Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Bronx Park Middle School
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 11X556
2441 Wallace Avenue
Bronx
NY 10467

Principal: Renee Rinaldi

Dates of Review:
February 1, 2018 - February 2, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Jacqueline King-Robinson
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 Park Middle 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

School leaders consistently provide ongoing training and communicate high expectations to staff that are aligned to the Professionalism, Reflection, Innovation, Determination, and Empathy (PRIDE) values of the school. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning and inform families of their children’s progress toward college and career readiness.

Impact

Communication and professional development around high expectations results in a culture of mutual accountability. The school’s advisory structure fosters student ownership of high expectations and promotes successful partnerships with families.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the standard for professionalism and high quality instruction to meet set instructional expectations. Each rated item on the observation reports includes language from the Framework for Teaching rubric along with specific detailed evidence from the observed class in support of the rating, and is immediately followed by next steps for teacher improvement. For example, feedback in an English class observation report advises the teacher to increase the level of rigor of the questions being asked and to use structures and protocols that promote more authentic classroom discussions. Feedback on another observation report read, “Your next step in this domain should be to ensure that your lesson plan and materials also includes prompts for students to actually answer the inquiry question. At the heart of inquiry work is exploring an inquiry question to propose and discuss the answer. One way to do this is to provide writing prompts at the end of each data collection section of the lab report.” Review of progressive observation reports evidences teacher growth in demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogical practices.

- The eighth grade English language arts team’s curriculum launches with a unit entitled Critical Consumers. The nonfiction text that supports the unit is the New York City High School Directory, providing a real-world tool for eighth grade students to navigate the high school process as critical consumers of information. The unit culminates with each student presenting a high school at a mock high school fair during project share day, hosted by the eighth grade team in the school cafeteria. As a result, students understand how to utilize the handbook to make informed decisions regarding their own high school selection.

- Teachers use PupilPath to communicate progress to families and students. Parents and students stated that they can ascertain the progress being made towards being prepared for high school. In addition, progress reports, generated and sent home two times per year, include subject specific learning targets and are designed to keep families informed about which standards their children have mastered and which ones are still providing a challenge within a given unit of study. Furthermore, parents attend student-led conferences. Students articulate their progress and next steps during student led conferences. All parents agreed that they are kept abreast of their children’s progress.

- Staff members attend professional development prior to the start of the school year during which they are provided with the school handbook that outlines expectations for curriculum, instruction, professional responsibilities, and implementation of the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). In addition, yearlong, school leaders and staff participate in daily morning huddles, prior to the start of the school day, to review expectations for the day.
Area of Focus

Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy  
Rating: Proficient

Findings
Teaching practices aligned to the curricula and the belief that students learn best when they access prior knowledge before engaging with new information are not coherently implemented across all classrooms. While teaching strategies provide students with multiple entry points, there are not high-quality extensions for high achieving students.

Impact
Students across classrooms, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs) engage in activities that result in meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers implement lessons that state the goal, access students’ prior knowledge, introduce new information, analyze the new information, and summarize the goal (GANAG), in line with schoolwide beliefs and this protocol is displayed across all classrooms to provide students with a road map for the day’s lesson. In an English Language Arts (ELA) class, the goal was for students to become unbiased journalists by writing an informational article. Students’ prior knowledge was activated by determining the author’s purpose based on the title of three articles. Students submitted their responses online and the teacher viewed student responses instantaneously. The teacher then facilitated a classroom discussion, in which students had to support their claims with evidence from the text. High-quality extensions are not yet visible across all classrooms visited.

- During an eighth-grade science lesson, students conducted research on the rock cycle, utilizing several primary sources, provided in Spanish and English, including the internet. Students used a graphic organizer to classify and organize their findings. Although this was an independent activity, students supported one another as they completed the task. Most, but not all, students had access to the task and were actively engaged in higher-order thinking. For example, in a sixth grade math lesson, the teacher provided instruction on multiplying and dividing fractions to a small group of students. The teacher reminded the students of the traditional algorithm and supported them as they solved the problem. However, the teacher missed the opportunity to explain the connection between the algorithm and the underlying math concepts to deepen the students’ understanding of the concept.

- Across classrooms, students were engaged in conversations and asked to support their claims with evidence from a variety of sources. During a visit to a sixth-grade self-contained classroom, there were four different groups each working on identifying the theme of a short story. The teacher activated prior knowledge by modeling how to identify the theme of the first story. A small group was utilizing a computer-based program to identify theme and two other groups were receiving targeted instruction. A review of student work folders revealed that special education students were held to the same standards as their general education peers. Instruction provides scaffolds, so that all learners demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products. Across classrooms, teaching practices support students with multiple entry points and scaffolds. While this approach provides access for all students, it can limit students’ ability to complete tasks independently and extend their thinking. There were missed opportunities to allow for students to engage in student-student discussions to further their learning.
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 staff utilize Understanding By Design (UBD) to design thematic interdisciplinary units that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and incorporate the instructional shifts. The curricula consistently emphasizes higher order thinking skills.

Impact
Unit and lesson plans consistently include rigorous tasks for ELLs and students with disabilities. Across grades and subjects, academic tasks emphasize college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff participate in retreats to plan and develop Common Core-aligned units that incorporate the shifts. Teams utilize a backwards design to collaboratively plan and revise five units across content areas for the school year. Units include Enduring Understandings (EU) and Essential Questions (EQ) that fall into level three and four according to Webb’s Depth of Knowledge tool. An eighth grade unit’s EU stated, “The purpose of journalism is to inform the people so that they can best exercise their democratic rights to free thought and action.” Teams develop a culminating project and identify how the EU will be addressed in each content area. Subsequently, teachers work backwards to design the lessons that support the EU leading to units that are coherent across grades and subjects.

- Curriculum units culminate in a cross-curricular unit project. Unit two of an eighth grade unit includes a project that requires students to develop and present their own alternative energy business proposal based on their findings. To accomplish this in science and ELA students learn about four types of alternative energy sources, in math they will calculate the pollution caused by different energy sources, and in social studies students will analyze various biographies of chief executive officers of energy companies. An adjusted version for the task included directions in English, Arabic, and Spanish, as well as scaffolds such as, videos, graphic organizers and vocabulary development. The unit’s project emphasized rigorous habits across the different content areas for all students, including students with disabilities and ELLs.

- A goal of a sixth grade ELA lesson plan from the unit, Craft and Construction, was for students to write a captivating narrative by analyzing the literary devices the author uses in The Golden Curse and Touch. The lesson included learning stations, at which students work each day, and are designed to assess student application of the learning targets as each station culminated in students completing a mastery task. The learning targets required students to cite textual evidence to support an inference, determine the theme of a story and how it develops throughout a story, explain how narrative elements interact in a text and why the author chose specific literacy devices, and utilize the writing process to improve their writing. Additionally, the lesson plan identified which students will work at each station, as well as targeted small group instruction for ELLs, students with disabilities, and struggling students. Thus, the lesson plan emphasized rigorous habits and required students to utilize higher order thinking skills to analyze a variety of texts.
### Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

School staff utilizes a mastery-based online grading policy that aligns with the school’s curricula. Across classrooms, teachers administer common assessments for all subjects to determine student progress toward mastery of learning targets. Teachers’ assessment practices reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding (CFU).

**Impact**

Teachers use data from interim assessments to adjust instruction and develop student groups. Teachers provide students with actionable feedback that informs students’ next steps.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School staff participates in Understanding by Design (UbD) retreats to design schoolwide rubrics and checkbrics, the school’s version of checklists for student use to guide their work. Furthermore, staff uses the criteria from the rubric to design actionable feedback for students. Students stated that the teachers post the rubrics on Google Classroom, as well as provide them with actionable feedback. Feedback on a student’s written conclusion based on a fictional case study stated, “Next time be specific and use quantitative data from the graph. Using the exact numbers helps you to support your claim.” After teachers provide students with actionable feedback they have the opportunity to revise their work. Students stated that feedback from their teachers helped them to improve their work.

