

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

The P.O. Edward R. Byrne School

08X101

**2750 Lafayette Avenue
Bronx NY 10465**

Principal: Jared Rosoff

Dates of review: May 20-21, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Timothy Behr

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Edward R. Byrne School is a middle school with 478 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 12% Black, 56% Hispanic, 16% White, and 15% Asian and 1% American Indian or Alaskan Native students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 94.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Students profit from Common Core aligned broad curricula with arts and music programs that support student's college and career readiness skills. (1.1)
 - The school utilizes Expeditionary Learning for English language arts and Connected Math Program 3 for math as its Common Core aligned curricula. Teachers make content connections within and across grades to support student learning. For example, the school has prioritized the school district's focus of improving student's vocabulary and numerical fluency skills. Consequently, there are consistent activities requiring students to use new words in activities and speed and accuracy when computing math problems. The school offers accelerated courses in numerous subjects that lead to State proficiency and Regents examinations. Effective Integrated Co-teaching classrooms utilizing the Wilson Just Words for special education and English language learner students to improve fluency skills. Chorus, band and media arts provide opportunities for students to pursue their talents and interests in preparation for high school and college. Recognition and concern regarding student academic progress motivated the faculty to engage in strategic curriculum modifications by incorporating enrichment activities aligned to instructional shifts in all core content areas. Students in a seventh grade social studies classroom were referring to the First Amendment to support their position on the Supreme Court Case, Tinker vs. Des Moines. In an eighth grade math class students were applying their knowledge of geometry to complete math multiple steps problems. As a result, students have access to demanding and coherent curricula to deepen their skills and thinking as evidenced by improved Degree of Reading Power data which demonstrates student growth in all grades and classes.
- Pedagogy across classrooms ensures rigorous tasks and multiple entry points that consistently provide all students with opportunities to demonstrate higher order thinking skills. (1.2)
 - The school consistently incorporates the demands of the Common Core into daily teaching practices. Students across classrooms were persistent, engaged, and demonstrated good work habits and communication skills to complete classroom activities. In a sixth grade English language arts class, students analyzed multiple texts to compare author's tone. In music class, students were applying their knowledge of chord progressions to play a melody. These activities support the school's articulated core beliefs that students learn best when the teacher is the facilitator and teaching is explicit via questioning, discussion, and engaging activities. Additionally, teachers support student learning and encourage reflection by asking students to seek, consider, and evaluate their work. In a seventh grade class, students with disabilities incorporated the use of plot, conflict, and setting to analyze a story by using accountable talk stems while working in groups. Across classrooms, teachers consistently used displays, auditory and visual information to involve and motivate students

at their entry points. Students were also provided graphic organizers to organize their thinking. Hence, students are demonstrating higher order thinking as evidenced by student work products and end of unit test results in all core content areas.

- The principal in collaboration with key constituents continues to make effective organizational decisions that prioritize student learning and result in improved work products. (1.3)
 - Recognizing the need to support staff with the implementation of new Common Core aligned curricula, a new teacher evaluation system and in the analysis and use of school data, the principal hired an assistant principal. This decision ensures that the school acts on its goal of monitoring and implementing curricula, observations, and data to inform decisions and support school-wide initiatives. Teacher teams meet weekly to review formative and summative data to inform lesson planning. Teams plan and teachers implement authentic units of study that provide a wealth of learning opportunities for students. Teams unpack the Danielson rubric to understand what good teaching entails and decide on strategies to implement in response to the Danielson Framework and looking at student work. A faculty member enrolled in the Leaders in Education Apprenticeship Program coordinates the school's participation in the Middle School's Quality Initiative. This program incorporates parental partnerships via informative workshops to support student learning. Furthermore, the school received a \$19,000 grant from State Senator Jeffrey Klein to support a student soccer program. These decisions aligned to instructional goals ensure that organizational moves result in student progress as evident in detailed Common Core aligned student work displays in all content areas throughout the school.
- School leaders effectively use the Danielson Framework to provide effective feedback via regular intervals of classroom observations to support pedagogical growth. (4.1)
 - The administration and faculty participated in Danielson norming activities to establish coherence in understanding the Framework expectations. The network provided a lesson plan clinic to support planning and preparation in Domain 1. At the time of this review, the administration completed all required observations as documented in the Advance system. Feedback is timely and actionable and has prioritized communicating with students and engaging students in learning. This focus has resulted in improved student's self-regulation and time management skills resulting in persistence through task completion. For example, in English Language Arts classes students were citing text-based evidence to complete writing assignments and in math there was evidence of productive struggle when students were trying to link concepts to solve problems with real word application. In other classrooms observed, teachers demonstrated knowledge of content and students by utilizing pre-assessment data, such as chapter/unit results and Degrees of Reading Power assessments to inform instruction. In addition, observation reports reviewed show effective feedback and suggestions which are aligned to teachers' professional goals of enhancing questioning and discussion techniques as evidenced by

