

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

The Bronx School of Cultured Pearls

**Elementary School 073
1020 Anderson Avenue
Bronx
NY 10452**

Principal: Jean Mirvil

Dates of review: April 15 - 16, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Dolores Esposito

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Bronx School of Cultured Pearls is an elementary school with 901 students from pre-kindergarten through grade five. The school population comprises 28% Black, 70% Hispanic, 1% White and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 21% English Language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 – 2009 was 92.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

“This principal has brought in more parents to the school and makes sure that our children are learning all of the time.” This is the general feeling among parents in the Bronx School of Cultured Pearls. The commitment and shared vision of the school are exemplified by the comments of staff, students, and parents. The principal is a very thoughtful and caring leader who embraces the entire school community in order to ensure the academic and social emotional success of all students through a distributive leadership model.

The school provides a curriculum that is aligned to State standards, including the arts to expose students with rich opportunities for learning. The leadership works closely with all members to identify targets, goals, and priorities that lead to school improvement based on various data sources, both formative and summative. This information is shared with the school’s functioning leadership team as well as with all of the parent groups and outside partnerships. Resources for the school are appropriately aligned to the school’s goals and enable parents to understand students’ strengths and areas for development. The ARIS Parent Link serves to support parents in this endeavor. This leads to strong supportive relationships between staff, students, and parents.

Through teacher empowerment teams, teachers have a greater voice in the decisions of the school as they relate to curriculum, safety, and parent involvement. This leads to greater teacher participation and more ownership of the work. Teachers feel that they are supported and given the resources to develop their leadership skills through the consultancy model in the school. As a result, leadership development fosters the capacity for continued improvement.

However, the goal-setting process is not fully developed and lacks frequent opportunities for feedback to staff and students. As a result, differentiation lacks depth and understanding. In addition, systems to better monitor progress and evaluate goals more effectively, in order to maximize student learning for all students, are not embedded practices.

The school continues to support parents through parent workshops and the establishment of their parent welcome center. Even though there is some work to be done in bringing all parent groups together, the majority of the parents in the school are overwhelmingly satisfied with the support the school has given their students as indicated on the Learning Environment Survey. As a result, attendance continues to improve and parent participation equally has increased.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The administration and staff work collaboratively to provide a safe, caring, and inclusive environment that supports the academic and social emotional development of students.
 - The Responsive Classroom Practice trainings and partnerships with Fordham University on building students' self-esteem continue to support the social and emotional development of students. Parents affirm that their children are able to learn in a safe and nurturing environment that fosters a culture of respect between students and adults in the building. "Our Principal has made our school a much better place for our children," is what many parents say to describe the warm culture in the school.
 - Students enjoy coming to school and engage in lessons that require their active participation with adults who encourage them in their development. This results in good attendance in the school for staff and students.
- Administrators and faculty collect a wide range of data to effectively organize and analyze the performance and progress of individuals and groups of students.
 - Teacher teams and administration effectively analyze a wide range of data to understand the school's strengths and needs of the school. There is a strong collaboration between all members of the school to discuss and analyze attendance, safety and other formative and summative data. This practice enables administration to effectively evaluate school level instructional and organizational decisions.
 - Administration and staff also meet regularly to organize and analyze data in order to monitor progress of students. This leads to effective planning around appropriate intervention strategies in daily instruction, extended programs, and long-term goals.
- Teachers work effectively in collaborative teams, using an inquiry approach, that results in shared leadership and improved student learning.
 - The school embraces a framework for distributive leadership that is communicated by the principal. This has empowered teachers to work collaboratively to share best practices, plan lessons and units, analyze data, and develop a focused study on differentiation for English language learners. This has led to strategies that are carefully assessed and adjusted as needed.
 - Teachers meet regularly during scheduled grade meetings to review and analyze the various data sources and make appropriate adjustments in the curriculum in order to plan effective lessons that incorporate strategies for differentiation. This results in effective progress of students based on review of school-based formative data.
- The leadership makes effective organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and evaluate progress resulting in improved student outcomes.
 - Thoughtful organizational decisions and allocation of staff have led to meaningful and productive regularly scheduled grade meetings where

teachers work closely with a consultant in order to work more efficiently and understand the distributive leadership framework in the school.

