Quality Review Report

2016-2017

The Bronx Mathematics Preparatory School
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 08X375
456 White Plains Rd.
Bronx
NY 10473

Principal: Dyon Rozier

Dates of Review:
May 11, 2017 - May 12, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Lenneen Gibson
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Celebration to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Focus to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as Additional Finding. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

The Bronx Mathematics Preparatory School serves students in grade 6 through grade 8. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
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<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>Additional Finding</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 Finding</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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### School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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<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>Area of Celebration</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

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<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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<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 Finding</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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Area of Celebration

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

High expectations are conveyed to the staff through professional learning and written communication that reflects the Danielson Framework for Teaching. School leaders and staff consistently communicate high expectations to families connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the school community, provide training, and have a system of accountability to ensure those expectations are met. School leaders and staff offer ongoing feedback to help families understand student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff participate in a faculty study group. Administrators and staff were observed conducting a book study on a text entitled, Never Work Harder Than Your Students. Members read the chapter, “Expect to Get Your Students There.” The meeting started with members receiving a quote and reflecting with a partner on how the quote resonated. One responder stated, “Based on the quote, there are new expectations every day, especially when it has to do with behavior.” The facilitator asked the group to reflect on how the quote would impact instruction. Members of the group stated that it is important to meet your students where they are, and it is necessary to backwards plan by having expectations and aligning them to the standards. As a result of this book study, teachers reflected on their practice and made small changes in their approach in order to meet students’ needs. Staff members use the book study to connect with colleagues and evaluate the supports provided for students with the same lens.

- School leaders consistently communicate to the entire staff high expectations for instruction, professional learning, and communication that is grounded in the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Expectations for instruction are outlined in notices such as science and math department non-negotiables. Leaders delineate notices with specific examples for planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. Administrators conduct talks with teachers that are rooted in analyzing student assessment data to discern trends and patterns and then discussing changes to instruction and the impact of these on student performance. Administrators conduct classroom walk-throughs, assessing the classroom environment, learning objectives, and instructional strategies, and then provide feedback to teachers. Leaders also provide teachers with professional learning opportunities on topics such as assessment of English Language Learners (ELLs), setting instructional outcomes through learning objectives, and scaffolding strategies. Lastly, the administration communicates with the staff through a weekly newsletter that lauds staff for their work, lists upcoming professional development workshops, notes parental involvement events, and lauds students and staff for their accomplishments. School leaders hold staff accountable for expectations through the observation process and by having teachers facilitate professional development sessions for their colleagues.

- Administrators and staff communicate high expectations connected to college and career readiness and provide feedback to families to keep them apprised of their children’s progress towards those expectations through online grading platforms, letters sent to the home, monthly newsletters, phone calls, progress reports, and weekly parent engagement meetings. The school partners with parents by hosting family forums and workshops informing parents about the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. The school also hosts parent workshops on topics such as Hands-on Scientific Engagement, Academic Success, High School Search and Responding to Challenging Behavior. During the parent meeting, parents attested that the school is very accommodating and that the communication between the school and the parents is “super good.”
Area of Focus

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
Teachers use common assessments aligned to the school's curricula to determine student progress toward goals. Most teachers use varied methods to check for understanding, including student self-assessment.

Impact
Faculty across most classrooms use student data to adjust curricula and instruction, and students in most classrooms engage in self-assessment. However, checks for understanding do not lead to on-the-spot adjustments in some classrooms and not all classrooms have implemented self-assessment for students, hindering teachers’ ability to meet the needs of all learners and limiting some students’ awareness of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses common assessments such as iReady and pre and post assessment data to determine student progress towards goals across grades and subject areas. Student data across grades in mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) show a significant increase in the average scale score. Similarly, pre-and post-assessments in mathematics and science, disaggregated by standard, also show an increase in student performance. As a result of the observed improvements in student performance data, iReady has been incorporated as a learning center across classrooms to provide students more opportunities to access the program. iReady data is also included in student progress reports to ensure that teachers and students can monitor progress.

- Teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of checks for understanding and student self-assessment. For example, in a math class, the teacher checked for understanding through questioning, such as, “Why is it difficult to determine the area of Pugsley Creek Park?” and “Is there an area of Pugsley Creek Park that is easy to find?” The teacher walked around to monitor student work and, based on the noticings, the teacher adjusted the lesson by giving the students a choice of which problem to solve. In a science class, the teacher checked for understanding by posing a density-related problem to the class. Based on the students’ responses, the teacher adjusted the lesson by conducting a quick re-teach of density and its relationship to the floating/sinking of objects. In another math class, the teacher checked for understanding by conferencing with student groups and documenting the interactions through conference notes. The teacher made the comment, “I like how you are drawing lines and not going over 71.”

- In a math class, checks for understanding occurred through questioning and the use of standing, talking, expression, peer-partnerships (STEPP), a schoolwide approach to build confidence where students stand and deliver their answers to their class. The teacher asked students who felt comfortable to stand and share the “area” of Pugsley Creek Park. The teacher charted how many students stood up and made an adjustment to invite those standing to share if their response were slightly different. In an ELA class, the teacher checked for understanding through questioning student groups. Examples of questions included, “Does that support the claim?” “Using context clues, what is the definition of catastrophic?” and “Where in the text did you get that information?” Although the teacher posed questions, there were no adjustments made to the lesson based on class data. Although most teachers are making adjustments to instruction based on information gathered through checks for understanding, this practice is not yet evident in some classrooms. Although students across classes also had access to a rubric to self-assess their work, the practice of self and peer assessment is not yet evident in some classrooms.
## Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### Findings
Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize the use of text evidence. Teachers modify curricula and academic tasks using student work and data.

### Impact
Curricula and academic tasks across grades and subject areas emphasize higher-order thinking skills and are refined so that a diversity of learners have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged.

### Supporting Evidence

- An eighth grade ELA task had students write a character analysis from the text *The Giver.* Students were required to use evidence from the novel to explain elements such as setting and show how the selected character differs from others in the text. Likewise, a seventh grade ELA task asked students to write an extended response about a societal issue that a character in *The Outsiders* faced, as well as, reflect on their own experiences. Similarly, a sixth grade ELA writing task required students to identify a central idea/theme of a poem. The task requires students to interpret the poem and articulate how its form and literary techniques convey meaning. Across classes, lessons require students to provide text evidence to support their claims and interpretations of literature.

- During meetings with teachers, they stated that modifications are made to the curricula based on *On Demand,* Fountas and Pinnel (F&P), iReady, and content specific pre- and post- assessment data. A seventh and eighth writing unit plan showed modifications to include the choice of a mentor text and the addition of grade eight Common Core Learning Standards. An eighth grade ELA reading curriculum map shows adjustments to two units to bridge the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) and Core Ready curricula. A science unit plan about weather shows revisions, such as, the addition of entrance and exit tickets, using New York State science exam questions, incorporating student friendly learning targets, using technology, and adding more hands-on activities.

- Lesson plans across grades and subject areas show modifications to strategically group students based on F&P, as well as, baseline performance data. Additionally, lesson plans include the assignment of individual students to small groups, such as, *on track, mastery, and challenge* groups. Math curriculum maps show revisions to include additional days for review and re-teaching to enhance student learning. Lastly, an ELA lesson plan shows small group instruction for ELLs that includes reading comprehension and language supports.
Findings

Across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect schoolwide teaching practices, such as STEPP, that align to the curricula and mirror an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best.

Impact

Teaching practices such as STEPP are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. Student discussions and work products reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- The school’s instructional focus states, “If teachers use student data to inform instruction, then students will engage in learning experiences, which include opportunities for peer partnerships, where they problem-solve and justify claims through discussion and writing.” This is embodied in a school-wide practice known as STEPP. When executing STEPP, students stand up, address their class, and engage in student-to-student discussions. For example, in an ELA class with diverse learners, the learning objective required students to be able to summarize texts from the biography genre. Students read an article about the civil rights activist Ruby Bridges. Individual students engaged in STEPP as they cited information from the text about the important details in the article. In a social studies class, students were engaged in a discussion about the effects of the Great Depression. Students were observed contributing their ideas to the discussion using STEPP and “pushing back” on one another’s points by clarifying a student’s misconception.

- In a science class with diverse learners, students conducted a station activity that investigated the relationship between mass and volume. Students applied STEPP on the interactive white board by justifying whether a cube would float or sink in water with a known density. Similarly, in an ELA class with diverse learners, students demonstrated STEPP as they evaluated a student’s writing piece using the Teachers College Writing Rubric. The student stated, “I would give him a three. The writer laid out a well-supported argument.”

- Across classes visited, student work products and discussions reflected high levels of student thinking and participation. In a math class, the teacher tasked students with finding the area of an irregular polygon. Students looked at a map of Central Park and Pugsley Creek Park, which is adjacent to the school. The teacher prompted students to engage in a turn-and-talk responding to the question, “Why is it easy to find the area of Central Park?” In their groups, students explained to one another that it was easier to find the area of Central Park because of its shape, which resembled a rectangle. On the other hand, Pugsley Creek Park’s shape has curves. In an ELA class, students engaged in a turn and talk to discuss the four elements found in argumentative texts. Students used a “tracing an argument” scaffold for support as they conducted their discussions. In a math class, students constructed histograms of their class’s assessment scores. Students in pairs were engaged in student-to-student discussions as they used chart paper to construct their data frequency tables and histograms.
**Additional Finding**

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
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**Findings**

Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. School leaders utilize teacher observation data to facilitate differentiated professional development for teachers.

