Quality Review Report

2017-2018

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

Principal: Dyon Rozier

Dates of Review:
May 14, 2018 - May 15, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Clarence Williams Jr.
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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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school</strong>...</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</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>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff that are aligned to The Danielson Framework for Teaching. Staff communicate a path to college and career readiness to parents.

Impact

The principal holds staff accountable by turnkeying information from the staff handbook into professional development (PD) to meet the high expectations. School leaders and staff help families understand their child’s progress toward high expectations in school and beyond.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal distributes a staff handbook that all teachers are required to sign for to confirm receipt. The handbook provides information on classroom management. In section two, entitled School Safety and Security, the principal highlighted under classroom management, “A high level of student instruction and interaction deters inappropriate behavior.” The principal also stated that the expectation is for teachers to use instruction to deter behavioral disruptions. This was evident as there were no behavioral issues in classes observed. This initiative was supported by PD in November 2017 on the behavior management cycle to motivate appropriate student behaviors. Teachers stated that because of this PD, classroom management issues have decreased in most classes. One teacher shared, “When students are engaged in the lesson, they don’t have time to be disruptive.”

- The principal created a memo entitled Bronx Math’s Teaching, Learning and Winning Creed: Instructional Focus. The memo states that it is the expectation of administration that teachers use data to drive instruction. The memo included the following methods of data collection: summative and formative, portfolios, and progress monitoring. Progress monitoring was evident in most classrooms visited. Teachers took notes about student work and discussions. One teacher stated that they use the notes to modify lesson plans. She provided an example, stating that after looking at her notes from one class, she noticed that during turn-and-talk discussions students were still struggling with expressing main ideas. She stated that during the next lesson students would spend more time in this area. All teachers interviewed were aware that this was a high expectation from the administration.

- The school uses PupilPath, an online communication system, for parents to view their child’s progress. Each teacher sends a letter to individual parents that explains what this online gradebook provides such as enabling parents to view assignments, grades, projects, due dates, transcripts, graduation eligibility status, attendance, and upcoming events in the school. The parent coordinator and guidance counselor assist parents with accessing and navigating this platform. During a parent interview a parent stated, “PupilPath is very helpful because I can access it on my phone from anywhere.” Another parent stated, “I learned to use it during Tuesday engagement for parents.” Most parents interviewed agreed that the ongoing communication that the program provides allows them to have information that helps them understand their child’s progress by giving them talking points with teachers for parent engagement Tuesdays.
Area of Focus

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

Findings

School leaders and teachers state that students learn best by being in a student-centered classroom and using turn-and-talk protocols. Across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

The school’s belief system is not yet coherent across the vast majority of classrooms. While students were observed taking ownership of learning, this did not occur across the vast majority of classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal stated that students learn best when turn and talks are incorporated into the lesson. During the observation of a grade-six English Language Arts (ELA) class, students were engaged in a turn and talk discussing the book *Ponies*. Students were asked to turn and talk to discuss “How does Top Girl respond to power?” In one small group a student stated, “She already has power and she wants more.” Another student stated, “I disagree. She has power so she doesn’t need anymore.” Another student stated, “She does not submit to the power because she is in control of it.” When asked why these discussions were important one student replied, “Because we share ideas with each other.” Although turn and talks were evident in this class, they were not effective in other classes. In a grade-seven-and-eight self-contained class, students were working on writing and solving equations with complimentary and supplementary angles. Students had some voice in the classroom but were allowed little time to collaborate with partners on the task.

- Not all students in the vast majority of classrooms take ownership of their learning. During the observation of a grade-eight math class, students were working on finding the approximate location of square roots on a number line. During whole-group instruction, the teacher asked students to tell the difference between two different expressions. One was a division symbol while the other was a square root symbol. One student stated, “One is used for division and one is used to find the side of a square unit.” Another student stated, “You cannot use both for division because they have different values.” Although students were engaged and participating, only a select few students were actually involved in the lesson. The teacher called on the same students that raised their hands. Other students did not attempt to fully participate in the lesson.

- During the observation of a grade-six science class, students were observed working on how to predict weather by looking at different fronts. The class was student-centered as students were working independently on maps looking at weather patterns. Students were engaged and participated in the activity. The teacher was taking notes on student progress. At one point, rather than answer a question for a student, the teacher put the responsibility on peers to answer the question. She stated, “I see people are confused with the different kind of fronts, talk to your partner to discuss what a stationary front is.” One student helped her peer by stating, “A stationary front is when the weather stays the same and doesn’t move from cold to hot.” Students relied on each other as the teacher took notes and coached. However, this was not evident in the vast majority of classes observed. In a grade-seven math class, the teacher modeled how to write an equation and then went into a guided lesson where she helped students work with complimentary angles. The lesson was teacher-centered with lecturing.
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
School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

Impact
Purposeful decisions build coherence in unit and lesson plans that are aligned to college and career readiness through questioning that requires higher-order thinking. Plans and units support students with disabilities through various scaffolding methods.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of an explicit reading instruction unit plan demonstrates how students with disabilities will be supported. One of the essential questions of the unit is, “How can I determine the central idea of an informational text and identify key details to support the main idea?” A section of the lesson entitled “Special Design Instruction” demonstrates how students with disabilities would be supported by being provided a grade-appropriate text of the book, Are You Bullied? The plan has an introduction, middle, and end. Students will also be provided notetaking worksheets to use while reading the text. An additional example is evident in a grade-seven unit of study. The lesson objective of the unit is, “Students will recognize that the length of an arrow on the number line is the absolute value of the integer.” Under the title of differentiation, students with disabilities are provided a laminated page with number lines to use with dry erase markers. Most lesson plans include supports for students with disabilities that expose them to higher-order thinking skills.

- Common Core Learning Standards and focused instructional shifts integrated into curricula build coherence across grades and subjects. All teachers use curriculum overviews to align the Common Core Learning Standards with the instructional shifts. The chart aligns the standards that the school is using to the instructional shifts that support the standard. Teachers have stated that the chart provides coherence across grades because it exposes students across grades to the same instructional shifts. For example, fluency in math is used across grades and aligned to the standards as well as citing text-based evidence to support a claim. All grades use curriculum overviews to support coherence of Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts.

- Lesson plans include Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questions to support college and career readiness skills. A grade-six lesson plan requires students to annotate to improve reading comprehension. The lesson uses DOK questions that include, “Can you recall a time when you felt you were being bullied and how did it make you feel?” Level-three questions included, “What facts would you select to support the central or main idea of the text and level four, “Write a thesis, drawing conclusions from multiple sources.” During a teacher interview a teacher stated, “The higher-order questions help prepare our students to think on a higher level that will serve them in higher education and in their future careers.”
Finding

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics that are aligned with the school’s curricula and use standards trackers to monitor student progress towards goals. Students use self-assessment tools to reflect on their work across all subjects.

Impact

Teachers use rubrics to provide actionable feedback to students in the form of commendations and next steps. Teachers across all grades use student reflections and progress monitoring to make adjustments to curricula and instruction that meet the needs of all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- To provide actionable feedback to students, a grade-seven teacher presented a three-point rubric for science lab. The rubric scores student work from one to three with one meaning the student was unorganized and the work was incomplete. Two meant that the work demonstrated some organization but was not neat. Students receiving a three meant that the work was completed, organized and included all the components of the lab that included labels, colors and keys. A student received a one and two scores. Feedback included, “Great explanations for how to use dichotomous keys.” Next steps included, “expand your thinking in your answers using more details.” In an additional lab rubric, the teacher stated, “Great job using observable characteristics for your questions; next time be more specific in your answers to show full understanding.” All teachers use rubrics to provide feedback to students. During a student interview, a student stated, “The feedback that we receive helps us to improve in all of our subjects.”

- Students use self-reflections to assess their understanding of the subject material. A math performance task reflection sheet is used to demonstrate what students know how to do and what they will improve on the next time. One student wrote about knowing how to use the SOLVE method. The student recorded, “I know how to use SOLVE to work through the distributive property. I need to improve staying on task.” In an additional example a student stated, “I know how to use SOLVE and I know how to multiply and divide fractions. Next time I need to improve on helping my classmates.” Students stated that they self-assess in most of their classes. Teachers stated that the self-reflections provide an additional layer of data to adjust their planning.

- Teachers use standards trackers to monitor student progress and make adjustments based on the data. This data is based on pre- and post-test at the beginning of each unit and itemizes each standard and how the students perform on them. The tracker showed students were sixty-five percent proficient in standards on geometry and forty-five percent on functions. As a result of the data, teachers extended lessons to include defining linear functions and constructing functions to model a linear relationship between two equations. All grade-level teachers use the trackers to make effective adjustments to meet their students’ needs.
### Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision  
**Rating:** Proficient

## Findings

School leaders support the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with effective feedback and next steps from observations and walkthroughs. Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching.*

## Impact

First-year teachers are observed informally to support their growth and analyze student work. Teachers are provided with feedback that articulates clear expectations for effective teaching practices such as explicit learning targets and using exemplars, supporting teacher development.

