Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Bronx Little School
Elementary X691
1827 Archer Street
Bronx
NY 10460

Principal: Janice Gordon

Date of review: February 12, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Matthew Angell
Bronx Little School is an elementary school with 363 students from grade Pre-Kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 20% Black, 67% Hispanic, 1% White, 10% Asian students, 1% American Indian, and 1% Multi-Racial. 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 2013-2014 was 92.0%.

### School Quality Criteria

#### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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#### School Culture

<table>
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<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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#### Systems for Improvement

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<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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### Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards, and integrate the instructional shifts. The curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize higher order thinking skills and rigorous habits.

**Impact**

Purposeful curricula decisions by school leaders and faculty build coherence and college and career readiness for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School created units of study follow a common template that includes essential questions, anchor Common Core Learning Standards, academic vocabulary, formative assessments, summative performance tasks, and scaffolds for multiple entry points. A review of curricula units and tasks shows that units are aligned and promote the instructional shifts including the balancing of informational, fictional texts, and deep understanding.

- Teacher’s lesson plans include scaffolds for groups of learners and differentiated tasks to address student learning needs. For instance, in a 4th grade mathematics integrated co-teaching lesson, teachers planned for different levels of support for students that included tiered questioning in group problem sets, strategic manipulatives for certain groups, and guided group instruction for specific students.

- Unit tasks require that students emphasize rigorous habits and demonstrate higher order thinking skills. Units, across grades and content, include formative assessments that align to increasing levels of depth of knowledge. For instance, in a 4th grade English language arts unit students read and analyzed multiple mentor texts, in both fiction and non-fiction, with layered tasks throughout the unit on narrative writing. The summative task for the unit required students to write their own narrative writing piece, and incorporate writing strategies and structures from their anchor texts.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics that are loosely aligned to the tasks and unit assessments. Across classrooms, teacher assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact
Students receive limited feedback on their work and often are unaware of their next steps as learners. Teachers are not always making effective adjustments in the classroom to meet all student needs.

Supporting Evidence
- Teacher teams analyze student performance on rubric based assessments, look at each individual trait result, and student work products. However, a review of student work portfolios revealed that teachers do not consistently provide actionable feedback to students. On many work products and assessments reviewed, teachers put comments such as “great job!” or only circled the score for each rubric trait. Teachers stated that they use rubrics to provide information to themselves for the purpose of differentiation and not always to provide students feedback.

- Across classrooms, student self-assessment was limited and often students did not understand what the expectations of the task were or how to do well on it. During a 3rd grade mathematics lesson, student groups had to present out their problem solving solution; there were clear expectations set by the teacher as to how groups were required to present their solution and what information they needed to include. However, in another class, students were revising an extended writing piece with no rubric to guide their work, and many students were unclear as to what their writing needed to include.

- Students reported that they received mostly verbal feedback from their teachers and most students were unaware of what they needed to work on or how to improve their grades in class. One student stated that they have used rubrics, but they only receive them after the assignment and usually with just a grade on it.

- Across classrooms, checks for understanding were limited to teacher questions and student conferencing. Teachers circulated the room during student discussions and provided verbal feedback to some students. In one 1st grade English language arts lesson, the teacher used an iPad to collect conferencing notes on individual students and tracked student progress over time. However, the practice of recording students’ responses and adjusting the lesson was not observed consistently across classes.
Additional Findings

<table>
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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflected the schools articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Across classrooms teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact
Teaching practices, informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and the instructional shifts engage all learners in appropriately challenging tasks and allow students to demonstrate higher order thinking skills in their work products.

Supporting Evidence
- Across classrooms, teachers scaffolded questions and provided supports through manipulatives, differentiated problem sets, and differentiated texts to support students in producing high quality work. For instance, in a 3rd grade mathematics lesson each group had multi-layered problems to solve at their table as a group. Questions varied by group and the teacher prepared materials that were colored coded to help some students organize their information as they went through the problems. Students worked collaboratively to solve their problems and groups shared out at the end of the class. Groups used Smartboard technology to demonstrate their thinking to the class.

  - Across classrooms, teaching practices were aligned to the school core beliefs in student collaboration and the workshop model. For instance, during a 1st grade mathematics lesson students worked together in pairs, using manipulatives, to measure and compare objects around the classroom. Students used appropriate academic vocabulary when discussing their measurements as teachers circulated student groups to check for student understanding.

  - Students in a 1st grade English language arts class were working on revisions to their project on animals. Students pulled relevant information about their chosen animal from multiple texts and created a booklet of information. Students created a cover page, table of contents, and multiple pages of text and visuals. Students were able to explain how they chose relevant information for their book and how they changed the words to be their own.
Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide ongoing training. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness to families.

Impact
School systems of accountability ensure that staff meets the schools’ high expectations. Ongoing feedback about student progress helps families understanding progress towards those expectations.

Supporting Evidence
- School leaders provide structured professional development aligned with feedback gathered during the observation cycle and informed by staff surveys. The professional development committee created a yearlong calendar aligned to school wide goals and objectives and has revised the calendar to include topics that have surfaced during the cycle of observations. For instance, the school has created more sessions on using assessment in the classroom and has identified expert teachers on staff to lead the workshops.

- School leaders communicate expectations through frequent teacher feedback, and constant monitoring of materials. Faculty engage in frequent “observation debrief” meetings that cover highlights and next steps. The principal monitors all classroom materials and teachers regularly engage in conversation regarding the use of those materials in instruction.

- The school provides structured parent workshops throughout the year on Common Core Learning Standards, literacy, mathematics, school assessments, and state exams. During a recent parent workshop the school reviewed changes standards, engaged parents in sample questions, and practiced learning activities parents could do at home.

- Teacher and parents connect through newsletters, phone calls, emails, progress reports, and conferences. Teachers effectively use Tuesday afternoons to schedule meetings with parents to speak about student progress. Parents stated that they appreciated the workshops that help them understand the changes in the standards and also appreciated the school’s open door policy. Parents stated that they could speak with their child’s teacher at any time, but appreciated that there was dedicated time on Tuesdays for them to come into the school.
Findings
Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have built leadership capacity.

Impact
Teacher team work has improved teacher practice and progress towards goals for groups of students. Teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence
- Teacher teams review student assessment data on grade teams, monitor student progress, and identify supports and instructional revisions to support student learning. A 4th grade teacher team was observed analyzing the mathematics unit post-assessment and sharing best practices to support students in the upcoming unit who did not make progress from the pre-assessment. They noticed that although a majority of students made progress from the pre-assessment data they still needed more scaffolds for students with disabilities.

- Teacher schedules include three common planning periods a week for teachers to look at student work and make curriculum adjustments using protocols. Teachers set agendas for their meetings aligned to team goals and objectives. School leaders monitor and support the work of the team in identifying students in need of extra support and curricular planning. Teaching practices are monitored using Advance data from cycles of observation.

- School leaders have engaged teacher leaders in professional development, curriculum, and school culture committees to ensure teachers have a voice in key decisions. Teachers stated that school leaders consistently listen to their needs and take them into consideration. Teachers stated that school leaders have given them extra time in their schedules to adjust curricula and have used teachers’ strengths to design professional development opportunities.