

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

Bronx Green Middle School

**Middle School 326
2441 Wallace Avenue
Bronx
NY 10467**

Principal: Emily Becker

Dates of review: November 9 - 10, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Elizabeth A. White

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bronx Green Middle School has 417 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises of 22% Black, 63% Hispanic, 9% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 92.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped with proficient features.

Recently, the school has had the smallest teacher turnover since growing to capacity and this has provided for stability in teaching staff. This, in turn, has had a positive impact on improving tone and climate, which is evident in classrooms and halls. Parents say that they are welcomed when they visit the school and that any issues that arise are addressed effectively by school leaders.

The school's leaders define classroom practice as "on the brink" of capitalizing on instructional practice that meets individual needs of students. They use formative and summative assessment data to develop school-wide goals. However, the goals set lack a clear time frame for monitoring and revising. Classroom practice is not yet consistently aligned to subgroup data to promote student achievement. While structures such as extra teacher support are in place to allow for differentiated instruction, the modification of instructional plans to adjust for individual student needs is not yet embedded practice in all subjects.

The school and has begun to integrate social studies into the English language arts curriculum. However, other academic areas continue to lag behind in curriculum development, specifically in developing and sequencing instructional activities and materials for student learning. The English language arts inquiry team in grade 7 effectively used a school-designed pre-assessment and analysis tool, which led to a rich dialogue about next steps for instruction. The outcome of this has been a coherent curriculum. Conversely, the math team in grade 7 struggled with its beliefs about rigor and pacing, subgroup focus and next steps as a learning community. As a result, the development of a clear curriculum is limited.

The school offers its students a variety of electives such as boxing, community service, foreign language, robotics and book clubs. It also has made improvements to the school yard that includes upgrades such as a football field and track course. The school has effectively secured the services of Lehman College social worker interns to support youth development initiatives. Gender-based groups offer students social and emotional support. These offerings have resulted in improved student attitudes about school. The school "feels like a family", according to parents who feel that their children are known well by adults.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school strategically aligns resources and teacher assignments to support improved student achievement.
 - The school has created a student program called “806” to meet the social and academic needs of an at risk group identified in grade 7. This has resulted in improved behavior that supports academic achievement. A social worker and an assistant principal who regularly monitor student progress and a dean who teaches part of the program support this targeted group effectively.
 - Two teachers are assigned to the majority of math classes, thus reducing the student/teacher ratio and enabling more direct instructional support. In addition, English language learners are supported by an additional teacher who attends their content area classes.
- The school makes good use of assessments and diagnostic measures to plan improvement strategies.
 - Teachers have been assigned laptops resulting in greater use of ARIS to track student achievement. In addition, staff utilizes *Google docs* to provide timely communication, resulting in more effective school-wide planning.
 - Analysis of school data trends based on report cards and interim reports in-between marking periods are identified to inform future school-wide planning.
- The school’s effective curriculum development in English language arts has resulted in improved student outcomes.
 - The school has created an “instructional dean” position to support curriculum development resulting in a cohesive English language arts instructional program. Student work analysis by the English language arts inquiry team in grade 7 is strongly aligned to curriculum development.
 - The school’s pre-assessment and analysis protocol has led to targeted English language arts instruction, resulting in improved achievement, especially for students performing in the bottom third of their peer group.
- The school has effective and regular communication with families about student progress.
 - The school provides interim progress reports to parents between formal reporting periods. These reports effectively help students to identify subject areas they need to improve upon before the quarterly marking period of record.
 - Parents state that the school regularly contacts them via phone calls or email regarding academic, attendance and behavioral concerns. They

also note that they can visit classrooms to see what is expected of their children without difficulty.

- The school offers youth services, which provide effective supports for students' academic and social development.
 - The school's advisory program is supported by an advisory coordinator who adeptly develops an advisory curriculum which supports students socially and academically. Math has been the current main instructional focus to promote improved achievement.
 - The school's partnership with Lehman College enhances youth development support through an extension of counseling services. Social worker interns support students with their social and emotional development in collaboration with the two social workers and the guidance counselor on the staff. This is already having a measurable positive impact.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the alignment between school mission and teacher practice to promote engagement, effective pacing, and differentiated strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners.
 - The school mostly uses a generic, lecture style for delivering instruction. This is not in line with the workshop model philosophy of the school and results in limited scaffolding for some students, and slow pacing and insufficient rigor for others.
 - Assessment of learning during lessons is inconsistent. As a result, teachers miss opportunities to provide students with meaningful on-going feedback to aid them to reach their achievement potential.
- Expand the use of measurable and differentiated learning goals for subgroups as well as students in need of support.
 - Teachers show little evidence of using subgroup data to inform lesson planning, resulting in uneven levels of student engagement.
 - The school has started a process for student goal setting in math. However, timeframes for monitoring the effectiveness of this and the system for goal refinement and communication are not clearly set out for all stakeholders to see.
- Formalize the process of providing teachers with formal feedback from observations and support for inquiry, with specific next steps for improving practice.
 - Leaders prioritize teachers up for tenure for support. Written feedback is not regularly provided to all individual teachers with indications of the next steps to improve practice or develop their leadership potential.

- The inquiry approach is applied inconsistently during grade meetings and does not always focus on the link between student work and teacher practice.
- Formalize teacher professional development plans to allow for targeted and continual progress monitoring and appropriate support when required.
 - The school is not clear who supports whom, for what, when, and for how long. Currently, there is no clear procedure for monitoring the effectiveness of professional support strategies.
 - Leaders acknowledge the benefit to be gained from realigning the English language arts group to serve as capacity builders. However, as yet, it has not developed a clear plan to do this.
- Ensure that all improvement plans have responsibilities identified, suitable time-scales, and specific success criteria linked to goals.
 - The school has yet to develop a system for all targeted initiatives that enables the school to monitor and revise school improvement plans, and includes interim benchmarks for Comprehensive Education Plan goals and teacher development plans for improving student outcomes.
 - A system for evaluating the curricular and instructional decisions in English language arts is in place, but is not yet consistent in other subject areas.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Bronx Green Middle 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							
Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed