



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

**Quality Review Report  
Office of Accountability  
2008-2009**

# **Quality Review Report 2008-2009**

**Bronx Green**

**Middle School 326**

**2441 Wallace Avenue**

**Bronx**

**NY 10467**

**Principal: Emily Becker**

**Dates of review: December 1 – 2, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Dr. Salvador A. Fernandez**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Bronx Green is a middle school with 472 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 23% Black, 61% Hispanic, 1% White, and 15% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 93.1%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 100% eligibility.

### Overall Evaluation

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

The school has worked hard in developing the whole child by providing a well-rounded curriculum that connects students to real life tasks. Strong committed leaders and faculty provide the stage for a collaborative environment that reflects on instructional practices to improve student outcomes. The school has made good progress since the last Quality Review in addressing the areas for improvement. The school has now grown to capacity and the founding principal's vision for developing a reflective community of learners has now become a reality.

Collaboration among teachers to share best practices and discuss students' progress academically and socially is embedded in the school day. Providing teachers with a professional space where they come together to plan, have conversations or just relax has strengthened the school community. However, the school does not have a differentiated professional development plan that provides a structure where each teacher sets personal goals to improve their instructional practices. School leaders, faculty and consultants have developed curriculum maps for English language arts, math, science and social studies that enhance the prior year's instruction providing continuity of instruction for students. Curriculum development is still a major concern for the school. School leaders recognize the importance of further developing the curriculum in math, science and social studies to bring them up to par with the English language arts curriculum that is fully flushed out and has a real n impact on students' learning.

Data collection system has been enhanced since the previous review. Teachers are comfortable analyzing and interpreting formative assessments designed by the school. As a result, they gain a greater understanding of students' strengths and weaknesses and plan lessons that meet students' needs. However, the school does not have a structure to support teachers in developing individual student goals in all core subjects that include interim benchmarks and timeframes that will enable them to track students' progress strategically.

The school has also made school climate a priority. Leaders and faculty have implemented clear and specific expectations for each classroom using the Community Expectations rubric. This has led to the development of a common language about what is expected in the school and has contributed to a positive school tone, which is conducive to learning.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has developed a caring and nurturing environment of mutual trust and respect between adults and students that is conducive to learning.
- The school has an advisory system that actively informs parents of students' academic progress and social improvement.
- School leadership uses formative assessments and summative data effectively to develop the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan.
- Teachers work collaboratively to share best instructional practices and plan lessons that are standards based to improve student outcomes.
- The school has an effective system for analyzing formative data in English language arts, math and science. to understand students' areas of strengths and weaknesses
- Leaders make thoughtful organizational decisions about the allocation of resources to align the curriculum and support teachers in improving student outcomes.

### What the school needs to improve

- Implement a structure to support teachers in developing individual student goals that include interim benchmarks and timeframes that enable them to track students' progress strategically.
- Develop a system that enables the school to monitor and revise plans, which include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for improving student outcomes.
- Create a differentiated professional development plan to include a structure that provides an opportunity for each teacher to set goals to improve their instructional practices.
- Match the exemplary practice in the English language arts curriculum in other core subjects by engaging and challenging students with rigorous instruction.

## Part 3: Main Findings

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

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

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

Since the previous Quality Review, the school has made significant progress in further developing their own formative assessment system in English language arts, math and science. School leaders and faculty analyze and interpret data to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. Teachers use their data binders to track students' progress in their classes. Currently, the school is in the process of extending its practice by developing formative assessment in social studies and other core subjects. The administration uses the tools provided by the Department of Education to disaggregate summative data to identify sub-groups within their school. This provides teachers with information about students' attendance, academic performance and progress of students in their class. Teachers use this information to identify trends and patterns and to develop groups to provide students with maximum instruction.

The advisory program has evolved successfully over the last two years and has become the hub for the school to gather data and track progress on how students are performing academically and socially. Teachers are excited about advisory because it provides them with a complete profile of the fourteen to eighteen students in their advisory periods. Students really enjoy their advisory time as one student stated, "I have connected with my teacher and understand what I need to achieve academically." Teachers inform students of what is expected both academically and socially, which has improved the overall climate of the school. Teachers also have an opportunity to bond with their small advisory groups. They meet with students twice a week and give their students regular updates. Teachers also notify the parents of their advisory group, keeping them informed of their child's academic and social progress. Parents speak highly of the program because it gives their child an outlet and guides them in becoming responsible.

**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 Comprehensive Educational Plan is developed collaboratively, with members of the school leadership team consulted for input. The school's own formative assessments and the City's summative data are used to develop priorities in the plan.

The school is becoming increasingly effective at communicating what it expects of students. School leaders and faculty conduct an open house in October to share with parents what the academic and social expectations are for the year. Teachers shared

with parents the curriculum maps and the assessment tools the school uses to provide parents with clear understanding of what is expected of their children. Progress reports are sent home between each marking period, keeping parents and students informed of progress and next steps. Students and parents both appreciate that the progress reports allow students to take ownership of their learning. As one student reported, "It is up to us if we do not do well on the report card grade." The progress reports are effective because they provide an opportunity to the students to improve their grade before the end of the marking period.

