

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

George F. Bristow

Elementary 134

**1330 BRISTOW STREET
BRONX
NY, 10459**

Principal: KENNETH THOMAS

Dates of review: Feb 11 - 12, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Myrna Rodriguez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

George F. Bristow is an elementary school with 727 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 45% Black, 51% Hispanic, 3% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 90.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty align curricula to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and integrate the instructional shifts and use student work and data to refine tasks so that varied learners have access to the curricula. (1.1)
 - The leadership and faculty design the curricula to emphasize high order thinking using non-fiction and informational text in all core subjects with an emphasis on building reading and writing stamina across all grades. Teachers develop academic tasks within grade and subject teams using activities from the CCLS, and use data from student work products to determine how to revise or adjust tasks to ensure that all students, or groups of students, improve academically. For example in the fifth grade teachers analyzed written work in which students gave opinions on the pros and cons of wearing a uniform. They discovered that the majority of students did not cite evidence from text or use transition words. As a result of this analysis, they revised the task to explicitly request that students add these two items in their writing, which resulted in improved work products. The school uses student work from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade showing a steady growth in increased rigor as identified in the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and included in the curriculum maps. Student work products, including that of English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWD) exhibit steady levels of growth in organization, development, length, reflections on writing and peer revisions, thus supporting improved student outcomes.
- Leadership makes strategic organizational decisions using resources to support the school's instructional goals, which is evident in meaningful student work products. (1.3)
 - The leadership and faculty make decisions on the use of resources that leverage student learning promoting positive student behaviors, academically and socially, while maintaining an organized and structured environment. Various technologies including SMART boards, laptops and computers are part of the classroom environment. . All classrooms include learning centers for math and reading, and small group work centers are equipped with manipulatives, leveled libraries, audio players, and laptops. Across classrooms students work on tasks tailored to their needs and use the resources, from manipulatives to calculators, which have been made available. Additionally, the school effectively uses Network resources to develop teacher pedagogy and leadership capacity through various workshops and professional development activities. As a result faculty and paraprofessionals have a sense of ownership and accountability in the school's success. The use of economic and human resources is evident as evidenced in meaningful student work products as students are given opportunities to reach targeted goals through diverse strategies using diverse tools.
 - The school has an action plan that limits teachers' student load by having out-of-class teachers push-in to classes on a daily basis to ensure strategic academic and behavioral support for all students. All teachers hold themselves accountable for the literacy gains of their students and welcome the expertise of the English as second language teachers as they plan interdisciplinary lessons collaboratively. As a consequence of the strategic use of resources, students are attaining the school's instructional

goals, which are evident in the school's data on reading, writing, math, and science, common assessments, and monthly student work. Additionally, schedules for diverse learners are based on reading levels and are structured for 75-minute periods, and a Focus Academy provides targeted instruction for all students in grades 3 to 5, and there are programs for kindergarten through grade 2 for English language learners and newly arrived immigrants. As a result of these organizational decisions, school data demonstrates improved student achievement in reading and writing work products.

- The school community maintains a culture of effective discipline and social emotional supports resulting in a safe and respectful environment, which supports positive academic and personal behaviors. (1.4)
 - The leadership and staff describe the school as a "family" place and students and parents agree. The school provides professional development for teachers aligned to parent and student activities to promote social-emotional supports through on-site programs. The Center for Integrated Teacher Education (CITE) consultants facilitate learning for all teachers on how to consistently address challenging behaviors, and how to foster character building. Students every day recite one of the three character traits from NED, Never give up, Encourage others, and Do your best. Parents are invited to activities where students who exhibit these character traits are awarded with yo yos. Students say that they know that teachers and school leaders will listen to them and cite as examples that their parents are welcome to the school and are able to communicate with teachers after school hours. Consequently, there is academic and personal growth of adults and students through the engagement, communication, and collaboration of all constituencies.
- Across classrooms teachers use rubrics, common assessments, and student work, to assess student progress towards goals providing students and families with actionable feedback and adjusting curricula and tasks. (2.2)
 - Teachers align common assessments to curricula, use reading and writing rubrics, and develop uniform grading policies to assess student strengths, weaknesses, and what teachers need to do to improve student learning to produce meaningful work products. Across classrooms students are given opportunities to self-assess using grade appropriate rubrics in writing. Additionally, teachers check for understanding in various ways including using hand signals, slates, and group presentations. As a result students understand that effort is needed to achieve high levels of thinking and speaking and produce increasingly meaningful work products as seen in portfolios and achievement data in reading, writing, and math.
 - Teachers create and use common assessments from the Common Core Curricula and meet weekly to share individual student results in order to analyze practices and next steps for each student through effective feedback. The school uses a tuning protocol that allows each teacher to reflect on pedagogy and resulting student work, which improves their teaching practices and student performance. Each teacher shares a piece of student work with the team, and during inquiry, team members ask questions to guide the presenting teacher in improving teaching practices by sharing strategies and next steps. Teachers have agreed that they are able to determine how they can guide individual and groups of students by working in collaborative teams and that as a result they are making effective instructional adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that instruction in all classes includes strategies or routines which further promote student independence and offer strategic supports that all students achieve higher-order thinking skills. (1.2)
 - Across classrooms teaching practices and strategies are aligned to the curricula, and the Danielson Framework for Teaching informs the set of beliefs of how students learn best, including questioning and scaffolds which provide multiple entry points into the curricula so that all learners are engaged, including ELLS and SWDs . However discussions at the team and school levels are not strategically targeting high quality supports to achieve higher order thinking skills, and extensions for transitional English language learners and high achievers. Consistent, strategic use of resources, including peer supports and technology, to bridge the language deficiencies of transitional ELLs and higher-level supports for high achievers were not sufficiently evident. As a result, transitional ELLs do not experience high levels of understanding in the content being taught, and consequently are not fully engaged during whole group or strategy lessons. Furthermore, high achievers are not presented with sufficient enrichment activities, thus impacting moving their thinking and work products to higher levels.
- Strengthen the processes to regularly evaluate the quality of school practices to ensure success of implementation of the CCLS. (5.1)
 - The school has an inclusive culture and high levels of mutual self-respect. However, the leadership and faculty do not have consistent processes in place to evaluate the quality of school culture and the ways expectations are developed and shared among school constituents. The school is developing student voice through student activities, including assemblies and clubs, but currently too few students are involved and the structure is in the developing stages. Additionally, teachers are not sufficiently communicating with parents around their children's test scores, assignments, and behavioral reports, although parents have requested further communication. As a result, there are missed opportunities to use student voice, sharing of high expectations with all constituents, and reciprocal conversations with parents, to share information around promoting higher levels of academic development.
 - The leadership and faculty regularly evaluate and adjust curricular and instructional strategies based on assessment data. Furthermore, the school has various strategies for working with ELLs, however, strategic practices for working with transitional ELLs and high achievers, and monitoring of how teachers work with these diverse populations is not consistent across all grades. Thus, for these relevant sub-groups, instructional practices are not yet sufficiently part of the refinement and revision process, which limits closing the achievement gap and students' readiness for college and careers.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: George F. Bristow	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