

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**P.S. 087 Bronx**

**Elementary**

**1935 BUSSING AVENUE  
BRONX  
NY,10466**

**Principal: DONNA ANAMAN**

**Dates of review: Dec 12-13, 2012  
Lead Reviewer: Deena Abu-Lughod**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 087 Bronx is a/an Elementary school with 559 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 73.5% Black, 17.7% Hispanic, 0.5% White, and 4.5% Asian students. The student body includes 1.6% English language learners and 13.2% special education students. Boys account for 52.6% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47.4%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 88.11%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is Developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Intelligent organizational decisions fully support the school's aim to foster effective collaborations that promote student learning. (1.3)
  - Redesigned teacher schedules promote both collaboration and job-embedded professional learning for teacher teams. Grade teams meet formally on one of their daily common preparation periods to plan, and informally throughout the week to adjust daily instruction. In addition, teams meet for 50 minutes after school each week to design Common Core aligned tasks and analyze student work. These collaborations have resulted in the implementation of the same curriculum with similar pacing across classrooms, with adaptations and additional supports for students with individualized education plans, and the development of uniform grading criteria. In addition, the school maximizes the learning from external consultants by freeing teams to meet for three consecutive periods for intensive lesson planning-implementation-debrief cycles, thus generating a common understanding of instructional quality and expectations, and an emerging understanding of rigor so that students can master more challenging academic work.
  - Resources are well-aligned to support the transition to the new standards, with significant funds allocated to bolster non-fiction titles in classroom libraries, and to maintain the school's considerable technology, which is used for the upper grades' web-based literacy and math curricula. With a large number of retirements over the past few years, the principal has strategically hired dual-certified newcomers who receive frequent mentoring support to ensure a strong basis for the shared path to success. One teacher looped with the 12:1:1 class, which had made significant gains last year, to build on that momentum, and several of his students join general education settings part time, so, as one of his students said, "I'll be ready for middle school."
- Clear goals and data-driven action plans that connect student learning and emotional growth to school practices focus the efforts of all constituents on school improvement. (3.1)
  - A thorough analysis of performance and survey data that is shared with the school community provides the basis for annual planning. While the cabinet sets the school's overall goals, parents and teachers follow up by crafting goals that align closely with and reinforce the school's goals so that each constituent feels accountable for the school's results. For example, to support the school's goal of increasing student engagement, parents organized the "Awakening the Genius in your Child" summit, which addressed how parents can communicate with their children in ways that increase student achievement. In response to caregivers' scheduling requests, several multi-workshop summits have been planned to replace shorter events, the first of which resulted in doubling attendance, and attracting new constituents, particularly men who came for a special panel on fathering. These summits serve to reinforce the parents' roles as partners in student learning, because, as one parent

said, “It starts at home.” With respect to teachers, the first of three annual one-on-one meetings with the principal requires a reflection on survey questions related to academic expectations, engagement and professional development and a commitment to goals such as improving questioning and discussion techniques and using assessment in instruction to link their professional development to specific pedagogical practices to impact on student learning outcomes.

- Action planning connects directly to analyses of survey data, performance and progress trends, observations of school practices and the citywide expectations. The comprehensive professional development plan matches areas of growth to providers who serve both staff and school leaders. Offerings include support for conferencing, enhancing the implementation of the *Time to Know* digital curriculum, text dependent questioning, math practices and leadership skills across the school, while on demand video modules are available for individual teachers. Monitoring of reading improvement has become more reliable after the school-wide adoption of a computer-adaptive assessment that eliminates variability in teacher administration, and provides the basis for identifying students targeted in the Response to Intervention cycles. As a result, there is greater coordination of classroom, push in and out-of-classroom supports for the most at risk students.
- The observation process provides teachers with specific next steps that are well supported by professional development, resulting in the improvement of some pedagogical practices and the emergence of teacher leadership. (4.1)
  - School leaders conduct cycles of observations using selected indicators from a research-based rubric. Feedback in previous years focused on creating a culture for learning, which was evidenced in the improved environments across the school, and the dramatic reduction in incidents originating in classrooms. Supervisory practice has evolved favorably, as the focus of observations has become more targeted and next steps more precise and measurable, resulting in some exemplary classrooms. Lengthy descriptions have been replaced by pithy points capturing strengths, with one specific next step, with a rationale and suggestion. For example, to reinforce accountable talk, one teacher was asked to consider “chunking to create more stopping points for students to interact with the text.” Teachers report that clear expectations and feedback have helped them keep on pace and introduce higher expectations for students, such as using evidence from texts.
  - The collection of teacher observations and student work provides a relevant basis for establishing professional development priorities and for encouraging teacher leadership. For example, these two data streams revealed a school-wide need to build teacher capacity to give meaningful written and verbal feedback to students, and led to contracting a “making meaning” consultant. As a result, administrators note that the quality of comments are now more specific than “good job!” and teachers report that they are more able to discern next steps. All staff, including leaders, engage in multiple learning opportunities to improve their practice. As part of the drive to build an internal leadership pipeline, assistant principals have delivered leadership of inquiry teams to the teachers themselves, who rotate facilitation responsibilities and report back on

progress to administrators, and grade leaders who are respected by their colleagues are emerging.

