



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 043 Jonas Bronck

Elementary School X043

**165 Brown Place
Bronx
NY 10454**

Principal: Dr. Giovanna Delucchi

**Date of review: December 17, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Rosemary Stuart**

The School Context

P.S. 043 Jonas Bronck is an elementary school with 502 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 0% Asian, 28% Black, 70% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 9% English Language Learners and 20% students with disabilities. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 91.3%.

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	Additional Findings	Proficient
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 <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , 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	Celebration	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:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Teachers use and create content area assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school's curricula. These assessments are used to determine student progress toward grade level benchmarks.

Impact

Teachers adjust instruction according to the outcomes of assessments and students receive actionable feedback to improve their work.

Supporting Evidence

- At the beginning of the school year, the school administers baseline assessments using the grade level benchmarks of *Fountas and Pinnel* in all grades K – 5. The results of these baseline assessments were used to design individualized instruction for students. For example, in grade 3, 59% of the students were at or above the grade level benchmark at the beginning of the year. The remaining students were identified for intervention services such as after school tutoring and Saturday academy.
- A theme of professional development this year has been on the use of formative assessment, with a particular focus on using information about student learning during the lesson to form groups for follow-up instruction. This practice was seen in one lesson in which students used red, yellow, and green cards to indicate their understanding of how to learn about the past through photographs. Using the information from the student self-assessment, the teacher regrouped students for a follow-up lesson.
- After analyzing the data from baseline assessments, the school leaders planned a schedule of assessment that allowed them more time to provide academic intervention in the first few marking periods with the goal of catching up to the district-wide assessment goals in later marking periods. Their assessment plan outlines in detail when students in each grade will be assessed on what material in all core subjects.
- In preparation for meetings with school leaders, each teacher creates grade level data action plans in English Language Arts and math that use assessment data to outline the standards that still need to be reinforced, the resources they will use, and the strengths and areas for improvement for groups of students. For example, a fourth grade action plan for operations and algebraic thinking analyzes how students can write equations with a letter standing for the unknown number.
- Teachers and students use the rubrics that accompany their tasks to give advice on how to improve and to self-assess. A teacher challenged a grade 2 student to extend a strategy to solve two-step problems. One student stated that rubrics describe what you need to do to get a better grade.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Teaching practices are beginning to reflect a belief system about how students learn best but there is inconsistent application of teaching strategies to provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

There is uneven engagement in challenging tasks and not all students demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal states there is a common belief system that all students learn best when they are engaged in challenging activities that develop and promote critical thinking. This belief was reflected in instructional practices in one class where children were drawing arrays to model the commutative property of multiplication. One student was able to make a connection with the related property of addition by stating that in both operations, “you can switch the numbers around.” In another math class, students were using an annotation strategy to understand word problems by circling the key numbers, underlining the question and putting a box around the math action words.
- In other classes, the children were not consistently engaged in tasks that challenged them. For example, in some classes the teachers called on students who raised their hands, in one case calling on the same student multiple times, while other students were not attentive and appeared to be distracted, thus losing opportunities to demonstrate higher-order skills.
- In one classroom, portfolios in science and social studies contained only a few pieces of student work and the items in the folders showed low levels of challenging work that required students to fill in the blanks or provide short answers, not allowing students to explore the material using a variety of learning styles.
- Although there has been a focus on ensuring equity and increasing student engagement through the use of random name generators and equity sticks, there was little evidence of this taking place during lessons, even though in several classrooms, the materials were at hand for the teacher to use.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders ensure curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards or content area standards and coherently integrate the shifts and tasks that emphasize rigorous habits and skills.