## Supporting Evidence

- Following an informal observation of a first-year teacher, the principal provided the teacher with commendations and next steps that are tied to The Danielson *Framework for Teaching.* The teacher was rated effective in the area of engaging students in learning. Comments included, “The learning tasks and activities are fully aligned with instructional outcomes and are designed to challenge student thinking.” The teacher received a developing rating in the area of growing and developing professionally. The principal stated, “The teacher attempts to engage all students in the discussion, to encourage them to respond to one another, and to explain their thinking with uneven results.” Next steps for the teacher included using peer-to-peer assessments and using conferencing notes that will allow the teacher to look at data to support grouping and guide the questioning based on the feedback. During a teacher interview, this first-year teacher stated that the principal uses student data as well as observations to support teacher growth.

- The principal conducts walkthroughs to observe all teachers using a checklist that is color coded to record frequency of teacher practices. For example, purple is mostly observed, blue is slightly observed, and green is not observed. During the review of a classroom teacher’s checklist, it was noted that evidence observed included the teacher including homework in the lesson. Detailed teacher or student comments related to the rubric were slightly observed and evidence of vocabulary terms that are aligned to the current unit of instruction was not observed. Expectations for the teacher included, “Student notebooks must have daily learning targets formatted as ‘I will be able to.’” This is included as one of the expectations articulated in the teachers’ handbook. An additional example of an expectation based on a walkthrough included, “Vocabulary is to be organized and defined, with pictures or process charts.” Most teachers interviewed were aware of the instructional expectations based on walkthroughs and observations.

- All teacher observations are aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching.* Subsequent feedback to teachers include an area or areas of focus and feedback based on the schoolwide instructional expectations. The principal has stated that teachers are expected to use exemplars as part of their instructional practice to support engaging students in learning. In an observation dated April 24, 2018, the principal stated that the teacher must take the following next steps to improve in this area: utilize instructional resources and materials to guide student work, use exemplars to help students understand their task, and to take ownership of their learning. The principal ended the report stating, “The expectation of using exemplar pieces should become a part of the instructional practice to assist in engaging students in learning.”
### Additional Finding

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

**Findings**

Teacher teams consistently analyze student work for students they share or on whom they are focused. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have built leadership capacity.

**Impact**

Subject-area meetings result in improved teacher practices that support progress for groups of students. Teachers have various leadership roles, such as Peer Collaborative Teachers, that are directly tied to student learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- A science teacher meeting was observed. The topic of the meeting was, “Improving teacher practice: lesson study feedback.” Teachers reviewed lesson plans and student work. One teacher stated that after reviewing her plans, she would like to make learning targets more accessible to students. Teachers engaged in a turn and talk about how to achieve this goal. Suggestions included, “You want to know what you want students to answer. It should be simple and concise.” Teachers agreed that the learning target should contain elements of what the student knows and what they are expected to know. Next steps included having all teachers bring in lesson plans to discuss their progress and next steps regarding crafting learning targets. A second agenda item was to look at student work regarding vocabulary words. Teachers have stated that grade-eight students have been struggling with vocabulary instruction. This was based on data from pre- and post-tests in January, and progress monitoring notes. Teachers have noticed that students were answering vocabulary-based questions incorrectly. The team engaged in an additional turn and talk on instructional practices to improve vocabulary. They discussed breaking down the prefix and suffix of words. When asked what impact that the work of the team meetings had, teachers stated that students are improving in post-assessments in areas of comprehension.

- The principal uses Peer Collaborative Teachers (PCT) to support their colleagues in order to have a positive impact on learning. The PCTs have areas of focus to support teacher development and student learning. They include mentoring new teachers, conducting inter-visitations of different classrooms to observe best practices, administering benchmark exams, and participating in instructional cabinet meetings and leadership meetings. In addition, the impact of their roles has been documented as PCTs implemented cross-curricular initiatives such as ensuring that students are exposed to common vocabulary words across grades, and facilitate PD that includes, creating assessment binders and how to track student data. Teachers have stated that as a result of these collaborations, they are better prepared when they enter their classrooms.

- A review of minutes from an English Department meeting demonstrated how teachers are supported to promote student learning. The focus of the meeting was to use student data to inform instruction, which included how to take progress monitoring notes, and looking at data to track progress. The team also discussed how students will engage in learning experiences which include opportunities for peer partnerships, problem solving and justifying claims through discussion and writing. Impact of this was evident in classrooms as students were observed in peer-to-peer discussions. Teachers have stated that they are still improving in this area as students will be more involved in student-centered learning.