

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The Bilingual School

Elementary School 025

811 East 149th Street

Bronx

NY 10455

Principal: Carmen Toledo

Dates of review: December 12 – 13, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Yolanda Torres

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Bilingual School is an elementary school with 350 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 8% Black, 91% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 91.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Parents are highly engaged in discussions on school-wide expectations and in the decision-making process resulting in an authentic commitment to the school. (2.4)
 - Parents who visit the nearby middle school meet recent graduates and are very happy to see the former students' names on the Principal's honor roll list, eagerly sharing this news with their own children. Parents are provided with a sense of security that although the 'manner of evaluating students' has changed, and there is much more pressure to produce, the success of the graduates comes from a strong foundation developed at the Bilingual School. Parents also indicate they feel comfortable speaking with teachers about their children's progress around daily tasks, homework, and projects, and have a keen understanding of the goals students must attain.
 - Families look forward to the "*First Friday, Second Cup of Coffee*" monthly event where they read a specific book with the principal and then enter into a discussion of academic expectations. Parents learn how to write notes to teachers, and what questions to ask about their children's learning, thus giving them a role as partners and learning leaders. Parents participate in learning walks alongside the principal and use rubrics to assess what they observe on bulletin boards and in classrooms. Consequently, parents state that this process helps them visualize how teachers deliver instruction in accordance with students' individual needs. During their parent association and school leadership team meetings, administration shares the information relative to the implementation of classroom instructional strategies and asks for parent feedback. Thus, parents learn strategies they practice at home, resulting in their children's academic improvement.
- School leaders make organizational decisions around the use of resources and structured instructional time in order to meet the goals of the school. (1.3)
 - During the school-wide "Power Hour" time, all teachers provide small group instruction in literacy and math to targeted students. Specialty teachers push-in on a daily basis to work with students, thereby, reducing the ratio of teacher to student, which leads to more comprehensive strategy-driven lessons in support of students' learning needs.
 - The hiring of teacher center/technology and special education specialists provide additional professional development support to teachers and allows for individualized attention to special needs students. Co-teaching and collaborative planning opportunities with the specialists lead to strategic use of instructional time with small cohorts of students. Technology supports English as a second language instruction, and is used as a language acquisition tool for English language learners. In addition, the use of technology engages students in academic tasks allowing them to take ownership of their learning as they design their videos on their personal experiences or memoirs. Students set up their laptops, share a brief oral snapshot of the process they went through in the completion of their projects, present the video, and avail themselves for follow-up questions. This process helps students develop their oral/aural skills resulting in deepened academic discourse in discussions and presentations, as specified in

the school-wide goals. Teachers meet regularly to align school goals to student goals across content areas in order to ensure meeting students' instructional needs. Teachers bring student completed weekly reflections to their meetings to share and discuss academic trends that inform their group planning and, hence, improve student outcomes, as evidenced by students' individual notes.

- Teachers use assessments and rubrics aligned to key standards for a better understanding on how to support students' academic needs. (2.2)
 - Teachers gather data and assess student work vis-à-vis exemplars aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, (CCLS). School-wide rubrics used by teachers guide students in their reflective learning. Consequently, teachers use these reflections as authentic assessments to ascertain where students are in their learning. As classroom teachers complete literacy and math topics aligned to the CCLS, they record completed lessons on a school-wide protocol form publicly displayed in the hallway, and this provides school leaders an at-a-glance observation how grades and individual classes are measuring in support of students' learning.
 - During planning sessions, teachers share the results of formative assessments, including running records and student work, to ascertain any grade-wide trends they need to address as a team. As they analyze the interim assessments, they identify the needs of their struggling students and discuss the use of specific Department of Education content-based instructional bundles, resulting in different instructional approaches to meet students' specific needs.
- School leaders use a research-based framework to ensure that they provide teachers with consistent and cohesive feedback leading to improved teacher practice and self-reflection. (4.1)
 - Goal-setting meetings between school leaders and teachers that take place on a regular basis, allow for ongoing feedback relative to instructional practice, and during reciprocal discussion, the development of goals based on school leaders' findings and recommendations as an outgrowth of classroom visits. Once agreed upon, the exchange of ideas and strategies result in teacher self-reflection and differentiated support including clear next steps towards attaining professional growth and effective instructional delivery.
 - The school motto: "*Believe and Achieve*" promotes that the dedication to the teaching profession connects to 'saving a child's life" by ensuring that each youngster is grounded in a strong academic and social emotional foundation that results in college and career readiness. That mission translates into participation in professional development opportunities on-and off-site to meet the needs of teachers and service providers in order to learn how to provide students with more strategic academic and social emotional support.
- Individual teachers as well as teacher teams work collaboratively in the use of formative and summative data to identify academic supports for students and teachers in order to leverage change in the classroom practice. (3.2)
 - The Response to Intervention (RTI) collaborative team, inclusive of service providers, focuses on supporting classroom teachers by assessing student work in order to identify factors impeding student progress. Their constant communication with classroom teachers helps develop a common language as

the classroom teachers incorporate some CCLS tasks into their instructional practices, leading to initial stages of tiered work based on students' needs. Members of the team speak with students about their interests and help build their motivation leading to goal-setting discussions, resulting in students' self-awareness of their academic needs.