student-led conversations in the classroom via turn and talk activities using accountable talk stems. These professional goals were developed in collaboration with the principal during initial planning conferences and post-observation feedback sessions. In addition, the administration prioritized establishing a culture for learning. Walkthroughs were conducted and feedback was informally provided to teachers which were aligned to Domain 2. Consequently, all classrooms have an established culture for learning as evidenced by student work displays and content-related teacher made charts that students use for reference in classrooms. These efforts have resulted in identified pedagogical trends and next steps that have improved instructional practices.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand parental involvement in order to enhance the schools overall academic and social development. (1.4)
 - Since the implementation of the Consideration, Accountable, Respectful, and Empathy PBIS program, principal suspensions have decreased by 78% and superintendent suspensions have decreased by 75%. As a result, safety has improved at the school. Furthermore, the principal knows all students by name and knows their specific strengths and weaknesses in order to assign personnel to support their needs. Consequently, students are able to place more focus on their academic accomplishments. At the time of this review, the year to date student attendance rate was 94.2%. Parents credit the principal for creating a school environment that is warm and inviting with happy student faces. A parent night out program encourages moms and dads to bring their child to the school on selected evenings so they may enjoy an evening together while the students are involved in positive social activities that promote self-esteem. The school has been accepted into the 2014 Summer Quest Program which assists incoming fifth grade students to become adjusted to middle school. The school band members' self-esteem was enhanced when they performed at the 2013 Bronx Borough-Wide Summer Grade 8 graduation ceremony. This was a District first! The school participated in the Middle School Honor Band Concert at Queens College. As a result of participation at these activities, students feel that school experiences are enticing and very rewarding, and teachers and parents' comment regarding the satisfaction derived from these interactions with the school community and extending beyond. The student council elected to have sports teams. As a result, students' have improved physical skills, responsibilities, and social interactions by participating in supervised NYC Middle School athletic competitions. The council also produces the school's morning announcements. They select a new vocabulary word daily from the Word Generation curriculum. Hence, students' vocabulary skills have improved as evidenced by conversations and work samples. However, the school has not yet supported family outreach to encourage participation in community district meetings and other meetings, thus hampering opportunities to enhance school improvement efforts.
- Deepen analysis practices and assessment of student portfolios and notebooks in all content areas to strategically track student progress. (2.2)

- Grading policies are aligned to the school's curricula. Word Generation essays were analyzed by classroom teachers leading to rigorous yet attainable vocabulary development activities, thus improving independent reading levels. Yet teachers inconsistently use rubrics in a focused and determined effort to improve student progress by prioritizing areas of difficulty and making them student-friendly. There were student work samples particularly on performance-based assessments across classrooms where student work had no constructive criticism or grade thus limiting student actionable next steps to further their academic achievement. Furthermore, explicit instruction to students in organizing important information in their notebook entries results in students not able to use their notebooks as a reference and/or study tool in the core content classes, or teachers not able to use notebooks consistently as an assessment for learning. As a result, students do not consistently receive meaning feedback regarding their achievement and, therefore, cannot demonstrate increase mastery.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: P.O. Edward R. Byrne	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 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					
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 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				
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 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				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed