



Quality Review Report 2013-2014

The Bronxwood School

11x112

**1925 Schiefflin Avenue
Bronx
NY 10466**

Principal: Susan Barnes

Dates of review: December 12 - 13, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Elizabeth A. White

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bronxwood is an elementary school with 454 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 50% Black, 49% Hispanic, and 1% White. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 13% 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 89.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is working towards identifying strategies to make purposeful curricular adaptations that lead to more standards-based learning experiences for students. (1.1)
 - The school has adopted *Ready Gen* and *Go Math* as curricula choices for English language arts and math instruction. School-wide curriculum maps have been reconstructed to include content from new curricular programs. Classroom teachers meet in teams to review units of study. Parents state that the real-world scenarios rather than make-believe in both math and English language arts curricula keep students interested and there is an increased level of difficulty in student homework. Students state, “It’s easy to write about (math) and answer questions.”; “Math has multiple steps now so it’s more self-explanatory.”; “I like the new standards. It’s helping us more than last year.” Teacher teams meet by grade to discuss curriculum and to norm scoring of student work products. Teacher teams have identified writing as a source in English language arts curriculum that needs bolstering to engage students in more rigorous writing. A protocol is identified for looking at student work and applying its use consistently during team work is developing. The identification of curricular deficits, establishing performance criterion and implementation of team protocols enable the school to refine planning and pacing of lessons across grades and subjects that will engage a diversity of learners.
- The school uses various assessment tools across classrooms and is working towards creating grading policies that are consistently applied across grades. (2.2)
 - The school uses common pre-unit assessments to review student strengths and deficit areas of struggle. Work on enhancing rubrics for assessment to include more rigorous expectations is on-going. Test folders representing assessments in all four core subjects are sent home for parent review. The school instituted a new report card aligned to Common Core Standards. The school is currently developing expectations for consistent use of feedback to students and families on work products, such as notebooks and displayed work products, tests across grades as well as measurements of success. For example, the grade 5 team works to develop key criteria for performance for end of unit assessments. As a result, the school is developing assessment practices that can accurately determine academic growth across grades in order to make effective adjustments to meet the needs of all learners and enable families to support student learning.
- The use of goal setting and action planning reflect data-based student achievement needs enabling the school to target efforts to promote positive student outcomes. (3.1)

- The School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) identifies data-based goals needed to develop school improvement initiatives. The targeted list of priorities include: the need for effective formative feedback to improve teacher practice; the creation of rigorous units of study aligned to Common Core Learning Standards with a special focus on access for students with disabilities and English language learners and overall improvement in student performance outcomes; the need to increase student attendance and parental involvement. Summative assessment data is shared with teachers and families during community forums at the beginning of the year. The school is currently developing systems for on-going data tracking to measure progress towards action plans across disciplines and grades to enhance communication of “big-picture” evaluation of school-wide performance and to drive success towards meeting long-term goals. For example, school leadership is developing procedures for analyzing instructional practice results from observations to facilitate the improvement of professional development plans school-wide, with emphasis on teachers with less than effective pedagogy resulting in school-wide accountability for goal attainment that drives efforts to accelerate student learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Cultivate a school environment that encourages personal and academic behaviors and respect for instructional time that supports the social and academic growth of students. (1.4)
 - The school received a ‘B’ on the Environment section of their Progress Report based on last school year’s spring School Survey and attendance results. In most classrooms, there was a respectful exchange between adults and students. However, students and parents identify bullying and aggressive behaviors as problematic. Parents indicate that incidents often occur with early childhood students. They state that three detentions are too many to receive before a suspension occurs. Students state that fights happen when people steal pencils and crayons. They say that classes are disrespectful in the lunchroom and some students threaten others. Furthermore, building culture does not yet promote a sufficient respect for academic time. During classroom lessons phone calls interrupted teaching and learning. In one instance, a teacher was called down in the middle of a lesson to speak to a parent and in another a call from a parent was transferred up to a classroom to speak to a child. School staff indicates that the former Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) is not currently in place. Youth development services are limited to a dean. Behavioral incidents that lead to detention and suspensions have almost doubled as compared to last year’s data. This was unknown by a cabinet member. The lack of a clear communication process between school leaders to address student behavioral concerns results in an absence of a consistent system to encourage appropriate behaviors hindering the promotion of personal behavioral growth amongst students that lead to college and career readiness.
- Ensure that teaching practices are aligned to curricula and provide multiple entry points resulting in engagement for all learners. (1.2)

- The school is working on implementing new curricula as well as aligning pedagogical practice to Common Core Learning Standards. Currently, however, instructional practice across the school does not yet demand students to think critically or enable effective scaffolds and extensions to meet the needs of all learners. During a math lesson on decimals the teacher modeled a sample problem using a place value template on a SMARTboard and then asked special education students to come up to the board and solve a couple of examples. While students were at the board, because it took a seemingly long time, the other students who were not called on were distracted (that is, talking, looking elsewhere). The teacher asked, “Are you ready?”, three times to refocus the students. Afterwards, all students were required to make place value charts at their desks. This was not a challenging task for several students since they had already demonstrated capacity for accurate decimal placement and did not require this scaffold. This lack of rigor resulted in wasted time which took away the opportunity for more advanced work on decimal placement. In another class, during a procedural writing lesson, while students were working independently on writing the teacher interrupted a student so that she could mentor her peer by showing him her writing piece. The teacher did not refer the struggling student to the model that was displayed which was part of the mini-lesson resulting in interrupted focus for the student who was on task and a missed opportunity for the struggling pupil to apply past learning to new knowledge. This also limited the impact of teacher demonstration prior to independent work. Yet in another class, during a lesson on multiplication, the teacher used recorded audio to explain grouping representations of factors. The audio was not paused to see if students understood what was being explained. Later, when students were asked to work on problems in pairs many could not answer correctly. The use of audio with multi-step instructions caused students to get lost which resulted in a lack of understanding. Overall, these classroom examples demonstrate a lack of student engagement for all learners which resulted in a general lack of student thinking and participation and either, lack of rigor in, or lack of success, with completing student work products.
- Implement a system for using observation data to design differentiated professional development resulting in improved teacher practice and accountability. (4.1)
 - Teacher practice is regularly observed and ratings are provided using the Danielson Framework. However, next steps are either not yet consistently identified, time bound, or lack clarity limiting next steps to ensure improved practice thus, rendering feedback ineffective. For example, written on teacher observation reports is, “The teacher attempts to deal with disrespectful behavior were not entirely successful” and “Knowledge of students is not applied to individual students but to the class as a whole”. Professional Development (PD) is often too general and therefore not aligned with individual pedagogical needs identified during teacher observations in accordance with the Danielson Framework. Based on agendas, offerings include *Curriculum planning, Building Response Team Safety, Data, On-line resources, IEP (Individual Education Plan), compliance, and test scoring*. The principal states, “We don’t have anyone in-house to support PD.” Support to improve pedagogical practice is limited to webinars and off-site trainings. The lack of effective staff development and teacher observation data impedes the

improvement of teacher practice based on clear expectations regarding rigor and engagement thus hindering the likelihood of yielding positive student outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The Bronxwood 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