

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**Crescent**

**Elementary School 057**

**2111 Crotona Avenue  
Bronx  
NY, 10457**

**Principal: Bryant Romano**

**Dates of review: March 4 - 5, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Myrna Rodriguez**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Crescent is an elementary school with 558 students from prekindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 29% Black, 68% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 10% 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 91.6%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The leadership makes strategic organizational decisions that support school goals and respond to student needs, impacting academic and behavioral outcomes. (1.3)
  - The principal's investment in instructional technology enhances learning in all core subjects with the acquisition of Smart Boards. This organizational decision results in greater student engagement in his/her own learning as they are often seen in classes using the SMART boards to work out math problems. Additional teaching materials for science and math, which incorporates the new technology tools, allow students to discuss videos on non-fiction themes in science, social studies, and English language arts. In human resources, the addition of a new assistant principal also serves as coach for English language arts (ELA), and math Academic intervention teachers are assigned to all grades to provide early interventions and intensive instruction to students, including English language learners, is helping to close the achievement gap. Consequently, by focusing on targeting additional teachers and staff for all grades has resulted in positive student achievement as seen in assessment binders, progress reports, and conference notes.
  - The principal structures teacher time to support instructional goals by having teacher teams meet weekly using an inquiry approach to monitor a targeted group of students for whom they develop specific assessments and teaching strategies in order to improve the work of struggling students. Teachers share student work within the teams, and review teaching strategies in order to identify the most effective strategies for a variety of student learners, and revise their strategies such as scaffolding and materials for diverse learners. As a result student assessment data in reading levels, writing products, and vocabulary acquisition, show steady academic growth in ELA and math.
- The school aligns assessments to curricula and analyzes student learning outcomes to adjust instructional strategies and practices across classrooms. (2.2)
  - Teacher teams use various assessments, including Fountas and Pinell, running records, and common assessments from unit chapters in all subjects, and they have adopted rubrics from the Common Core library to analyze student-learning outcomes and provide feedback to students. As a result they are able to adjust classroom level curricular and instructional decisions and student goals, and scaffold lessons for English language learners. Additionally, teachers share unit assessment outcomes within teams and with the Instructional Cabinet to analyze needed next steps in practices across classrooms and within teams to improve student outcomes. As a result, because of the strategic use of data from assessments students are guided to achieve learning targets and produce meaningful work products.
  - The principal works with teachers by modeling how to incorporate checking for understanding assessments during class time. As a result, across classrooms teachers use strategic questioning during lessons, hand signals, and slates. This allows the teacher to know if students understand what has been taught, and helps to determine whether to

individually tutor, change group formations, or do a whole class review. Observations in several classes showed that teachers regrouped students when they determined that student understanding was not clear, and in some classes teachers interrupted discussions in groups to clear up misunderstandings so that students could continue their independent or group work. As a result, teachers are able to adjust instruction so that all students are engaged with the information needed to complete tasks or work products.

- The school shares a vision of school improvement which is reflected in school, team, class goals, and action plans, which are tracked for progress and result in improved teacher practices and accelerated student learning. (3.1)
  - The leadership and faculty effectively involve the community in developing activities and tone and climate of the school leading to students and adults sharing a vision of individual and school improvement. The school has developed goals that are driving efforts to accelerated student learning by targeting reading levels, academic vocabulary acquisition, effective questioning to elicit higher order thinking across all grades, and helping students use writing as a self-reflection process around their work. Action plans, especially in the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP), include targeted professional development to address student achievement and attaining student goals. As a result, reading levels have improved compared to last year's data and student writing that is tracked every month shows marked and steady improvements across all grades. Furthermore, the school strategically aligns itself with the parent association, and families are engaged in developing school and student goals and action plans within the School Leadership Team (SLT). Parents enthusiastically support the school goals, which are resulting in academic improvement for students.
- The principal has engaged all constituencies in creating a warm and caring environment which promotes adult and student learning. (1.4)
  - The principal has created a school environment that makes students and adults want to work hard, as evidenced in how all constituents express that the school is a family and learning is fun. For example, the first thing that one sees when entering the building is a very large fish tank, a change made by the principal to instill a feeling of home within the school. Students from kindergarten through the fifth grade, English language learners, and students with disabilities, wrote about and drew the fish in the tank and received prizes and the opportunity to take care of the fish. Parents and students describe various activities from taking care of animals in the principal's office during lunchtime, who are called "Romano's Raiders", to the highly effective parent association activities, as reasons why the school is improving. As a result, daily average attendance is at 93% and students feel that this is where they learn in a safe and trusting environment as they work towards their academic and behavioral goals and show progress in their work products.
  - The principal has structures in place, including that every student is known by several staff members, and he has developed a Positive Behavior Intervention Services (PBIS) program to motivate students and staff to work collaboratively to produce high levels of student engagement in classes and outside of classes by promoting an award system of "Crescent bucks." This system allows adults to reward students who in turn buy achievement gifts for good learning and social behaviors. Another new structure is the student government, which runs Town Hall

meetings where students discuss the Book of the Month, and perform skits around topics chosen by students such as, as anti-bullying. Students display very positive attitudes about learning and say that teachers are willing to work during free periods and lunch time to help them learn. Consequently, students are exhibiting improved behaviors as well as a deep interest in their learning.

## What the school needs to improve

- Further develop curricula for diverse learners and make decisions to develop academic tasks emphasizing rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills across all grades that will lead to college and career readiness. (1.1)
  - The school aligns its curricula to include the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE), ensuring that in English language arts students are reading and using non-fiction texts, and they are learning to cite evidence, a skill that leads to college and career readiness. The school aligns the English language arts (ELA) and math curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and as a result students are using non-fiction texts and writing across all content areas and across all grades. This is evident in work products in which students have to produce arguments in terms of claims and counterclaims, citing text-based evidence as support. The school ensures that the curricula in social studies and in science also includes the use of primary resources and content area texts so students write, discuss, and produce work products, such as three dimensional art forms (dioramas), that engage students and develop high levels of thinking. The principal and two assistant principals lead teachers to create curricula maps for all subjects with specific use of second language strategies such as having students repeat what other students have said, or encourage students to use full sentences with content vocabulary. However, students learning how to independently access vocabulary by the strategic use of targeted resources such as dictionaries or technological tools and targeted use of word walls during lessons is not clearly defined in the curricula maps. As a result, the goal to promote language acquisition needed for college and career readiness for all students, including high achievers, is limited, impacting increasing student achievement.
  - The curricula for all subjects include teaching strategies, such as providing students with targeted questions and sentence starters to elicit more than content knowledge when students engage in partner talks. The school curricula includes a variety of samples of Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questions to raise student levels of thinking from content knowledge to analysis was evident in lesson plans to encourage student discussions, student turn-and-talks, and group work. While question scaffolds are consistently planned for all students, including English language learners and special education students, the school has not yet designed scaffolds to facilitate deeper comprehension, so that all students demonstrate critical thinking in all content areas, and high achievers are challenged at a more advanced level.
- Further develop teacher pedagogy developing strategies or routines which promote student independence and offer strategic supports so that all students produce meaningful work. (1.2)
  - The leadership and faculty use the Danielson Framework for Teaching to inform this practice. Furthermore, teaching practices across all

classrooms reflect a strong belief system, which includes using the workshop model, giving students opportunities to learn collaboratively with the teacher as facilitator. Teachers use varied entry points, student pair-shares, and group work opportunities, and are engaged in the school-wide goal to deepen their questioning skills to elicit high levels of student thinking and work products. Teachers develop and adapt rubrics from the Core Library for all subjects and across the grades so that students use them to edit their work and their peers' work products, promoting student independence. Although student work products reflect high levels of student thinking and participation in class and group discussions, it is not as evident for relevant subgroups, such as English language learners, students with disabilities and high achievers. There is limited strategic use of resources, including peer supports and technology to bridge language deficiencies or increase volume and scope for high achievers. Therefore, inconsistent opportunities to increase higher-order thinking for all groups of students limit their participation and ability to produce increased higher levels of work products.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Crescent	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>				
<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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
<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?			<b>X</b>				
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations?			<b>X</b>				
<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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
<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>