

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Baychester Academy

Public School 169

3500 Edson Avenue

Bronx

NY 10466

Principal: Cristine Vaughn

Dates of review: May 3 - 4, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Elizabeth A. White

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

BAYCHESTER ACADEMY is an early childhood school with 276 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 3. The school population comprises 77% Black, 18% Hispanic, 3% White, 1% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 94.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has effectively taken steps to integrate Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) into the curricula resulting in coherent instructional practice within disciplines and across grades. 1.1
 - As a result of identified student outcome deficits, the school has intentionally moved from genre-based (e.g. mysteries) to information-based curricula and has embedded more rigor by using Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to serve as a guide to developing its own curricular tasks. This has enabled it to integrate science into unit-based tasks resulting in interdisciplinary units across grades and curricula. Students in grade 3 English language arts (ELA) classes engaged in an investigative study of sharks and were asked to write an informational report describing a shark and include their decisions about why they selected a particular shark to explore. Students were encouraged to use facts and details to support their reasons. This approach to learning results in rigorous discussion and evidenced-based thinking habits that engage a diversity of learners.
 - The school's academic program is complemented by its arts curricula as it looks to building a school-based orchestra. Students study music theory and rhythm and as a result are able to read and write music. The school also engages its students in the visual arts via clubs that include photography and cinematography. Additionally, students' artistic works are displayed at celebratory events such as 'Black History Month'. These efforts provide effective links to academia while providing the supports and challenges that encourage students to pursue their talents.
- The school effectively utilizes organizational resources to provide supports aligned with its instructional goals to improve student outcomes. 1.3
 - To support implementation of teams focused on developing more rigorous curricula, teachers on each grade have three to five weekly common planning periods. This substantial collaborative time is used to develop rubrics and unit tests, to review student work, and develop instructional strategies. Assignments and tasks have been developed using Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels as a guide in the design of lessons that engage and challenge students, resulting in improved curricula. This is demonstrated through written task assignments such as the 'Adaptations of Fairy Tales' where students have choice in their demonstration of proficiency in understanding of narrative texts. The unit is scaffolded enabling students to study text with guided teacher support, have choice in selection of text to adapt, and can create an original text. In addition, to the literacy consultant the school has successfully petitioned to use *Envision* as their core math curriculum. The program enables teachers to do daily checks for understanding, which have led to improvement in student outcomes on unit assessments. In alignment with the school's ELA and math goals, these combined efforts have enabled the school to surface gaps in student learning, leading to improved curriculum and pedagogical practice, and student work products.

- The school effectively engages and collaborates with families resulting in mutual support for student progress. 2.4
 - A shared commitment for student achievement by the whole school community engages school leaders, parent groups, and faculty in opportunities for decision-making. The school's leadership team (SLT) and Title I group have reviewed on-going data trends and offered parents literacy and numeracy workshops to help families support their children at home. Academic expectations aligned to the CCLS, as well as how to use ARIS to monitor student academic progress and attendance is regularly shared. In addition, the school has events such as a *'Fathers' Cook Off'* to encourage paternal school involvement. These activities are highly attended by families and staff alike, including the school nurse and custodial staff and allows for a community of active collaborators leading to mutual support for student progress.

- The school's collaborative goal setting processes results in a focused set of school-wide expectations that are supported by the school community. 3.1
 - School and parent leadership forums, such as the SLT, review past data in May and June to then establish focused goals based on gap analysis. The goals include student academic and social expectations as well as teacher development and parental involvement, which are subsequently shared with the school community at-large. Furthermore, there are intentional checkpoints analyses done throughout the school year. In November, goals are reviewed against baseline and interim assessment information as well as student discipline data and parental participation information. In January school leadership gives a *State of the School Address* focusing on the progress of meeting school-wide goals and next steps. In March, on-going data is again reviewed. This on-going goal monitoring by the school community has resulted in implementation of needed interventions, such as adding an additional teacher to reduce student teacher ratio, improve academic outcomes, and diminish the number of student disciplinary incidents. Consequently, there is a broad-based support for accelerating student learning and social-emotional growth.

- The faculty well supports youth development skills resulting in improved student academic and social-emotional growth. 4.4
 - The school's *Positive Behavioral Intervention System* (PBIS) serves as the vehicle for establishing school-wide social-emotional expectations for students and staff and it uses a behavioral matrix that is known by the whole school community to set guidelines and standards for responses to student behaviors. Through a partnership with STOPP, a Strategies Training Option Prevention Program, staff have received professional development on how to listen to students, suitable protocols for deescalating incidents and behavior modification strategies. In addition, the development of need-based individual counseling plans for students, spearheaded by the school's social worker, addresses social-emotional challenges. Aligned with these efforts are yearlong celebrations of academic and personal growth. These comprehensive measures have

resulted in improved student character development as evidenced by a decrease of negative social-emotional occurrences in classes.

- School leaders regularly gather, analyze, and monitor multiple data sources resulting in accurate assessment of strengths and areas for improvement.
5.2
 - As the school has no summative State data as of yet, it regularly monitors progress using multiple school-generated data sources. Baseline and Interim assessments such as Fountas & Pinnell reading benchmarks, conference anecdotes, on demand writing tasks, unit tests and project based assessment in science and social studies, formative quick checks, unit and quarterly assessments in math, and monthly attendance and behavioral data are analyzed. The school has created an *internal data dashboard* to make these data sets easier to monitor over time, thus the longitudinal data enables the school to share a composite of school, class and individual student data with staff and families. The school has also integrated the rigor of common core expectations into assessment practices. The expectation of end-year reading level standards for each grade has increased. In kindergarten, students are expected to read at a level D/E, an increase from level C. These structures have resulted in school's ability to accurately adjust strategies towards meeting school-wide goals and a deepening of the coherence of high expectations in policies and practices across the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop pedagogical practices that align with curricular goals to ensure optimal student outcomes. 1.2
 - While teachers utilize flexible student groups for instruction for different academic subjects, in a few cases academic assignments are not yet sufficiently differentiated to match the varying needs of each student. In a math classroom, after modeling a lesson and sending students off to complete independent tasks around the use of clocks and telling time, students were called back to the large group as the teacher needed to redirect them based on assessing some students' inaccurate completion of the task. However, as a handful of students were able to accurately complete the assignment the re-teaching was not necessary resulting in some students not receiving extensions and challenge, and minimizing accelerating learning for all students.
 - In a few instances pedagogical practice, lesson pacing and scaffolding techniques do not yet provide coherent targeted instruction resulting in limited student engagement across all classrooms. Science experiments, modeled by teachers are not always rigorous and lack a demonstration of clear expectations based on anticipated student responses. Thus, in a science class students were asked to compose a science report on melting ice cubes based on an experiment using two variables from a prior lesson. Students were then asked to write a hypothesis relative to the lesson, but were unable to complete the assignment, minimizing understanding of concepts.

- Enhance assessment practices to deepen their alignment with CCLS to enable teacher teams to utilize tools that effectively match grade level expectations. 2.2
 - Teachers assess student writing and formulate strategies to address student-learning needs using rubrics with a general strand of grades, (e.g. K-2). Expectations more closely aligned to grade specific CCLS are still a work in progress resulting in a lack of refinement of assessment tools that match a specific grade's academic learning expectations.
 - While students can articulate next steps for their academic growth based on assessment data, teacher teams currently measure student outcomes against that of their higher achieving peers. This practice does not align with the more rigorous expectations of CCLS. As a result there are limited performance benchmarks, thwarting all students from reaching their full potential.
- Provide consistent feedback to families on students' progress, which results in continual provision of information regarding mastery of learning goals across grades. 3.3
 - School and teacher team documents reflect that the school tracks progress regularly, which enables them to make adjustments as needed. Parents state that communication with families about progress towards school wide goals is on going. Parents receive information about their children via teacher conversations, report cards, and ARIS. The school provides interim progress reports between formal grading quarters, however the formal tool used to deliver interim information to families is consistent in grade 3 only. Kindergarten through grade 2 teachers do not formally provide interim feedback to families about individual students. Lack of consistency across the school specific to next steps limits parents' ability to know, understand, and support their children's goals, thus minimizing opportunities for increasing mastery of learning for individual students in all grades.
- Ensure that the cycle of teacher observations gives a clear picture of next steps for teacher development resulting in pedagogy that aligns with the school's expectations for instruction. 4.1
 - The evaluation of instructional practice with alignment to student outcomes is a verbal conversation resulting in a limited ability for school leaders to effectively monitor teacher practice that leads to improved student outcomes over time.
 - Evaluation efforts are focused on 'teachers of need'. However as written feedback for all informal and formal observations is not formalized for all teachers, the suitable planning and delivery of focused professional development is not an established practice, thus minimizing the ability to enhance teachers' practices

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Baychester Academy	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