

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Bronx Little School

Elementary School 691

**1827 Archer Avenue
Bronx, New York
NY 10460**

Principal: Janice Gordon

Dates of review: November 15-16, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Myrna Rodriguez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Bronx Little School is an Elementary school with 283 students from Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 21% Black, 62% Hispanic, 1% White, 12% Asian and 4% multiracial students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 92.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The leadership makes organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals to raise achievement.
 - The leadership uses its resources to support an instructional technology teacher and laboratory. All grades use the laboratory where specific skills are targeted using engaging student friendly programs, resulting in student engagement and ownership of their own learning.
 - The school has traditionally had very small classes, but it is now a much larger school. The leadership, however, has used its resources to maintain a low teacher student ratio, despite limited space, which allows teachers to have a manageable set of students. It is too early to know the full academic impact on student academic performance as a result of this additional reduced class size support.
- The school leadership communicates to students and parents in various ways regarding student performance which results in more engagement in student progress.
 - Parents are active partners in the school leadership team and use this forum to communicate school performance with other parents. Parents periodically receive informational letters and progress reports about students' goals, strengths and weaknesses, resulting in greater parent understanding of what their child's needs are and involvement in their academic achievement.
 - The parent coordinator works with parents teaching them how to use various tools including workshops to help them understand the data in the Learning Environment Survey, ARIS Parent Link and progress report, which results in their increased understanding and engagement in their child's academic progress.
- School leaders and faculty track classroom level progress to ensure achievement of content and learning goals.
 - The school uses the Periodic Assessment, reading and classroom assessments, as well as data from a technology pilot program to track student progress. This results in adjustments to identified school-wide plans and goals to increase student achievement.
 - Students receive feedback about their academic progress in core subjects during weekly conferences, as well as additional feedback on English language arts (ELA) and math progress in technology classes, which results in many students improving, as demonstrated in their progress reports and teacher data tracking folders.
- The leadership uses classroom and team meeting observations to analyze impact on student performance and organizes professional development activities and opportunities promoting professional growth based on this data.

- The majority of the faculty support a coherent school culture as well as share a common instructional focus which is centered on embedding literacy skills within all core subjects so that learning is maximized by rising reading scores.
- The school leader provides teachers with opportunities to develop instructional and content knowledge through various professional development activities. One of the major instructional goals this year is to provide more time on tasks, specifically in reading. Teachers have been trained on how to develop and integrate this activity on a daily basis. As a result, effective instructional practices are improving student achievement.
- Faculty and staff are engaged in structured collaborations using an inquiry approach which results in more targeted instruction to improve student performance.
 - The majority of teachers belong to a grade team which is developing an inquiry approach on analyzing student work. The third, fourth and fifth grade teachers are on one team because there is only one teacher per grade, which has resulted in higher levels of collaboration in terms of sharing content and strategies across the grades, thus positively impacting student learning.
 - The school is building capacity by developing leadership within each grade team providing some opportunities for collaborative decision making regarding key issues that effect student achievement. For example, the principal encourages teachers to make some grade decisions regarding curriculum, resulting in more teacher engagement in the leadership process, and better student outcomes.

What the school needs to improve

- Design and align curriculum and rigorous academic tasks evenly across the grades that will result in improved student outcomes for a diversity of students.
 - Academic tasks are rigorous in some subject areas, such as math and ELA, but not evenly across all grades, resulting in student products that do not consistently demonstrate higher order thinking skills in many classes.
 - The school engages in planning curricula and academic tasks with some emphasis to engage diverse learners. However, tasks that provide additional supports or extend learning are not widely used in all classes, resulting in the lowest and highest achieving groups not being challenged or engaged.
- Develop teacher pedagogy so that teaching strategies and routines in all subjects and grades are consistent in offering differentiated learning opportunities for students.
 - Across classrooms teaching strategies and routines do not demonstrate multiple entry points, supports or extensions into the content area for a diversity of learners, resulting in fewer opportunities for the lowest and higher achieving students to meet or exceed standards.
 - Some students are highly engaged, but many are compliant as many activities are lacking in rigor or do not address students at their entry levels. As a result, students state that they do not see activities as personally meaningful, believe

they will not accomplish something of worth by doing it, or are not challenged enough. Consequently, there is an uneven level of student progress, which limits growth for all students.

- Ensure that all subgroups are identified so that additional supports and learning goals are set appropriately for each group.
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers are developing systems to set data informed goals for groups of students, but the school has not used data informed processes to indicate subgroups that teachers should be aware of when developing goals in order to achieve better student outcomes.
 - Classroom level goals are being developed to improve classroom practices in teacher teams, however a lack of a structured collaborative and data informed process to set measurable and differentiated academic goals limits the school's ability to provide targeted instruction for selected students.
- Evaluate the effectiveness and cohesiveness of structures that monitor strategic school data and how and when dissemination of this data is shared with families to increase community awareness of student progress.
 - The school has not sufficiently collected and analyzed in depth the varied root causes of absenteeism, and its interventions up to date have not improved attendance rates significantly, which impacts negatively on the school's progress and student performance.
 - The school is developing systems to address attendance issues, youth development and academic interventions. However, there is little systemic evidence that the negative impact of attendance on student behavior, academic performance and overall school scores is shared effectively with the whole community, including parents. Consequently, this limits the school's ability to resolve these issues early in the school year, which negatively impacts student performance for this targeted subgroup.
- Utilize data to evaluate leadership capacity building, and structured professional development in order to further develop effective teacher teams and better communication systems.
 - Student data shows some improvement as a result of collaborations on teacher teams sharing student work. However, the improvements have been limited, therefore the principal is beginning to develop systems to further structure the collaborations with the teacher leaders in order to analyze and adjust current practices and professional development to improved student outcomes across the school.
 - There are informal structures for communication between grade teams and school leadership, mostly handled via emails and one to one meetings. However, systemic opportunities for dialogue that are conducive to leadership growth within a collaborative setting are developing.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: X691 Bronx Little 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	
		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					
		X					
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed