



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Performance and Accountability
2010-2011**

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Bronx Dance Academy School

Middle School X308

3617 Bainbridge Avenue

Bronx

NY 10467

Principal: Sandra Sanchez

Dates of review: March 9 - 10, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Daniel J. Purus

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bronx Dance Academy School is a middle school with 277 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 26% Black, 73% Hispanic, 1% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 23% special education students. Boys account for 17.5% of the students enrolled and girls account for 82.5%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 92.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty align rigorous key standards with a coherent curriculum that fully engages students and supports student learning.
 - The school utilizes curriculum maps for ELA, math, science and social studies that emphasize key reading and writing standards across grades. The infusion of literacy skills in all content areas is consistently woven throughout the curriculum. A strong 10 minute reading component followed by writing threads its way through all content areas and across grades resulting in improved comprehension as evidenced by post unit assessment results.
 - Teachers collaboratively plan learning objectives and rigorous real world tasks that align with the school's standards-based curriculum. Across classrooms, thinking is extended through challenging activities and questioning techniques that foster curiosity and promote complex reasoning. As a result, there is great consistency across grades in the ways in which teachers extend students' thinking for individuals and groups of students, improving achievement outcomes as demonstrated by the instructionally targeted assessment results.
- A dedicated principal and staff share strong beliefs about pedagogy resulting in instructional decisions that ensure student success.
 - All teachers use common assessments to inform flexible grouping and standards-based rubrics that reflect clear academic expectations. ARIS data is used to identify grammar as a school wide focus. As a result, changes in teaching practice are coherently aligned to the curriculum; students are challenged appropriately and produce work aligned to rubrics resulting in a 9% increase in mastery on ELA post tests.
 - Across classrooms teachers pay careful attention to students' learning styles. Running records administered by ELA teachers are shared with content area teachers. This data is used to inform the development of flexible groups. Teachers design tiered tasks with academic supports to provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Questioning techniques are adjusted to scaffold or extend learning. As a result, students in grades 6-8 show improved comprehension based on a periodic review of running record data.
- The principal makes effective instructional and organizational decisions aligned to school goals that enhance supports for improving student achievement.
 - School budget and resources are leveraged allowing the school to maximize progress towards key standards in writing. Out-dated technology is replaced with Smart Boards and laptops for internet access to extend collaborative learning. Coaches expand teaching practices as students advance their research skills through responsible use of the internet, thereby supporting engagement in persuasive writing backed by authentic research. Effective use of human and instructional resources

further the school's key writing standards and advances digital learning, resulting in improved scores on student writing assessments.

- An innovative schedule change this fall structures student time allowing for a 72 minute instructional block of concentrated learning for more in-depth exploration of content and challenging rigorous activities that increase student performance. Teacher teams meet three times per week and set interim goals for a group of students with high ELA and low math skills and design strategic plans to improve achievement of the selected group. This inquiry-based approach results in increased teacher capacity and passing grades on unit quizzes tracked by Engrade, an online grading system.
- Teams of teachers create assessments and analyze various data sources to inform instructional practice resulting in increased student outcomes.
 - Teacher teams engage in collaborative inquiry and use key standards, rubrics, student writing samples, teacher created and other assessments to analyze student learning outcomes so that a clear picture of student mastery is surfaced. Based on data analysis, teams create differentiated instructional task to target student deficiencies using strategic action plans for improving student outcomes. This year's cycle of inquiry enabled teachers to develop expertise in diagnosing and supporting students using a genre specific rubric and resulted in improved student writing as demonstrated by 6% increase in Level 3 writing products.
- School Leaders and teacher teams use and develop tools to gather, analyze, and disseminate data that support ongoing growth in student achievement.
 - Teacher teams are reflective practitioners who use many assessment tools such as Acuity, ARIS, unit assessments and exit tickets to assess trends using and tailor instruction. This coupled with a focus on IEP goals analysis leverages change in classroom practices by targeting Students with Disabilities. A data accountability form is used to track and monitor teaching strategies and the progress of student groups and individual students allowing for appropriate interventions and challenging instructional settings to be made available, leading to improved student outcomes on Acuity predictive assessments.
- School leaders structure professional collaborations so that all teachers regularly work together, resulting in improved instruction and student outcomes.
 - The majority of teachers hone instructional practices informed by inquiry-work. Teachers work in grade level teams and content area teams to analyze data and evaluate student work products. As key decision makers, an ELA teacher team focuses on increasing rigor by introducing higher level questioning aligned to the new Bloom's Taxonomy. As a result of looking at student work, through the lens of the Common Core Learning Standards, adjustments to the ELA curriculum are made to include new research-based strategies that inform lesson plans resulting in improved student performance on teacher created assessments.

- The School Leadership Team (SLT) meets monthly using multiple data sources to evaluate progress towards school-wide goals resulting in improved student performance.
 - The SLT and a core inquiry team hold regular meetings to analyze data trends and engage in multi-year planning for long-range impact on student achievement. Data from teacher teams is used to track real time mastery of goals for targeted groups to monitor student progress at interim checkpoints. The school has a culture in place whereby the predictive and interim assessments are used to track trends and monitor progress, enabling timely instructional adjustments to be made for subgroups and individual students throughout the year resulting in accelerated student progress for ELLs on the NYSESLAT.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance the use of the formal observation process to fine tune classroom practice and inform performance evaluations to further professional growth.
 - School leaders use the formal observation process to offer specific recommendations and next steps to teachers resulting in improved instructional practice. Data sources such as interim assessments and student work are used when evaluating classroom instruction. However, the use of a common instructional lens such as a rubric that defines levels of teaching performance along with specific feedback based on such a rubric varies across subjects hindering school leaders' and teachers' ability to identify gaps in a specific teaching practice in order to improve student learning .
- Expand systems that evaluate the ways in which student performance data is aggregated so that information is more accessible to all families in order to maximize support at home and increase student outcomes.
 - The school has numerous systems in place for faculty and staff to re-evaluate and adjust curriculum and instruction. However, some families indicated difficulty accessing information independently without support from the school and understanding the next learning steps for their child, resulting in an inability to support student outcomes at home.
- Strengthen communication with families during planning to include specific information about data-based goals to broaden community support for increasing student achievement.
 - School leaders involve the school community in school level planning during School Leadership Team meetings. Parents indicate that they engage in the school level planning to some degree. However, spectrum of opportunities for community involvement during the planning process is limited, resulting in minimized understanding of and supports for data-based school goals by all constituency groups.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Bronx Dance Academy School	UD	D	P	WD
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?				X
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, 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

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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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			
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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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			
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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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			
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed