Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Bronx Delta School
Elementary 08X392
650 Hollywood Ave.
Bronx
NY 10465

Principal: Maria Rogalle

Dates of Review:  
May 22, 2017 - May 23, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince
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

Bronx Delta School serves students in grade PK through grade 2. 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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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## School Culture

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<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>
</tr>
<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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</tbody>
</table>

## Systems for Improvement

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<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>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

The school consistently promotes a culture of high expectations around college and career readiness for students and families through the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and offers ongoing and detailed feedback and guidance supports to prepare students for the next level.

Impact

As a result of the consistent focus on high expectations, all constituents contribute to a culture of learning and high expectations so that students are on a clear path to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has established partnerships with families to support students’ progress toward college and career readiness. This is shown through well attended open houses, parents’ active participation on the School Leadership Team, and participation in school presentations. As a parent stated in a well-attended meeting with parents, “There is a focus on independence and this school pushes you hard to be proud of your work”. Several parents stated, “There is a constant flow of communication from the school.” This information includes information from the teachers who stress positive interactions with their children, the advisors and support personnel and the principal, who knows every student and greets students and parents every morning. ClassDojo, along with an on-line free app called Bloomz, assist parents in learning structures to implement at home as well as see pictures of their children during class time and communicate with other parents and teachers. Weekly newsletters are prepared by each grade to share subject area information along with monthly newsletters prepared by the administration and parent coordinator to highlight important events, trips and reminders.

- A community building program called Tribes is followed in each grade where students receive a specialty class once a week focusing on social and emotional connections through literature. Tribes philosophy is designed to support schools in creating a secure, risk-free learning environment that looks at the whole child, emphasizing high expectations for all students in both academic and social-emotional behaviors. Monthly Tribes newsletters are sent home to parents with the book of the month to ensure that the connection is extended to home. Students and families are asked to adhere to the Tribes agreement that involves academic goals and mutual respect and safety.

- Clear and consistent communication of expectations has resulted in a drastic improvement in student behavior and overall improvement in school culture as evidenced by a reduction in Online Occurrence Reports (OORS) and an increase in monthly attendance rates. The school has focused on students knowing “where you are and what do you want to be” in guidance sessions and within the curriculum. There are clubs like middle school readiness and a free enrichment program through Bronx Arts Ensemble. Bronx Engineering, a CBO, comes into the school to teach classes in upper grades on the early stages of coding with ScratchJr.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices reflect a coherent set of beliefs informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points and high quality supports and extensions into the curricula for all students.

Impact

These teaching practices ensure that all learners are engaged in challenging tasks that enable them to demonstrate higher-order think skills and active learning. However, there are missed opportunities for the advanced student to have extensions for learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Students across grades demonstrate competency in literacy by completing performance tasks on fiction and non-fiction reading, writing, speaking and listening. Assignments are aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards and a set of beliefs aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. In all classrooms visited, students participated in class discussions by responding to both teacher and student generated questions. Multiple entry points were observed in some classrooms with differentiated work assignment and higher level questioning. In a grade one Integrated Co-Teaching class there were four different assignments based on achievement levels, including general education students and students with disabilities. Students were working to gather information about different non-fiction topics of their choice, such as “old barns” and “sea glass.” Some groups were working on sounds, another was singing as a strategy to identify works on a chart, while others were examining sea glass and making observations. Teachers were either at a table or circulating making notes. Students in a grade two class were engaged in student-to-student discussions for an opinion writing assignment with a conversational prompts chart displayed to help with appropriate responses about important parts in their books. High quality extensions and supports were also evident in some classrooms, but overall, the use of these quality extensions for higher achieving students and supports to advance learning were not as prominent, resulting in fewer opportunities for all students to engage in challenging tasks.

- Student groupings were flexible, depending on the need to challenge all learners. Teachers use visual, leveled texts and a variety of graphic organizers, assuring scaffolding. In some classes teachers asked open-ended questions to push student thinking, facilitate responses and give students an opportunity to deepen their thinking by questioning each other during the think-pair-share portion of the lesson as well as in whole class discussions. In a grade one general education class with English Language Learners (ELLs), students were at different table groups charting to show base ten checks, and identifying numbers ten less or ten more than a number on the chart. They were required to share out explanations with each other using reason and evidence. Groupings include remedial, on level, and enrichment groups which were using a game involving throwing dice to write numbers on their white board and then create their own problems.

- Across all subject areas, projects are incorporated to increase student engagement and expose students to a wide variety of instructional tools and practices. Teachers are focused on aligning advanced instructional strategies to complement the rigor of the curriculum. However, academic tasks vary in opportunities for extensions for higher-performing students, limiting accelerated learning for all students.
**Findings**

All curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. High-order skills are consistently emphasized for all learners across grades and content areas. However, coherence across all grades and subject areas is not entirely aligned to support higher order thinking and rigorous tasks.

**Impact**

The school’s curricular decisions build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all learners. Across grades and content areas, academic tasks through unit and lesson planning embed Common Core Learning Standards, Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* and using Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* (*DOK*) questioning techniques to design task and skills that require more critical thinking.

**Supporting Evidence**

- New structures have been put into place such as a master schedule and changes in the organizational system with a consistent “flow of the day” *posted* on each teacher’s door and certified teachers in all subject areas including a movement class and English as a Second Language. The entire school is being supported by the administrators in an effort to build coherence on implementation of a rigorous curriculum with higher order thinking skills embedded into all lessons, including the workshop for reading within a balanced literacy approach. Reading units of study are designed by *Teachers College Reading and Writing Project* and then customized by teachers to focus on the needs of each individual student. All teachers are trained and certified in the *Tribes* protocol for social-emotional learning. The school cohesively integrates the instructional shifts and content standards across all curricula with rigorous tasks, learning experiences and multiple entry points supporting foundational knowledge that promotes college and career readiness. The school is deepening its commitment to coherence within the math curricula through whole and small group work and one-to-one conferencing.

- Many teachers have adopted Common Core Learning Standards, instructional shifts, learning outcomes, aims, essential questions, potential misunderstandings, evidence of data, vocabulary, *Universal Design for Learning* strategies, college and career readiness skills, as well as activities such as do nows, mini lessons, procedures, assessment, homework, and reflection in their lesson plans. While the majority of teachers include the above structures, there is still ongoing work to infuse more *Tribes* work into the curriculum through the purchase of books that include reading and writing assignments that promote social-emotional learning. There has been an increase in parent involvement around using *Tribes* and the use of real-life connections to the work. The school is using Wilson *Fundations*, a successfully tested program for phonics spelling to reduce deficiencies. In addition, *Recipe for Reading* is used for reading instruction and intervention strategies for struggling learners. This protocol, which has extensions in phonics, spelling and vocabulary, is an assessment tool assisting in student groupings where placement is flexible, giving more complex, higher-order steps and scaffolding to the appropriate groups.

- The (NTN) National Training Network is working with the staff to focus on math standards and professional development for teachers. This had had a positive impact with 85 percent of kindergarten students performing at levels 3 and 4, and at grade one, 63 percent of students performing at level 3 and 4. In grade two, May data revealed that 82 percent, up from mid-year data of 71 percent, are performing at levels 3 and 4. Curriculum documents are created in Google Drive as living documents.
### Findings

Across classrooms there are curricula-aligned assessment practices that inform instruction, along with grading policies and common assessments that provide actionable feedback. There are ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment, leading to effective lesson adjustments.

### Impact

The school’s systems to monitor progress through data analysis as well as during instruction are used regularly to guide adjustment in units and lessons to meet students’ learning needs.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use a variety of assessments, checklists and rubrics in their classrooms. Teachers are looking at work across the grades measured against a standards-based rubric aligned with actionable feedback to students. Across classrooms visited, rubrics, charts and structured interventions were used and aligned to the curriculum. Feedback consistently suggests next steps based on specific, leveled criteria in order to indicate how students can move to the next level. Writing rubrics contained a checklist with specific details such as “I edited to make my writing easy to read,” or “I told facts about my topic.” Teachers’ writing detailed notations to students who are starting to grow across grades.

- The school recently implemented a schoolwide grading policy and instructional questions across grades have been established, resulting in four main areas of assessing students. Assessment criteria associated with any given task ask, “Can students peer assess, use rubrics or checklists, know what to do next upon completing a task, self-assess their own learning?” A grade two class was working with an opinion writing checklist and shared with a peer for feedback. An opinion writing rubric was used and scored by the teacher with actionable next steps and comments on what was optimal in the narrative.

- Teachers receive prompt, actionable feedback from the coach and the principal following classroom observations. Data is analyzed at grade team meetings such as Teachers College Running Records, administrated throughout the year, as well as pre- and post-assessment writing for all units. Math is assessed at the beginning, middle and end of the year along with assessment documentation in science through FOSS Kits using hands-on experimentation, and New York City’s Passport to Social Studies curriculum, with books used to teach concepts, research and geography skills. All have built-in assessment features.
Additional Finding

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

Thoughtful rubric-aligned observation and feedback systems based on the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* support professional growth, including those new to the profession. The principal is proactive in supporting teachers, as well as making informed and effective organizational decisions to support improvements in pedagogy.