- The school aligns its resources well with school foci. Professional development opportunities with consultants and partnerships support the schools' goals and enable teachers to gain an understanding of best practices around differentiation of instruction. The school's enhances its partnerships with the French Embassy by providing opportunities for students to go on trips that enrich their culture. This has led to improved student engagement during lessons and collaborations that are more effective with parents.
- The school provides opportunities for professional development that promote individual and shared reflection and enable teachers to evaluate and revise their practice.
 - The school focuses on the Santa Cruz model in order to support the development of teacher goals and align them with the school goals. This has helped build the internal capacity of the school through teacher empowerment teams and provided teachers with strategies for leadership development, which affects student progress and proficiency.
 - Lead teachers have additional support this year to work with a consultant on developing their leadership skills and strategies in order to build internal capacity of the school. This has resulted in more efficient and productive meetings as indicated by teachers in the school.
- The school communicates high expectations to students and families resulting in effective partnerships with parents and community-based organizations.
 - The school's parent welcome center involves many 'Learning Leaders' who promote effective involvement. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to participate in the school's leadership team to discuss school goals and individual concerns. They access the ARIS Parent Link to learn good information about the academic progress of their children. Many parents indicate how pleased they are with the way in which the school shares information with families, thus increasing parent involvement in their children's success.
 - The school works closely with a community-based after school program and with a consultant to ensure that there is alignment of support, and sharing of expectations for students and families based on the school goals. Strong communication between school and home enables the school to meet the academic and social/emotional needs of its students.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop teaching practices in the content areas that are aligned to the curriculum that emphasize rigorous products, habits, and higher order thinking skills, for a variety of learners with different needs.
 - Although the school has developed an engaging curriculum in English language arts, math, and the arts, it has yet to develop teaching practices aligned to curriculum that are rigorous and allow for multiple points of entry to ensure that the various needs of students are met effectively, especially in the areas of social studies and science.

- Teaching practices in the content areas lack rigor, lead to uneven levels of student engagement in classrooms, and do not support the continuity of rigorous learning across the grades.
- Develop teachers' capacity to differentiate instruction, based on student achievement data so that they can effectively group students and raise the instructional levels of all students.
 - The school has made a greater effort to organize and collect various data sources for different subgroups; however, there is a lack of teacher understanding of the analysis of data resulting in an uneven practice of differentiation in classrooms. The school recognizes this as an area for further development and improvement.
 - Teachers through the inquiry process have begun to study differentiation more deeply in grade meetings and participated on professional development opportunities, but this is not yet an embedded practice in the school. Consequently, learning targets are not adjusted at the classroom level consistently with actionable feedback.
- Refine strategic systems for measuring and evaluating progress towards interim- and long-term goals for staff and students to accelerate learning for all members of the school community.
 - The principal meets with his cabinet and support staff regularly to review student data and monitor student progress. However, there are no systems to evaluate progress and provide feedback to staff consistently with sufficient time to make the necessary adjustments for improvement. Therefore, the school is unable to measure the progress towards meeting goals for all teachers and students.
- Expand the goal-setting process to include focused plans for improvement, and interim- and long-term targets that are understood by students and parents to support raising student outcomes.
 - Although the goal setting process tracks progress of students in some areas, it does not yet set clear benchmarks for improvement in all areas. Teachers have set goals for students based on data, but these are not always clearly communicated to students and parents. Therefore, students are not consistently able to articulate their understanding of these goals for improvement and build independence in their learning.
 - Teacher teams and teachers use classroom assessments to track progress for subgroups during the year, however individual student progress is not consistently monitored impeding timely adjustments for improvement. Feedback is not always aligned to State benchmarks or indicators resulting in lessons that target general needs in the classroom. As a result, the school is unable to effectively measure progress towards meeting the goals they have set for students and subgroups.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: The Bronx School	△	▶	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	△	▶	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			X	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?		X		
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			X	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X	
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	▶	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			X	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			X	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.

<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X	
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X	
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			X	
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X	
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X	
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X	

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

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X	
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X	
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?		X		
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X	

Quality Review Scoring Key