



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report 2010-2011**

**The Bronx Mathematics Preparatory School**

**Middle School 375  
456 White Plains Road  
Bronx  
NY 10473**

**Principal: Mark D. Clarke**

**Dates of review: April 5 - 6, 2011  
Lead Reviewer: Michael L. Schurek**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Bronx Mathematics Preparatory School is a middle school with 428 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 33% Black, 60% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian and 5% Other students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 23% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 93.4%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Students benefit from teacher pedagogy that demonstrates coherence regarding lesson routines and curricula alignment and regularly utilizes differentiation to engage a variety of learners.
  - Teaching practices across all grades and subjects reflect instructional coherence as evidenced by established routines such as warm-up, launch, independent and group exploration, work stations, reflection and exit slips. All grade subject teachers follow the same pacing schedule, thereby enabling alignment across subjects by grade.
  - All classes use data to group students according to need and utilize tri-level focus questions and problems to challenge students of all abilities. In addition, leveled materials, hands-on resources, graphic structures and individualized computer software applications ensure multiple entry points into curricula.
- Leaders make informed organizational decisions to support improvements in teaching and learning.
  - Due to weak 7th grade interim data, administrative and teaching assignments have been reorganized mid-year to improve student outcomes. As a result, 7th grade anecdotal reports have decreased and students report more rigorous and engaging academic activities.
  - Part of the school's long range goals include preparing its students to participate successfully in the 21st century. This goal has enabled the school to dramatically increase its use of technology by aggressively pursuing grants to achieve this long term aspiration. As a result, all classrooms have computers and some have smart boards. In addition, monitors positioned throughout the school broadcast school celebration events to bolster community morale.
- Teachers work effectively in collaborative teams to share good practice, create common assessments, conduct inquiry and plan curriculum and instruction.
  - The school's main inquiry team consists of administrators, specialists and teachers from all content areas. This team serves as the engine for the rest of the school's teams by identifying power standards across content areas to align the work of the teams. Department teams, organized by grade, create a uniform coherent set of content-specific pre- and post unit assessments in each subject area that are used to item analyze, identify problem areas and measure the effectiveness of their practices. As a result, differentiated instructional strategies such as flexible grouping and tiered focus questions are utilized across grades and subjects to meet varied student needs.
  - In addition, periodic assessment is used to supplement the school's copious evaluative tools to further identify the strengths and needs of

students, including student subgroups. Consequently, these students regularly use Acuity to remediate weak areas.

- The principal and staff work as a unified team to create a calm, respectful and orderly environment where learning can take place and students feel supported.
  - Learning Environment Survey results have prompted the school to emphasize character education and socialization through its Living Young and Free Everyday support team and its Seven Jewels of Virtue system. This structure allows students to socialize in a positive way across the grades, supports teamwork and fosters self-control, resulting in improved behavior and a calmer overall environment.
  - The Living Young and Free Everyday Support Team provides seven members who work closely with students and their teachers to encourage and elevate student potentials enabling all scholars to feel well- known and supported.
- Effective student support services and collaborations provide students with a wide range of opportunities to grow academically and socially.
  - All support team members and six selected teachers turn-key anti-bullying training through professional development conducted by the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program, contributing to the school's more relaxed atmosphere.
  - The support team members also partner with outside community based organizations and conduct home visits to provide child/youth services to students. In addition, the school's Beam House program provides exposure in the areas of business, engineering, architecture, media and technology to students to help them begin to make career choices.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Deepen academic rigor by increasing the use and complexity of academic tasks that emphasize higher order thinking skills, increase student engagement and align with key standards.
  - Each department teacher team examines data and uses this information to emphasize power standards for groups of students that are compiled and followed on a computer data tracker system; however, rigorous academic tasks are inconsistently utilized in classrooms across the school, including some of the classes containing lower achieving students, thereby limiting opportunities to meet adequate yearly progress for students with disabilities.
- Expand the effectiveness of the school's observation tools by providing feedback that includes an analysis of student work products as part of teacher performance evaluations to elevate instructional practices.
  - According to last year's Learning Environment Survey, most teachers indicated that the performance feedback provided to them was unhelpful. In order to address this issue, the principal, assistant principals, network

support personnel and teachers conduct learning walks to make the observation experience more positive and inclusive. However, management decisions do not include an analysis of student work products, omitting opportunities to monitor the rigor of academic tasks.

- The school provides a range of professional development supports through workshops, internal lead teachers, coaches and mentors, but does not offer enough special considerations to its newer staff members resulting in observable gaps in their pedagogical practice.
- Enhance goal-setting practices across curriculums to include using data to set differentiated learning goals for students in need of additional support to target their needs, track their progress and raise outcomes.
  - Pre- and post unit assessments are regularly administered in all subjects, however, differentiated learning goals are not established for students in need of additional support, thereby omitting opportunities to focus on their specific needs and involve them in recognizing their progress. Some goals are set in Humanities and in some mathematics classes during conference time, but students are largely unaware of these goals. In addition, teacher teams have not established measurable goals for their respective student groups, impeding efforts to leverage changes to improve classroom practice.
- Refine action planning by linking interim goals to targeted benchmarks at specific intervals so that school, team and teacher action plans can be monitored to expedite revisions and maximize impact.
  - School action plans generally use percentage-based targets as the annual goal in the identified areas of improvement. Benchmarks measuring progress towards these goals at specific intervals during the school year are not indicated. Teacher team and class action plans also do not contain interim benchmarks for targeted students. The lack of these structures hampers the school's ability to determine the effectiveness of their actions along the way to allow for contingencies and make timely adjustments that improve outcomes. It also limits the school's ability to align planning from one year to the next.
- Improve communication and collaboration with students and parents to increase parental capacity to assist in their child's learning and increase the engagement of these constituents in school-level decision making.
  - The school utilizes signage throughout the building to promote excellence and broadcast the school's mission. In support, the staff dresses up for professionalism and students wear uniforms. While these practices help to communicate daily high expectations to students, parents report confusion regarding arrival procedures, homework policy and the clarity of students concerning required assignments. Consequently, expectations are sometimes unclear, limiting the school's ability to effectively engage and challenge students in a consistent fashion.
  - The school has parent members on their Leadership Team and Parent Association executive board, however, the school recognizes that parent involvement is an issue as evidenced by low parental attendance during

these meetings. As a result, the school is unable to engage parents consistently in school-level decision making.

### Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: The Bronx Mathematics Preparatory School / 08X375</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		<b>X</b>		
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?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			<b>X</b>	

<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?		<b>X</b>					
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>				
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?		<b>X</b>					
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?		<b>X</b>					
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?		<b>X</b>					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>