Teachers receive class data that gives them a composite picture of how their students' are doing academically. The data combines information from formative assessments that the school has developed by content area. These assessments allow teachers to set class goals in content areas. Teachers track students' progress a minimum of four times a year using these assessments to inform their instructional practices. The advisory period becomes another vehicle by which students can track their progress and meet the goals set in the classroom by their teacher. The school has systems in place to assess students' progress in attaining class goals in English language arts, math and science. However, it has not yet implemented a system by which teachers set individual student learning goals that include interim benchmarks and timeframes that will enable teachers to track students' progress strategically in core subjects.

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

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

School leaders and faculty have extensively reflected on the quality of the curriculum since the previous review. They are working with consultants to revise the sixth and seventh grade curriculum, and are developing an eighth grade curriculum in English language arts, math, science and social studies that is standards based. The intention is to develop the curriculum strategically so that each grade builds upon what is learned in the previous year. The school has also linked social studies with English language arts in order to reinforce students' learning across subjects. The school has also added more project based learning as evaluation showed them that students are more engaged in learning when working on projects. Teachers plan developmental lessons with continuity of instruction in evidence during classroom visits. The English language arts curriculum serves as the exemplar for the school. The school leaders recognize the need to further develop the curriculum in other core subjects to engage and challenge students through rigorous instruction.

The principal has allocated resources to ensure that the school has a nurturing and caring environment of mutual trust and respect between adults and students by providing the school with additional support personnel. As one student reported, "Since the dean came this year I feel safer." The school has also instituted the Community Expectations rubric to focus students' attention on maintaining a positive school climate. Teachers use the common language of the rubric to encourage students to modify unwarranted behavior and develop an environment conducive to learning. One teacher reported positively on the impact, "Students are coming to school ready to learn."

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

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The school has evolved a setting where teachers work collaboratively to go over student data and plan lessons that are differentiated and engaging. The principal opened the teachers' learning center this year. This provides teachers with a professional space to come together to plan, talk or just have time for professional reading. Teachers meet weekly during common planning by content and grade level. They find these meetings extremely productive. It provides them with the opportunity to share instructional practices and develop effective pedagogical strategies.

The school also provides opportunities for teachers to attend workshops and turnkey their learning to the rest of the staff. Formal and informal observations are primarily used to monitor teaching and learning and to provide feedback to teachers on how to improve their craft. The school provides an array of professional collaboration activities. These opportunities have had a direct impact on the development of a uniform and comprehensive curriculum in English language arts. However, the school does not have a structure in place that enables school leaders to differentiate professional development activities and allows teachers to set individual learning goals in all core subjects to improve instructional practice.

The newly formed Inquiry Team analyzed summative and formative data and selected the target population. The target population consists of 19 seventh and eighth grade students who are performing poorly in literacy. The team is finalizing phase one and has started working to strengthen writing skills. The team collaborates with classroom teachers so they can reinforce the strategies during lessons and after school. The team works well collaboratively and has a good strategic plan for helping students improve academically.

Youth development is a high priority for the school and is at the center of the mission to educate the whole child. The Garden Council is a perfect example of students and staff taking ownership for their academic, social and professional growth. This is a field study program, which provides students with hands-on activities inside the classroom and work in the school's garden, which promotes a sense of ownership for students. The students plant, harvest and cook the food from their garden. The students and teachers are extremely proud of the work they do in field study. Another example, the advisory program, has evolved to be a major contributor for school improvement. Students enjoy advisory because their opinions are taken seriously, building a sense of belonging. The school has several partnerships with outside providers to ensure further development for students' social, emotional and academic growth.

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

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

Since the previous review, the school has become more sophisticated in the analysis and interpretation of data. The instructional team has further developed the curriculum and has added checkpoints throughout the year to assess where revisions may be needed. The school's own formative assessment system is used effectively to inform instructional practice and to differentiate instruction. The school analyzes summative and formative data to inform instructional practice and to provide teachers with strategies to improve student outcomes. The organizational decision was sensibly made to provide common planning time for professional collaborations where teachers share best practices for improving their craft. However, the school does not have a structure in place that will enable them to strategically monitor and revise plans which includes measurable interim goals and suitable timeframes for improving student outcomes.

The principal has a clear vision for the future development of the school building upon prior year's work. The school leaders and faculty have developed a culture of reflection, which allows them to make sensible and timely adjustments as needed for school improvement. The school has implemented clear and specific expectations for each classroom by creating a "Community Expectations" rubric, which has developed a common language of what is expected in the school. Regular walkthroughs take place to make sure all stakeholders adhere to expectations and to promote consistency.

## School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: Bronx Green</b>	△	➤	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?		<b>X</b>		
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

### DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

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

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

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

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

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

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

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

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.</b>							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?		X					
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?			X				
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?			X				
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?		X					
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?			X				
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?			X				
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent do...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?		X					
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?			X				
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?			X				
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
△	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>