## What the school needs to improve

- Enhance the alignment of units and tasks to the standards so that students are exposed to more demanding expectations and are well prepared for the challenges of their next level of learning. (1.1)
  - The school has attempted to revise or adopt new curricula so that these align more closely to the standards, with varying degrees of success across grades and subject areas. In addition, the school has conducted item analyses to identify the standards that represented the greatest challenge with the aim of supplementing curricula in these areas. However, in some classes, skills were taught discretely, with little expectation that these come together in final products. For example, while unit plans and word walls contain unit-specific vocabulary, culminating tasks did not effectively require students to demonstrate their ability to use that vocabulary. In teaching compare and contrast, students simply extracted details from a paragraph that had already articulated the differences and placed them in a graphic organizer. The absence of attention to the pedagogical shifts required by the standards reduces the potential for students to demonstrate their ability to use evidence and grapple with grade-level text.
  - The school works effectively to ensure that students with disabilities access the same curricula and tasks as their non-disabled peers. Lessons provided through the digital platform are adjusted, allowing some students to spend more time on critical concepts. However, there is insufficient consideration of how the curriculum addresses higher order skills and while the marking of student work reveals that all students are held to the same standard, the school's understanding of grade level work does not match the demands of the standards.
- Extend the repertoire of teaching practices so that lessons provide sufficient supports and opportunities for high level thinking to promote greater student interaction and mastery of challenging tasks. (1.2)
  - Most lessons include opportunities for students to "turn and talk" and for end-of-class shares, revealing that the school has made some inroads in its aim to enhance student engagement through improved questioning and discussion. In one first grade class, students were held to a high standard of accountability as the teacher pressed them to share what their partner had said, explain disagreements and use high level vocabulary, then checked in with students during independent reading so that each student was engaged and challenged. However, this class was above the norm, and elsewhere, there was little evidence of the school's goal to pre-plan higher order questions so students could discuss content in whole or small group settings to deepen comprehension. For example, science instruction consisted of the teacher reading aloud from a text book and interjecting random personal connections. Upper grade students work diligently on laptops with the digital curricula they acquired as part of the iZone pilot, which adapts to student needs with engaging videos, auditory supports and leveled texts, providing multiple entry

points. However, tasks involve more matching and fill-in-the-blank answers than extended responses. The inconsistent planning for integrating discussion in lessons so students can share and compare their thinking limits student ownership of learning and higher levels of achievement.

- Student work products reveal considerable variation across grades in terms of cognitive demand. While some kindergarteners produced written products of expected length and quality, expectations in other grades do not keep pace. In the third grade, the four written assignments to date were limited to personal narratives, and lacked an expectation to write from sources or engage in other ways with the world around them. In the upper grades, the absence of exposure to opposing viewpoints resulted in uniform opinions across the grade related to child labor. Problem-solving in mathematics classes emphasized isolated strategies, reducing opportunities for students to develop mathematical reasoning and select among multiple approaches, and rarely involved students actually presenting and explaining their work. As a result, there are missed opportunities for staff to capitalize on students' evident interest in learning to lead them to higher levels of achievement.
- Embed promising assessment practices across the school to ensure that student outcomes consistently inform instruction and feedback to accelerate the progress of all learners. (2.2)
  - The school uses multiple common assessments to evaluate student performance and progress, including three on demand writing pieces scored on the 6+1 rubric, a computer-adaptive reading assessment administered monthly in the lower grades and bimonthly in the upper grades, an online math assessment as well as Acuity baseline and benchmark assessments. These sources help teachers and school leaders pinpoint areas of need by need and subgroup. However, these data sources are not used consistently to inform teaching, provide feedback, or set goals in areas other than reading level. Teachers are making efforts to develop pre- and post tasks that align to the Common Core, using an alignment protocol. This is an emerging practice, and teams are still learning about how these tasks connect to their practice and how they will inform instruction.
  - The use of formative assessment for instructional decision-making is inconsistent across classrooms. The digital teaching platform in the upper grades provides teachers with real-time data so that they can support individual students or provide timely whole-class intervention, and supports teachers in monitoring progress. In more traditional settings, few teachers were observed noting information about which students were responding and how. Some teachers have introduced rubrics that align to the common core standards and others collect rubrics from online sources, and not all students use rubrics and reflections as part of daily practice. As a result of insufficient input, many students lack awareness of their strengths and next steps, and many lessons are generic and inattentive to the levels of mastery demonstrated.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: P.S. 087 Bronx	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		X					
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?		X					
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?		X					
<b>School Culture</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?		X					
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?		X					
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			X				
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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 <b>inquiry approach</b> that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?		X					
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?		X					
<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>