



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

**Quality Review  
Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning  
2013-2014**

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**Jonas Bronck Elementary School**

**Elementary School 043**

**165 Brown Place  
Bronx  
NY 10545**

**Principal: Dr. Giovanna Delucchi**

**Dates of review: March 26 – 27, 2014**

**Reviewer: Yolanda Torres**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Jonas Bronck is an elementary school with 531 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 26% Black, 73% Hispanic, and 1% White. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 90.9%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school climate is an inclusive learning environment where all stakeholders work together to support and promote the academic and social emotional well-being of all students. (1.4)
  - The social-emotional well-being of all students is at the core of the school-wide beliefs on educating the whole child. Upon entry to the school, students begin their day by reciting their mantra: *“Never Give Up! Encourage Others! And Do Your Best!”* leading the day’s work towards positive thinking and encouragement to do your best. Each classroom displays a poster entitled *“How are you feeling today?”* which serves as a social emotional reminder to students that they have a voice to express their feelings, especially when in need of the attention from an adult. Students are comfortable going to adults when in need of support. The school goal to maintain a culture of respect and responsibility is evident in the daily interactions between staff and students as well as from student to student resulting in acknowledgments via school-wide incentives and assemblies. All classroom doors depict original decorations of what respect means to the homeroom students. These decorations hold special meanings to students because, upon entry to their classrooms, they see their agreed-upon commitments to safety, respect and responsibility. The student-selected school mascot, Oliver the Owl, is displayed on a poster and makes appearances during assemblies and parent events reminding adherence to the school pledge which promotes self-belief, investment in learning, high expectations for college and career readiness, all important factors leading to overall academic and social emotional success. Classroom teachers know their students well and have developed close relationships with them and their parents. Guidance service providers, in collaboration with teachers and school leaders, closely monitor student attendance to ensure that both students and parents understand the positive impact good attendance has on student achievement. This monitoring also leads to individual meetings with parents to discuss strategies for improvement of student attendance. Parents voice their confidence in and appreciation for staff members being genuinely there in support of their children and for reaching out to them on a regular basis. The Positive Behavioral Intervention Support (PBIS) program engages staff, students, and families in a variety of professional development activities and events that promote safety, respect and responsibility resulting in less school-wide disruptions. A close analysis of the school’s OORS (Online Occurrence Report System) report reveals a decrease in students’ removals and suspensions as well as a short list of students in need of more intense support via individualized behavior plans and/or outside referrals. In addition, the guidance personnel, including social work interns, provide counseling and peer mediation opportunities for students to talk about their issues and/or concerns. These sessions lead to students expressing their feelings and learning how to self-regulate their behaviors. Teachers and guidance personnel also articulate and discuss interventions for at-risk students. As a result, this interaction enables students and families to show resiliency and a positive disposition towards learning and school involvement. Lastly, the collaboration and strong partnership with

outside organizations such as PRIME leaders, Anne Frank Center, Lehman College, CARE for Teachers NYC, Timberland, and the Chris Canty Foundation provide a myriad of services to students as well as to teachers to ensure the academic, but most importantly, the emotional well-being of all. This speaks to the leaders' attentiveness to everyone's needs.

- School leaders and teachers use a variety of assessments aligned to the curricula in order to provide actionable feedback that leads to student progress on set goals. (2.2)
  - The professional collaboration that exists between the school leadership and teachers provides opportune conversations on what works and what needs adjustment. During initial planning conferences, teachers share their experiences with the curricula and the variety of assessments students would be exposed to. The decision of reducing the amount of assessments ensures that those that remain are done effectively so that teachers can deepen their practice and build on their skills and strategies, thereby able to make specific instructional decisions to meet students' needs and close the achievement gap. In order to effectively track student progress in literacy, four cycles of running records are conducted throughout the year to monitor student progress and growth so that teachers can make targeted decisions on how to approach students' instructional needs. Teachers listen in and take notes to ensure that their planning addresses the academic needs that ensue during these interactions. The use of rubrics and checklists for student self-assessment afford students to partner up, share and talk about their work. Teacher teams meet regularly to discuss student performance and analyze student work to reflect on their own practice and identify the trends across content and/or grades leading to instructional adjustments to lessons. As teachers track student progress, they bring their results to the table and consult with each other for instructional coherence. This sharing of data and information increases the collaboration amongst teachers leading to deepened conversations of their practices. The grade-specific goals to accelerate student learning in literacy and math are the intended outcomes that frame the conversations amongst teachers as evidenced by the agenda topics and the feedback provided to students during conferences as both teacher and student look at work products. School leaders meet regularly with teachers to talk about data, examine student work and discuss teacher feedback to ensure that students and teachers are on track towards academic success. The results of the common assessments such as running records, conference notes, quick checks for understanding, and beginning/end-of-unit tests provide teachers with granular information that lead to logging on to online programs such as reading level tracker, Literacy Central and Spatial-Temporal (ST) Math assigned mathematical tasks to reinforce specific concepts. Close monitoring of student performance as they complete these tasks serves as another assessment tool for teachers and assistants to hone in immediately on areas students struggle with for movement and growth. These efforts to analyze benchmark and formative assessments of student learning result in effective adjustments to instruction thus improving student goal attainment.
- Administrators and teachers have ensured the alignment of the curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards to build coherence and emphasize higher-order thinking thus promoting college going habits for all students. (1.1)

- With the implementation of Common Core-aligned curricula, *ReadyGen* and *Go Math*, school leaders and teachers agreed in incorporating additional components to strengthen the reading, writing and math skills across all grades. The Common Core standards are at the core of the school-wide instructional focus and are introduced in every lesson. In order to meet students at their multiple entry points and ensure student engagement in critical thinking opportunities, lesson plans are structured so that students receive exposure to diverse instructional practices aligned to standards. Lesson objectives begin with an “I can” statement messaging to students the expected learning outcomes, but, most importantly, encouraging students to learn and discover. The school-wide focus on discussion techniques is evident as teachers challenge students’ thinking with task activities that provide a variety of venues for students to hold conversations with each other. Teacher training in Visual Thinking Strategies promotes the use of visual arts to support the curriculum as a means to develop students’ critical thinking skills with the use of sophisticated language as they discuss and write. The integration of the arts via an interdisciplinary approach is a newly added curriculum component to the instructional day in the lower grades to strengthen their literacy foundation. These efforts have resulted in coherence of curricula and tasks across grades and subjects with access to a variety of learners.
- School leaders use the Danielson Framework for Teaching to provide teachers with effective feedback in support of teacher development resulting in improved instructional practices. (4.1)
  - Prior to the full implementation of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, the school participated in a pilot program where teams and school leaders engaged in observations together to norm and calibrate their low inference notes. This ensured consistency and coherence so as to provide meaningful feedback to teachers and resulted in an awareness of the attributes for effective teaching. A year later, the translation of the essential components of this framework is a continuous process where leaders are observing improvement in teacher practice and student discussions as evidenced by improvement in teacher ratings. Teachers’ self-assessment of their needs and practices have led to the creation of individual professional goals which are closely monitored through observations and feedback sessions as well as professional development activities. School leaders use this data to inform the professional development topics that make sense for teacher growth and ultimately impact student performance. For example, at one of the professional development meetings, teachers shared their beliefs about how students learn best based on observation feedback and their own observations and assessments of student work. As a result, teachers created a poster that represents their vision on how students are learning and emerging as young scholars. In addition, due to this visual representation, the school motto: “*Owls have BIG EYES.*” emerged sending a powerful message of investment in learning as a community known and understood by all stakeholders. Formal and informal observations provide school leaders with areas that teachers do well and those in need of support. Furthermore, school leaders assist teachers by discussing next steps and planning customized professional development sessions to meet their needs, but, at the same time, holding teachers accountable for their learning and their students’ learning by conducting frequent check-ins on student data. Classroom observations also lead to the identification of effective practices emerging in some classrooms

resulting in collegial inter-visitations and reciprocal learning experiences. Teachers appreciate the opportunities to share practices during these visitations and during their team meetings where they can closely work, reflect and validate each other's work, thus creating a collaborative partnership leading to professional improvement and reflection in a risk-free environment.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Strengthen teacher pedagogy and effective practices to ensure that high levels of student thinking and participation are consistent from classroom to classroom. (1.2)
  - The school-wide beliefs about how students learn best are represented via the use of varied instructional techniques and multisensory programs honoring students' learning styles and language acquisition. Class and student individual goals are conspicuously displayed in classrooms to ensure that these are revisited for student progress. The use of technology in classrooms enhances student learning and serves as a scaffold as they engage in tasks that develop their cognitive ability to articulate their thinking. Some teaching strategies observed in classrooms such as "Think, Pair, Share" and questioning leading to student self-assessment align with the curricula, beliefs and the instructional shifts. As students engage in discussions prefaced by questions posed by teachers, they use accountable talk stems to form opinions on a topic and/or cite evidence from a text in support of their points of view. The use of visuals and scaffolded questions with step-by-step procedures provide access to some students with disabilities in a structured small group setting resulting in students' self-assessment of their work. However, these practices are not consistently evident in all classrooms, thereby, resulting in uneven levels of students thinking and work products.
- Refine the process to evaluate and adjust curricular and instructional practices so that there is continued coherence between what is taught and how it is taught. (5.1)
  - School leaders meet regularly with teachers to discuss their low inference observations from classroom visits. Data Talk sessions with teachers bring important information on how students are progressing. These conversations serve as reflection and much pondering on next steps for curricular and/or teaching practice adjustment. In addition, teacher teams meet regularly for collaborative planning while looking at student work in order to make decisions on instructional next steps for student academic improvement. Professional development meetings provide teachers with opportunities to focus on areas in need of improvement based on the feedback provided by school leaders as they visit classrooms. While the tasks and practices are anchored in the State standards and "I can" statements, there is a lack of embedded checks for understanding and school-wide instructional adjustments thus limiting further alignment and coherence of practices.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Jonas Bronck Elementary School	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?			X				
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the 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 supports 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 those expectations?			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 student 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 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?			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				
<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>