Impact

Curricula are designed to promote college and career readiness for students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leaders look at lesson plans as part of the observation process. They noticed from last year that occasionally the lesson plan did not explicitly include higher-order questions and occasionally the objective in the plan did not match the delivery of the lesson. They provided professional development to the teachers on incorporating higher-order questions into unit and lesson plans. As a result, lesson plans now exhibit stronger alignment of learning objectives and consistently incorporate questions that challenge students on a deeper level. One observation from October outlined the deficiencies in a lesson plan and the resulting low level of instruction. A subsequent lesson plan from the same teacher in December included higher-order questions such as asking students to explain how they are alike or different from a character in the story.
- Teachers include the instructional shifts in their lesson plans with a focus on using text-based evidence, academic vocabulary, and balancing fiction and non-fiction texts. One lesson plan referenced the Common Core and the Blueprint for the Arts standards and required students to self-assess their performance at a recent recital. Teachers stated that they design unit and lesson plans as a grade team referencing the Common Core standards, Hess's *Cognitive Rigor Matrix*, Webb's *Depth of Knowledge*, and their adopted curricula.
- The school leaders adapt lessons from *ReadyGen* and *Go Math!* and supplement these curricula with material designed to focus on the writing process and guided reading. They also incorporated programs, such as *RAZ-Kids*, designed for students to use on computers so they could use them both at home and at school.
- A differentiated lesson plan for a self-contained grade 3 and 4 bridge class enables groups of students to read texts at various reading levels. In another lesson, the students were grouped to address essential questions about two different texts. One group was exploring how a character's journal showed the impact westward moving settlers had on the native cultures. The other group was discussing how a daughter portrayed her famous father, Mark Twain, in her writing.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and staff consistently communicate high expectations for student achievement to parents and they establish a culture that supports students as they work toward meeting these expectations.

Impact

Families understand what their children are expected to do to be successful and the school partners with parents to help prepare their children for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses an owl to illustrate their motto, “The P.S. 43 Owls Have Big Eyes!” Their belief statement is written as an acrostic poem with the first letters spelling “big eyes,” which is recited daily. One line of the belief statement is, “Young minds can grow for college and careers.”
- Parents and students sign a compact that outlines the responsibilities of the school, the parents, and the students. The compact states that the school will provide opportunities for parents to review school progress and brainstorm suggestions for improvement. It requires parents to agree to participate in decisions relating to the education of their children, and outlines how students can share responsibility for their own academic achievement.
- Parent-teacher conferences include a status report on the progress of each student outlining where the child should be by the end of the year. Parents commented on how useful it was to know what their child was supposed to be doing, and how they could help their child work toward those goals. One teacher stated that after parent-teacher conferences, many students come to school with new books that are at higher reading levels because parents know how to push their children to excel.
- All communications to parents are translated into other languages or are enlarged for vision-impaired parents. An agenda for a math workshop held for parents shows that they were given information about how to access online interactive lessons and homework for their children in addition to learning about grade-level skills and rubrics.
- Students explained that the reason some teachers make them read every night is so they can increase their stamina and be able to get a better grade as they “build toward the next level.” One student stated that the texts on the State tests are hard and you need to practice so you can answer the questions at the end of a long story.

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

Teacher teams on all grades engage in inquiry-based collaborations. Teachers develop leadership skills and have a voice in key decisions.

Impact

The instructional capacity of teachers is improved and teachers make decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Inquiry teams on each grade level are using protocols to look at student work, with a particular focus on student writing. One team was observed using a protocol to analyze an on-demand writing piece. They explained that this protocol is new to their group and they will reflect on how their practice has improved as a result of its use when they have completed a full cycle of review.
- Teachers were observed following an agenda that included discussing how to create a vacation packet of tasks that would focus on strengthening writing skills of comparing and contrasting. They discussed how to make the packet engaging by incorporating research about diverse winter holiday traditions.
- Five teachers are participating in a leadership institute where they learn about various protocols for looking at student work. They return to the school to facilitate schoolwide professional learning sessions where they have modeled how to use these strategies.
- Teachers state that they have input into school improvement initiatives and that they feel a strong partnership with the parents and school leaders. One teacher said that when she requested leveled reading cards that would support a new initiative she had learned about at a workshop, the school leaders purchased the materials immediately. Teachers were using these cards during class visits.