

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Bronx Green Middle School

11x326

2441 Wallace Avenue

Bronx

NY 10467

Principal: Charles Johnson

Dates of review: January 10 - 11, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Elizabeth A. White

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bronx Green is a middle school with 357 students from grade 6 through 8. The school population comprises 22% Black, 65% Hispanic, 8% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 90.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's culture of positive student and staff attitudes results in an environment that fosters enhanced academic and social-emotional growth. (1.4)
 - The school community's ethos for education is typified by a common belief in the importance of learning. This leads to both social-emotional and academic student success. Students state that they are encouraged and feel free to express their opinions due to "an atmosphere of trust". They feel comfortable meeting with teachers for guidance and academic help. Students voice that teachers help them to understand by ensuring that concepts are explained. As a result, in math, for example, State performance scores rose more than 5 percent from the previous year. In addition, they also value teachers' supportive attitudes in afterschool academic programs and unofficial support offerings by individual subject teachers like science. In addition, the parent coordinator is well valued as the hub of information and support for parents regarding student discipline, academic concerns, school meetings and general information. Clear attendance procedures are established and personalized to ensure that outreach by school attendance personnel, including home visits, are conducted as needed guaranteeing that a high average of student attendance is maintained. The school's attention to student learning needs has resulted in pupils becoming more responsible for their own learning behaviors. Additionally, this is evidenced in a decrease in student incidents and suspensions as reflected in the school's OORs data.
- The school's rigorous and engaging curriculum is effectively designed to embed Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) resulting in the promotion of content area mastery to support college and career readiness efforts. (1.1)
 - The school has selected argumentative writing to emphasize a key standard as a cross-curricular priority. This includes the creation of performance-based assessments. During writing instruction in a special education class, students use graphic organizers to aid in capturing text-based evidence to support a claim regarding their views on the merits and possible abuses of students using the social-media utility, *Facebook*. In another classroom during reading instruction, English language learners were using sticky note pads to identify details from their individual novels which provoked deeper thought or questions about the text. These efforts have led to an improvement of student performance in on-demand writing tasks for all subgroups, thereby ensuring career and college readiness.
- The school's assessment measures effectively identify student learning needs enabling the school to adjust instructional design and pedagogy. (2.2)
 - As a result of teacher team work, across classrooms teachers use on-going assessment practices to modify instructional approaches as needed resulting in improved student outcomes. Assessment practices include a review of student work and grading policies that are regularly evaluated

against expectations based on key Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). For example, in writing the 8th grade teachers use a Common Core-aligned, task-specific argument writing rubric accompanied by the use of *Student Work Analysis Protocol* recording sheets to document areas of strength and weakness in written composition. Additionally, common pre- and post-assessments are analyzed across subjects. In turn, teachers provide actionable feedback to students regarding next steps and improvement which leads to consistent grading and the creation of individualized student goals. Furthermore, students self assess by checking their work against CCLS aligned rubrics such as the *Proportional Relationships Problem Solving Rubric* to gauge their own subject matter aptitude. Teacher observation anecdotes and on-going checks for understanding during classroom lessons are also used to adjust guided instruction groups, thus enabling teachers to meet the needs of learners, especially English language learners and special education students. These ongoing assessment practices not only result in consistent revisions to instructional practices, but also to improved progression towards mastery of goals for all students.

- The school accurately captures teacher effectiveness through observation and student data resulting in feedback that identifies critical attributes for pedagogical improvement. (4.1)
 - The school conducts co-observations of teachers done by administrator and coach pairs. This model enables the school to assess its identified pedagogical focus while providing a professional development support mechanism, that is, coaching, that enables school leaders to effectively follow up promoting continual instructional improvement. Each teacher has been observed formally and/or informally at least three times to date. Teachers present student work for discussion about student growth and plans for instruction during pre-observation conferences, followed by formal observations. Post-conferences are conducted for all observations. Observation feedback notes demonstrate an accurate representation of teacher practice aligned to areas of school-wide focus and professional development efforts. For example, one school focus is tracking data and providing students with feedback for continued growth. Some supervisory observation quotes are: in art, “You made sure you touched based with every student and gave them feedback on their work...”; in math, “...you encouraged your students to self-correct and express themselves mathematically.” Also observation feedback captures commentary on prior highlighted areas for improvement. For example, regarding concise *Do Now* pre-lesson exercises in social studies the administrator wrote, “You have taken my recommendation and it appears to be a stable component of your lesson planning.” The continuity of focus and strategic use of coaches results in greater accountability and improved pedagogical practice.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve systems for communication that includes ongoing dialogue in order to provide for a seamless partnership with all school constituents that reinforce a path to college and career readiness. (3.4)

- The parent coordinator is well valued as the hub of information and support for parents regarding student discipline, academic concerns, school meetings and general information. The school offers summer orientations for each grade and meetings with parents during open school night. However, parents have expressed a desire for workshops to better able them to assist their children on a path for college and career readiness. Specifically, offerings on technology, getting a greater understanding of curriculum, and receiving more informative interim reports that offer specific next steps, "...not just a grade". Insufficient opportunities to support parental involvement in instruction results in a stymied ability to partner with parents in an effort to help students achieve high academic expectations. This limits parent ability to be included in helping students achieve.
- While teacher teams reviews of student work offer appropriate feedback to both teachers and students for future academic growth, teacher-made end of unit assessments are just becoming common on all grades for math. Thus, consistent communication of high expectations for all students does not yet permeate across grades hindering supports needed to consistently promote math proficiency.
- Continue to develop instructional practice that provides consistent access to content tailored to meet the needs of all learners. (1.2)
 - As the school implements and refines more rigorous curricula, in a few instances the match between challenge and student levels is not always appropriate. This limits access to content for some learners. For instance, in one class students were given the group task to read about different historical figures. However, for a notable number of students the text complexity of the passages offered too much challenge which led to frustration. In addition, opportunity for student-to-student interaction was limited due to pacing in another class. In an English language arts classroom, a minimal amount of time was given to students who were working in pairs to discuss and identify details to support a claim. This resulted in limited engagement and an overreliance on the teacher to complete the task. Both instances negatively impacted students' opportunity to complete their assigned tasks, thereby limiting access to content knowledge. (b, c)

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Bronx Green Middle School	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
Instructional Core							
<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				
School Culture							
<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					
Systems for Improvement							
<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 inquiry approach 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				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed