to find something interesting for us to do." They particularly demonstrate respect and trust in the principal. Despite these good relationships, behavior management strategies are inconsistent across the school. Disruption by a significant minority of students impacts on the pace of learning. Consequently, a disproportionate amount of leadership time is used to address issues related to behavior rather than the core purposes of learning and academic achievement.

Since the previous review, good data collection systems have been established. These support greater understanding of where each student is in their learning. Strategies are in place to set individual students goals, for example, in reading. Strategic decisions in the deployment of consultants have placed the school in a stronger position to manipulate and use data to better effect. Professional development has been aligned with goals. As a result, teachers use their professional learning to improve their instructional practice. The school has particularly focused on the development of reading and writing, and students are benefiting from more regular checks on their progress and achievement. There is a growing confidence amongst some teachers which enables them to better use data to inform instructional practice. Special education students have particularly benefited from this good start and make good progress. While there have been some good opportunities for staff to develop new skills and knowledge, there is not yet a consistent approach to the analysis and use of student data to differentiate instruction.

The inquiry team has been established and its members are well on the way to determining the focus and methodology for their action research project. A shift to monitoring the progress of students, as well as their performance, in math is enabling the school to be more accurate in identifying precisely which groups of students need to do better and what they need to improve. This research has yet to be completed and shared with the teachers.

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 the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has introduced effective assessments in reading and writing, including student conferencing. Consequently teachers now monitor the progress and performance of each student, classroom and grade with increasing effect. Similarly these effective systems are also being implemented in math through work undertaken with the external consultants. Insufficient use is being made of this data, however, to understand the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and other categories of interest to the school.

The school has developed a good range of data management systems to begin to measure student performance and progress. Use is made of local communities and networks to benchmark performance with similar schools. However, systems to check its performance against other similar schools are embryonic. The school has compared its performance this year with last and has taken suitable action to ensure that it grows from strength to strength. Consequently, training opportunities have been provided to promote better use of the new data systems. Teachers know how to use data to identify academic and personal needs of their students. However, they do not use data sufficiently well yet to support instruction and identify how best to meet each student's needs.

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.

The "culture club forum" facilitated by the Community of Unity demonstrates the desire on the part of leadership to promote collaborative decision making. Well attended by members of staff, it makes a positive contribution to shaping the strategic direction of the school. Although the school sets individual, group and class goals, whole school goals are less well articulated and understood by the whole community.

The school is beginning to make good use of data to identify students in particular need of improvement and provide support that meets their needs. Academic intervention services provide clear intervention and differentiated instruction for special education students and, as a result, the students make good progress. Moreover, the inquiry team has focused on a low functioning group of students in math, developing alternative teaching styles that make greater use of manipulative approaches. This focus is leading to a clearer strategy on how the school can use instructional strategies based on the use of manipulatives to support the learning of a wider group of students.

Some parents are fully involved in supporting their children's education but many are not. This makes it difficult to share improvement goals with them and to get them to contribute useful information about their children's strengths and learning needs. The school has tried hard to increase the level of parental involvement through a range of activities. However, engagement remains low. The majority of support comes from a very small but dedicated group of parents involved in the Parent Teacher Association.

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.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school provides a broad curriculum that is relevant to the students’ needs. In addition to mandatory subjects, there are growing opportunities to study art and music. Bilingual teaching supports students who are English language learners resulting in better understanding of goals and progress in lessons.

DYO training and the work of the external consultants to develop differentiation have raised the profile of individual goal setting for students amongst teaching staff although the school has much more to do before it is proficient in this area. Consequently, the higher-achieving students in particular are often not sufficiently challenged or stimulated in lessons. While students report they enjoy school, are engaged, and are interested in their learning, the lack of challenge, leads to boredom and off-task behavior. As one student reported “I like my teacher but sometimes the work is not hard enough to keep me interested so I start talking to my friends.”

There are fruitful links with community-based organizations which enrich the curriculum. For example a grade 6 visit to the botanical gardens has supported student work in furthering the development of the garden at the school. After-school activities enhance and complement student learning.

The principal has taken strategic action in budgetary and staffing matters to help the school achieve its goals. The deployment of consultants has made a positive contribution to teachers’ professional development and has improved procedures for managing data within the school. Attendance figures at 93% show improvement since the previous quality review and represent the development of improved procedures.

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 proficient.

There are suitable systems for monitoring instruction and giving constructive feedback to help teachers improve. Classroom observations by senior staff are effective in identifying strengths and weaknesses in instruction. Consequently, teachers feel supported in their aim to improve outcomes for students. Teachers have opportunities to observe each other and to share good practice through inter-visitation and collaborative teaching. As the school grows, capacity building amongst both new and existing staff remains one of the greatest challenges for the administration.

Close collaboration between colleagues ensures that there is a shared understanding about what makes good teaching. Teachers have more opportunities to turnkey new ideas from courses they have attended. Joint planning sessions provide useful opportunities for teachers to increase their understanding of how students learn. Good support from the teacher mentor for new and inexperienced teachers is making a significant impact on instruction. Inexperienced teachers feel well supported and openly comment how this support is making a difference to how they plan and deliver lessons.

Behavior management is not consistent. Teachers and students both report that the behavior of a minority of students sometimes gets in the way of learning. Consequently,

this impinges on teachers' ability to instruct and the students' ability to learn in a safe orderly environment.

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 undeveloped.

The principal is clear in her vision of making the school an important stepping-stone to higher education for its students. However, the goals and interim goals to fulfill this vision are not always well articulated throughout the school community. Despite the investment in a comprehensive program of professional development and the establishing of systems to support the collection and analysis of data, the impact on achievement is yet to be realized.

At present, the school does not use data systematically to inform medium and long-term planning and to set rigorous interim goals that allow it to track the progress and effectiveness of improvement strategies. Plans for improving achievement and instruction identify areas in which action is needed and outline strategies to bring about change but insufficient attention is given to monitoring progress against time-limited goals. This limits the school's ability to revise and modify plans in response to changing circumstances.

Teachers have made a start in using assessment data to improve individual students' performance, particularly with lower-achieving students. This has resulted in good gains for special education students. Systems for recording assessment data are sound because they allow the data to be analyzed in a number of ways. However, this data is not systematically used to best effect to support and inform planning. School leaders acknowledge that its use of this data is still a developing area.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Bronx Green Middle School	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 student knows and is able to do and to monitor the student's 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