



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Bronx Green Middle School

Middle School X326

**2441 Wallace Avenue
Bronx
NY 10467**

Principal: Charles Johnson

**Date of review: April 27, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Hadiya J. Daniel-Wilkins**

The School Context

Bronx Green is a middle school with 413 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 23% Black, 59% Hispanic, 8% White, and 9% Asian students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 24% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 91.0%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Focus	Developing
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	Additional Findings	Proficient
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Additional Findings	Proficient
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and teachers can articulate how they ensure that curricula are aligned to CCLS and other content standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data so that individuals and groups of students have access to curricula and cognitively engaging tasks.

Impact

The staffs' curricular decisions build coherence across grades and subject areas promoting access to coherent curricula for all students including ELLs and SWDs.

Supporting Evidence

- Unit plans included the following: content specific Common Core Learning Standards/content standards; independent transfer goals for all students; making meaning of content with essential questions and understandings; acquisition of knowledge through skill development; "close reading" and writing tasks; evaluation of learning using performance tasks and other evidence; summary of key learning events and instruction using pre-assessment and learning events, and progress monitoring and modifications to provide students access to challenging tasks. For example, in English Language Arts students were provided with non-fiction and informational text articles which challenged them to utilize "close reading" to navigate complex text features and academic vocabulary, as well as to complete an informative essay requiring them to, "Compare and contrast the effects of two specific natural disasters."
- Lesson plans in all content areas included the following: enduring understandings, essential questions, Common Core Learning Standards, Bloom's level of cognitive process, objectives, aims, pre-lesson, mini-lesson, student action, teacher action, guided practice, independent practice, check for understanding, groupings, modifications, a plan for when students become confused, and homework, as the school strategically implements the instructional shifts across content areas.
- Teachers used the Frayer model organizer, in unit plans, to support the instructional goal of increasing reading comprehension. When teachers reviewed the vocabulary acquisition of ELL students, who were provided with the Frayer model in classroom tasks, they uncovered no notable progress in ELL students' academic performance. Unit and lesson plans were then refined to increase the use of the "close reading" strategy for ELL students to afford this group occasions to access cognitively engaging tasks.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best. Student work products and discussions reflect an uneven level of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Inconsistent implementation of engaging instructional practices aligned to a belief about how students learn best results in limited occasions for students to demonstrate high levels of cognitive engagement and discourse.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices reflected a belief that questioning was important to students' learning. Questions however, were posed primarily by teachers. For example, teachers were heard asking the following: "Based on the data, can you tell how many people are in a group?" "How do you know it is first person?" "Which row is sulfur?" "What is credit?" With teachers' dominating the asking of questions in classrooms, moments for students to demonstrate high levels of thinking and participation were limited.
- While lesson plans had sections for students to "turn and talk, restate questions, cite evidence, answer questions, and group work," students were observed engaged in teacher-led verbal exchanges. For example, in five of seven classrooms, moments for students to become actively engaged in discussing the classroom task and posing questions to each other, in order to promote rigorous thinking, were not evident. Students sat in groups in classroom configurations, yet had limited opportunities to discuss the work they were assigned to produce. Moments for students to actively engage in cognitively demanding peer discourse were missed.
- Teachers used the workshop model format to deliver instruction. Teachers were seen modeling, guiding practice, providing time for independent practice, and checking for understanding. In some of the classrooms however, the pacing of the teachers' "I do," led to the teacher being at the center of the instructional allocated time, resulting in little time for students to develop their work products.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with school's curricula. Teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Teachers use data reports and provide actionable feedback to students and make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms student work products displayed had grading rubrics affixed with actionable feedback to students in the section titled "Teacher Notes." For example, in 7th grade English Language Arts, after highlighting the student's writing performance on a task rubric, one teacher noted the following, to a student, on a Historical Fiction Journal: "You have good descriptive details. You were able to draw your readers in and keep them engaged. Well-developed plot dialogue and historical facts. Remember if you are writing in the past tense (or whichever tense you choose) make sure you keep (write in) that tense."
- Teachers' analysis of daily skills check-list, I-Ready and Scholastic Reading Inventory data, as well as Measures of Student Learning baseline and interim assessment outcomes, led to decisions to use the Connected Math Project 3 in order to expose students to Common-Core aligned curriculum for math classes across all grade levels. The analysis of the same data also fostered an increase in scaffolding worksheets in the 12:1 classes of students with special needs, and a system for using students' Lexile levels for classroom groupings.
- School leaders and teachers used the item skills analysis data of the New York State, Common Core and New York City ELA and Math examinations to identify students' performing above grade level. A school program was then designed to incorporate an honors class of 34 students on each grade level. Students were strategically programmed to loop with their teachers in order to sustain achievement and to meet their learning needs.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for all staff, which is evidenced through professional development using elements of The Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students.

Impact

This culture for learning supports professional growth and student ownership for learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leader has established a teachers' book club with the required reading of the professional book, *Teach like a Pirate*, by Dave Burgess, by all teachers. The expectations are that all teachers are supported, beyond the annually scheduled professional development sessions, in the implementation of the Danielson' Framework elements in Domains 2 (Classroom Environment) and 3 (Instruction). Teachers are also expected to conduct inter-visitations to support nurturing classroom environments and cognitively demanding instruction.
- To prepare students for the next level, each year, the staff executes an articulation process, which includes one-to-one 8th grade student conferences with their guidance counselor to prepare them to enter high school. Students and parents are supported with reading information through the articulation process. Parent conferences are conducted to provide caregivers of 7th graders the academic and social-emotional expectations for 8th grade. Information delineating high academic expectations is distributed to parents and students at the conference gatherings.
- The school provides programs to support the academic and social-emotional skills development of students as they prepare for the next levels. To that end, 6th graders are programmed for 3 elective periods per week for developing computer skills to support learning at the next levels. Opportunities for students to develop home and career skills with an afterschool Field Study program are provided for 7th graders. Ballroom dancing and trips to Broadway plays have become a part of the school's culture, and the introduction of French as a second language has been included to broaden language choice for students.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals. Distributive leadership structures are in place so that teachers can build leadership capacity and voice decisions.

Impact

Teacher teams use protocols to facilitate inquiry and promote the school’s instructional goals on improving student performance

Supporting Evidence

- The teacher inquiry team was observed using the “Four ‘A’ Text Protocol” to read the article “Purposeful Annotation: A “Close Reading” Strategy that Makes Sense to My Students,” to garner, “What does this mean for our work with our inquiry students and our instructional plan?” Teachers were heard agreeing or arguing with what was noted in the text, and adding what their next teaching steps would be based on the text read. Articulating that the students’ work products they were reviewing were designed to assess students’ proficiency levels on determining main ideas, identifying context clues, and making inferences, teachers were heard sharing accounts of how the method for having students’ annotate text to demonstrate understanding of the aforementioned reading skills was now prompting them to revisit how they were teaching annotation to have students’ demonstrate thoughtful engagement. One teacher stated, “Kids have intense notations; however, they do nothing with them.” The discussion, focused on how “close reading” could support students’ learning, continued.
- Teachers explained how a learning-style survey was conducted at the beginning of the school year to determine how students’ learn best. Teachers expressed that based on their findings on the survey, they were empowered to revise and or create supplemental curricula content to support their students’ learning needs. For example, math teachers described how students were provided with the opportunity to develop math standards skills by creating budgets for independent living situations, and how they were using cooking recipes to support the learning of fractions.
- The school leader has established distributive leadership structures. 8 teachers are enrolled in a Teacher Leadership Program, with the expectation for them to build and design student-centered programs, foster a collegial atmosphere and share best practices for improving student outcomes. These lead teachers were expected to facilitate the reading of the book, *The 5 Dysfunctions of a Team*, in order help strengthen team building and the instructional capacity of staff.