



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**The Young Women's Leadership School of the  
Bronx**

**09X568  
1865 Morris Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10453**

**Principal: LeMarie Laureano**

**Date of review: January 29, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Cheryl McClendon**

## The School Context

The Young Women's Leadership School of the Bronx is a middle school with 251 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 36% Black, 62% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 0% of the students enrolled and girls account for 100%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</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>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

School leaders and faculty integrate the instructional shifts with Common Core-aligned curricula to ensure coherence and support students in preparation for college and career. Curriculum planning and modifications are based upon analysis of student work and data to provide access and cognitive engagement for all learners.

### Impact

Comprehensive mapping, data-based modification and standardized planning of Common Core-aligned curricula promote college and career readiness and access and cognitive engagement for all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- During the leadership meeting, the principal shared that for English language arts instruction, the Expeditionary Learning curriculum was selected for the complex texts and the informational writing tasks that are integrated throughout the units. Teachers also developed Common Core-aligned units of study in English language arts that are alternated monthly with the Expeditionary Learning units.
- Curriculum maps are developed for across grades for all subject areas including but not limited to math, English language arts, social studies, science and Spanish. Each map contains fully-developed units of study. For example, the teacher-developed eighth grade social studies curriculum map comprises comprehensive units that each begin with an essential question and are aligned to the New York City social studies scope and sequence and the Common Core, and College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards in English language arts. This map contains well-planned units of study on the following topics in American history: reconstruction, industrialization and immigration, progressivism, expansionism, economic change, power/morality and global conflict and World War Two to present – challenges of the modern world.
- Across grades and subjects teachers use a common lesson plan format which delineates the pre-assessment, focus, objective, differentiation, Universal Design for Learning strategies, vocabulary, materials, Common Core standards, content-standards, English as a second language standards, other-related standards, Degrees of Knowledge questions, co-teaching accommodations and the “flow of the lesson” format.
- In math, teachers integrate the Connected Mathematics Project 3 curriculum (CMP3) with Engage NY math modules. Based upon data analysis, teacher teams integrate and modify curricular units. For example, school leaders reported that October’s sixth grade math item skills analysis illuminated a deficit in student proficiency in geometry. In response, teachers shortened the number system module in which student proficiency was greater to allow more time for the geometry module.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices reflected the school's beliefs about how students learn best, as informed by the Danielson Framework for teaching. Student work and discussions reflected high-level thinking and participation, however these practices were not observed in some classes.

### Impact

Research-based strategies and technology-based structures support effective differentiation and engagement across classrooms where effectively implemented.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers were observed using different student engagement strategies from the Kagan Cooperative Learning paradigm. Some of the strategies observed across classrooms were peer-to-peer discussion and timed pair-share, wherein each student in a partnership shares her ideas with the other for a full minute. In addition, in one classroom, students placed talking chips (a Kagan Cooperative Learning structure) in the middle of the table, to indicate when it was each of their turns to explain their problem-solving strategy. Through this process, every student had an opportunity to speak uninterrupted, with her peers actively listening.
- In a math class, students were observed working at three different math stations. A few students worked on the teacher-designated absolute value playlist in the technology-based Power MY Learning platform, while another group worked on comparing and ordering integers on the number line and a third group worked in partnerships to watch a video and play a game on graphing coordinates. In this classroom, the teacher circulated and pulled a small group of students for strategy instruction.
- In the School Self Evaluation Survey, the faculty stated that in December the school's leadership council noted a need to work with teachers in differentiating for all learners. Classroom observations confirmed this assessment. While across classrooms teachers were observed implementing various data-informed differentiation strategies, also observed were missed opportunities for effective differentiation and engagement in a couple of classrooms.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Curricula-aligned rubrics, teacher-created assessments and grading policies facilitate actionable feedback to students and teachers. Analysis of common assessments facilitate progress-monitoring and inform curricular modifications.

### Impact

Feedback from rubrics, common assessments and teacher conferences support student progress.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams have developed and adapted a variety of Common Core-aligned rubrics and checklists to measure student progress across grades and subject areas. Some of these are the scientific method rubric, answer, citation conclusion rubric, book review rubric, argumentative writing rubric, Common Core mathematical practice student rubrics and the participation and classwork checklist.
- Teachers use and analyze common assessments to diagnose student proficiency, monitor progress and guide instruction. Performance Series is administered throughout the year to monitor independent reading progress. Measures of Student Learning are administered in every subject and reviewed within each department. Unit tests, quizzes and midterms are administered within each subject.
- Review of the school's Google Doc portal provides evidence of various assessment collection tools used by teachers such as a check for understanding form, a conferring form and a student data tracker. The weekly student data tracker is used to monitor and track students' effort and proficiency in the Common Core standards. All assessment forms are used to collect progress monitoring data and record teacher feedback to students.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

High expectations are consistently conveyed to the entire staff by school leaders and supported through professional development opportunities in a culture of mutual accountability. The faculty also partners with families to communicate high expectations and support student progress.

### Impact

Teachers feel well-supported by the professional development that is provided. Families feel supported and well-informed by school leader and staff.

### Supporting Evidence

- Through participation in the Teachers College Inclusive Classroom Program (TCICP) a coach visits one day a week to conduct coaching cycles for individual teachers. In addition, through a “Computers for Youth” grant, a technology consultant has provided professional development in blended learning.
- Teachers attended *Kagan Cooperative Learning* professional development sessions wherein they studied various strategies to promote student engagement, based on the research of Dr. Spencer Kagan.
- Through membership in the Young Women’s Leadership Network the school conveys high expectations for students through the provision of numerous academic and extra-curricular after-school programs, summer camp for students, and an educational sleepover in the Intrepid Museum and Saturday activities for families.
- The monthly school publication, “The Leopard Times” contains important information for families about school wide events, student government news, curricular highlights and students of the month.
- During the parent meeting, parents expressed their satisfaction with the academic and socio-emotional support that the faculty provides for their children. Parents also stated that they receive real-time communication regarding student progress, attendance and any other issues through Pupil Path online communication platform. Parents express that teachers provide on-going support in helping them to understand the demands of the Common Core Learning Standards.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The school has established systems that engage teacher teams in analysis of student work, assessment data and vital elements of teacher practice, resulting in improvements in teacher practice and goal attainment for targeted groups of students. Teacher leadership and collaborative decision-making is fortified through the embedded distributed leadership structures.

### Impact

Embedded systems and structures for teacher teams and distributed leadership support student progress and teacher development.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams log their meeting agendas, minutes and attendance in Google Docs which facilitates school-wide sharing and monitoring by school leaders.
- Horizontal grade level teams meet once a week. Within the teacher team meeting, one member assumes the role of manager. The manager assembles all of the data for the case study student. The teacher team discussion is titled, “girl talk” because this is an all-girl’s school. Teacher teams follow the Looking at Student Work protocol. Team members review the lesson and objectives. Participants analyze the student work, with focus on what the student can and cannot do and independently score the work using a Common Core-aligned rubric. Teachers share and norm their analyses. The teacher of the case study student then discusses challenges that may have been encountered and new learning that she or he has gleaned as she or he reflects on the efficacy of the lesson. Conclusively, all participants share any new understandings they have gained from the session. Teachers record “take aways” comprising notes on what was learned from the session and what concrete teaching strategy each will immediately apply in his or her practice as a result of the meeting.
- Across the school, weekly vertical department meetings are conducted for teachers to engage in content-specific curricular planning. Vertical teams also engage in inter-visitations and conduct inquiry-based lesson study.
- Teacher teams developed and use rubrics to self-assess pedagogical practice such as Common Core-aligned mathematical practice rubrics for instruction and the rubric for task development.
- An embedded distributed leadership structure, the Leadership Council, comprising of school leaders, department chairs and teacher leaders that are funded through the Teacher Incentive Fund Grant, collaborate weekly to constantly develop the professional development map based on surveyed and observed teacher need.