**Impact**

School leaders’ use feedback to teachers and observation data to design and facilitate professional development that promotes teacher development and professional growth.

**Supporting Evidence**

- A review of an observation report demonstrates an alignment between leader feedback to teachers and the school’s instructional focus. In one report, the school leader provides feedback to a teacher focused on questioning and discussion techniques which correlate to the instructional focus of emphasizing peer partnerships. Recommendations to the teacher include using strategies that prompt more student-to-student interactions and incorporating questions from the New York State assessments into future lessons. In addition, the school leader provided the teacher with professional resources on questioning and discussion techniques. The teacher applied this feedback in the next lesson using the recommendations and resources provided.

- Sample observation reports provide feedback that captures teachers’ challenges and next steps. One observation report shows evidence of leader feedback on student engagement which also aligns with the school’s instructional focus. The school leader provides the teacher with detailed student engagement strategies, tools to maximize student participation, as well as, professional reading resources to support growth in student engagement practices. In another observation report, the school leader provides feedback on questioning and discussion techniques, more specifically, on creating an environment for students to pose higher-order thinking questions. Recommendations to the teacher include incorporating content and instructional charts to increase students’ opportunities for higher-level questioning and engagement. Another recommendation invites the teacher to conduct an intervisitation with a colleague to observe the classroom environment, focusing on the use of charts.

- School leaders conduct an analysis of observations, walkthroughs, and feedback data to develop and implement a differentiated approach to professional development planning and support for teachers. Professional development aligns to the school’s instructional area of focus, as well as, the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and is offered in a series. Examples of the topics in the professional learning series include the reading of resources such as, “Golden Rules for Engaging Students in Learning Activities,” “How to Start Academic Conversations,” and “What are Multiple Entry Points?” The professional planning template also identifies the expected outcomes as a result of each professional learning opportunity. Data from observations is also used to make internal promotional decisions such as teachers’ capacity to become Peer Instructional Coaches (PICs).
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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Findings

Leadership opportunities as grade and content leaders and cabinet members foster collaboration with peers and administration. Teacher teams analyze student work and assessment data to develop new strategies and improve instructional practices.

Impact

Distributive leadership structures ensure that teachers have a voice in making decisions that affect student learning across the school. Professional collaborations that analyze student work result in improved teaching practices and successful student learning outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams’ analysis of student work provide a data-based rationale that informs their decisions to adjust instructional practices and create goals for groups of students. For instance, a math team was observed using a prescribed protocol to explore the efficacy of the implementation of portions of a math strategy known as set up a plan, observe, look for a solution, verify, and explain (SOLVE). More specifically, the team looked at student work to analyze how well the students incorporated the SOL portions of SOLVE. The team looked at a variety of work samples ranging from high to low performing. Teachers determined what the next steps were for the students, as well as, the math department. Teachers discussed providing more opportunities for student-to-student discussions, including pairing a student with an “expert,” having students critique each other’s work, and conducting gallery walks to provide peer feedback. Team members identified departmental next steps which included conducting an error analysis of student work, placing an emphasis on vocabulary for the sixth graders, using the S and O portion of SOLVE across departments, and focusing on error analysis for grade seven. The math team meets weekly to share their lessons and strategies and have refined their math assessments to include New York State test questions in daily lessons. Teachers also noted improvement in students who are on the cusp of a level two proficiency. Across the grades, mathematics iReady data showed percent increases in students attaining various mathematical standards.

- A review of teacher team meeting notes shows that the science team used student assessment data from a performance baseline to determine effective next steps. Teachers noted that students scored poorly on two station activities. Consequently, teachers planned to re-teach the concepts that correlated with those station activities and provide students with a study guide for support. Based on the notes, students will have an opportunity to repeat the station activity and the science team will the review new assessment results. Additional science team meeting notes revealed teachers analyzed an item skills analysis of the results of the New York State science exam. As an outgrowth of that data analysis, teachers devised a science department plan of action to address topics that posed a challenge for students assessed. The action plan includes the standards and a timetable for completion. Pre-assessment iReady science assessment data showed forty-six students scored less than fifty percent and post assessment data showed thirty-two students scoring less than fifty percent.

- Distributive leadership structures such as grade and content leaders and membership in the instructional cabinet provide teachers a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school. For example, teachers that are part of the instructional cabinet review curriculum maps, are instrumental in providing feedback to their colleagues and make adjustments to content curricula. Additionally, teachers on the instructional cabinet team were involved in constructing the school’s instructional focus. Members also review iReady data with the administration to determine which students are ready to move to the next instructional level.