**Impact**

Rubric-aligned observations and next steps to support professional growth have elevated pedagogy and teacher reflection of their practice throughout the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher leaders and the principal collaboratively developed a schoolwide calendar of diagnostic, formative and summative assessments by grade. Included in the plan were dates to meet to review, revise and update data from assessments and share what has been successful and what was challenging for students at a professional development meeting of the entire staff. The teachers referred to class summary sheets that reflect student progress in relation to lesson strategies. For example, it was revealed that more scaffolding was needed for second graders to learn how to read and cite from a text. This therefore created a focus in professional development across the grade. Teachers participate in inter-class visitations with a focus on a specific skill and sharing of best practices. Teachers revisit their own lessons after receiving feedback from their peers. Teachers spoke about how this helps to further their own personal learning goals.

- Professional development is provided to teachers on curriculum alignment and task complexity and furthered within team meetings, as evidenced by the meetings attended where teachers discussed strategies to re-teach the inference skills. These interactions are developing teacher dialogue and collaboration for improving instructional practices as shown in lessons planning to increase student progress. The principal’s open door policy fosters trust and enables teachers to freely discuss lessons that worked well as well as continuing struggles.

- New teachers are supported by mentors with planning, use of materials and demonstration of lessons. They observe best practices and are provided with feedback to advance their practice. Teachers stated they often meet during lunch periods and outside of school hours to ensure planning for student success. Cross-grade meetings serve to make vertical alignment clear for next steps. High expectations were evident at both meetings, focusing on the impact of practice on student work. Formal observations as reported on *Advance* include pre-and post-observation meetings. All teachers have met individually with the principal and have received feedback with next steps both verbally and in writing.
**Additional Finding**

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

**Findings**

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations. Distributive leadership structures provide a means for teachers to have input on key decisions about curricula and teaching practices.

**Impact**

The work of teacher teams has resulted in schoolwide instructional coherence, improved pedagogy, student work and progress. Shared leadership structures build capacity to improve student learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Many teachers serve as leaders. Distributive leadership structures include teacher-led professional development sessions, creation of curriculum development units and setting schedules for intervisitations and peer collaborations. Teacher teams across grades are working together to plan lessons aligned to the Common Core and generating text-dependent questions to reinforce students’ habits. Referring to text for evidence and promoting critical thinking skills was evidenced in lesson plans and promoted through teacher planning. Common language, rubric alignment to practices and analysis of student results at the end of tasks were observed in many classes, thus establishing schoolwide coherence. As evidenced on observation forms, the administrators give feedback with next steps in the form of an assignment and revisit the classroom in three weeks to see if recommended key strategies have been used. An example was apparent in the *Studio In a School* classroom exploring painting and the use of mixing colors. It was recommended to incorporate vocabulary and more speaking into this class of students with disabilities and English Language Learners. Students were using words such as “dab” and “wipe” in regard to their brushes and identifying primary colors, textures and patterns, and sharing information with each other.

- Teacher teams participate in planning, inquiry and professional development meetings to facilitate increased student achievement and expertise in pedagogy. Topics that have been addressed include implementing the Common Core Learning Standards and the Danielson Framework for Teaching, as well as using Webb’s Depth of Knowledge for essential questioning techniques. Common preps have been programmed for all grades to allow for grade planning, examination of student work and the sharing of best practices. Discussed at the mixed grade, mixed subject specialty meeting were the ideas of collaboration and how sharing resources have built a culture where teachers rely on each other. Teachers stated that they look at student work for strengths and gaps in their writing and the implication for teacher practice. Instructional modifications are decided upon collaboratively.

- Distributed leadership is evident through the rotation of teacher roles during meetings, thus allowing all participants to have a voice in the decision making process. Teacher leaders conduct professional development. During the pre-kindergarten - grade two meeting comparing student work to accessing learning outcomes, it was determined that more scaffolding was needed for ELLs and students with disabilities. The teachers agreed that talk prompts need to be inserted into science curriculum maps. Student videos were analyzed using a checklist to come up with next steps of support. Work was covered on modifying and scaffolding skills in science, as well as using consistency and routines. Assignments were given to create anchor charts showing basic science skills, visual clues to help teach the scientific process and hands-on exemplars to model application of skills. In addition to assigning teachers to leadership roles as grade leaders, the principal sends teachers to outside venues for workshops and they subsequently turnkey training for the entire school staff.