- As teachers meet to discuss their data findings, they identify instructional trends for grade-level foci. Once these patterns are determined, teachers rank students accordingly into strategy-driven small groups resulting in targeted instruction. Teachers also look at sharing best practices for classroom implementation to contribute to school-wide instructional growth.
- The integration of the school-wide character education program and teams focused on the social emotional needs of students leads to a nurturing and supportive learning environment for all staff, students, and parents. (4.4)
 - Teachers' development of school-wide character building lessons is connected to writing. Morning discussions on the value of the month probe how students are feeling before engaging in the instructional agendas for the day, resulting in students sharing orally or reflecting in writing. Service providers offer teachers any needed support to ensure that every student is emotionally ready to learn. Teachers have participated in professional development on the New York City Discipline Code and cyber-bullying so that they are able to immediately address issues and continue contributing to a wholesome and inclusive academic and social emotional environment.
 - The school's external partners meet with teachers to discuss the social emotional needs of specific students as well as offer after school homework and enrichment. These organizations also work with parents in need of coping skills due to stress or mentally challenged children resulting in a closer relationship between the home and school. The partners meet regularly with school leaders to ensure that their plans of action are in consonance with the school-wide goals, thereby, creating consistent expectations for all students.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the alignment between the curricula and the integration of the Common Core Learning Standards tasks translates into consistent rigorous habits and reasoning skills evident in student work and class discussions. (1.1)
 - Teachers meet weekly to plan lessons aligned to the CCLS to include an increase in nonfiction reading and plan end-of-unit assessments aligned to key standards in accordance with students' needs. School leaders share they are moving away from the Department of Education bundles and focusing on the curriculum resources on the EngageNY website from the New York State Education Department. While there is emphasis of the key standards and evidence of some integration of CCLS tasks, the school-wide instructional practice provides uneven levels of learning and student engagement in order to close the achievement gap.
 - Although special education teachers are honing in on the analysis of running records and conferrals with students to assess interim progress in reading and thinking, data on students with disabilities shows little progress and is of concern to school leaders. In spite of curriculum alignment to CCLS tasks, there is

minimal evidence during classroom visits of consistent engagement of students in well-matched differentiated, rigorous activities, thus missing opportunities to meet all students' needs and develop higher order thinking for in-depth discussions and improved student work products.

- Improve the consistency of differentiated learning through questioning techniques and strategies to ensure that individuals and groups of students receive the appropriate instruction at multiple entry points. (1.2)
 - While there is a concerted effort in some classes to differentiate work for students, and develop tasks for small groups of students to meet their needs, overall, teacher questioning techniques, and feedback to students for next steps remain at the low level of the Depth of Knowledge taxonomy. Thus, there is a lack of authentic differentiation minimizing the meeting if students' needs and impeding individual learning growth.
 - As students turn and talk with their peers, they engage in discussions around their work products and teachers check in to hear how students exchange ideas or formulate persuasive opinions on the topic at hand. However, the inconsistency in methodologies of teacher 'check-ins' from classroom to classroom, leading to uneven levels of student thinking and work products, hence, not meeting students' needs at their entry points.
- Provide students with detailed feedback with challenging next steps they are able to articulate and perform to accelerate their learning resulting in content mastery and independence. (3.3)
 - During grade level meetings, teachers discuss the results of the periodic assessments in literacy and math. Once they identify the trends and patterns, they regroup students and develop a plan of action with a list of strategies resulting in adjusted and targeted instruction for students. As the conversations amongst teachers continue to happen on a daily basis, meaningful feedback to students on their achievement is beginning to take form in some upper grade classrooms. Nonetheless, there is still inconsistent feedback in many classrooms, resulting in students' uneven understanding on why they are engaged in certain tasks and what they need to do to help accelerate their own learning.
 - Students share that when their teachers check their work, they give them feedback on what is correct, what is wrong, and with which concepts they have problems. However, meaningful and in-depth feedback is inconsistent across subjects leading to students unable to articulate next learning steps that require analytical thinking in order to reach a sense of ownership and independence.
- Evaluate the curricular and instructional structures to sharpen the alignment and coherence between student learning and the Common Core Learning Standards expectations. (5.1)
 - School leaders, instructional specialists, and teachers, communicate on a regular basis on curricular and instructional decisions that impact on their planning and student learning. However, uneven levels of student engagement across subjects, and a lack of a comprehensive evaluative structure, hinders ensuring that student learning needs are aligned with expectations, thus impacting improving student outcomes.

- As teachers discuss assessment results, they plan accordingly and adjust their instructional practice. School leaders conduct frequent informal observations to provide teachers with timely feedback on lesson delivery. However, although student progress is monitored via these observations, the instructional feedback and decisions provided have yet to consistently measure the effectiveness of instructional practices leading towards the mastery of the CCLS.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The Bilingual 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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?			X	
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?				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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			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, guidance/advisement 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, with particular attention to the CCLS?			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
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