- Teachers administer interim assessments in math and ELA aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards for each unit of study. After administering interim assessments teacher teams complete a data dive utilizing a note catcher protocol. The protocol calls for teachers to rank the standards from highest average proficiency to the lowest average proficiency, as well as identify the standards that were taught in the most recent unit. According to the note catcher reviewed, teachers noticed that the students did well with citing textual evidence and attributed this to the fact that social studies teachers were working on this standard as well. Teachers then identified the standards that will be targeted in the next unit. Additionally, teachers make adjustments to upcoming units to ensure inclusion of targeted standards.

- Across classrooms teachers utilize mastery trackers to record data from formative assessments, including CFUs. The data is used identify which students met the learning goal, are approaching the learning goal, and which students still need additional support, as evidenced on the formative assessment trackers reviewed. The data is further used to inform adjustments to future lessons and plan targeted instruction to meet the needs of individual students.

- To meet the schoolwide expectation for students to reflect on their learning, students participate in a weekly reflection to establish a goal for the upcoming week that is based on feedback received from teachers on prior assignments. Students record their reflections on a weekly reflection guide. At the end of a unit, students review all reflections from the unit, as well as all their work from the unit and complete an end-of-unit reflection. Students also identify a piece of work that supports the mastery score they received and add it to their data portfolios. In addition, each classroom has a prove-it station. A place where students can redo old assignments or a new assignment that aligns with the unit’s standards. Students are expected to self-assess in order to determine mastery and then complete a prove-it task to demonstrate mastery.
## Additional Finding

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

School leaders, using frequent cycles of observation, support the development of teachers with effective feedback and next steps, and identify strengths and challenges that are aligned to the Danielson *Framework for teaching*.

### Impact

Frequent cycles of formal and informal feedback communicates clear expectations for improvements and promotes teacher reflection. A variety of professional development opportunities support teacher development.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teacher leaders conduct frequent formal and informal observation cycles based on specific components of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the school’s instructional foci. School leaders provide teachers with effective feedback designed to promote teachers’ professional growth and increase student achievement. Feedback to a new teacher stated, “Your next steps in this domain should be to ensure that you are modeling the activities and learning outcomes you want students to engage in. For example, I saw two ELLs struggling to write the words in English. I did not see any exemplars or models from the day before either posted in the room or on students’ desks. Modeling exemplar products is an important pedagogical move to help you teach into misunderstandings, before they occur and help students access contact.” Future observation reports to the same teacher evidenced follow-up on the same component and effective next steps to further the teacher’s development. Overall, teacher data in *Advance* reveals a nine percent increase in planning and preparation and instruction. Student assessment data illustrates steady growth in students’ English and math proficiency levels.

- School leaders have an effective system for managing observations. There is a shared calendar that identifies the number of observations that each teacher needs. Additionally, the calendar identifies who conducted the observation and how many more need to be completed prior to the end of the year. School leaders normed their observation feedback to ensure that teachers receive feedback that is aligned, regardless of who was conducting the observation. Thus, the feedback to teachers promotes teacher development.

- School leaders ask teachers to reflect on feedback from the previous year’s observations and develop ideas and goals for the current year that is aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. During initial planning conference they are expected to bring their reflections and suggested goals. Together teachers and school leaders refine the goals. School leaders then utilize the goals as a lens when conducting observations. School leaders have a master worksheet that includes each teacher and their identified goals and *Advance* is used to monitor teachers’ progress towards meeting their goals. Teachers participate in a mid-year check in to review their portfolio and assess progress towards goals, utilizing the Winter Recess Teacher Reflection Guide (WRTRG). The WRTRG asks for teachers to reflect on progress thus far and identify peers that they can seek support from. All WRTRG reviewed evidenced teacher reflection and goal setting. Subsequently, teachers make mid-year adjustments and repeat the cycle at the end of the school year, including assessing their practice using the Danielson rubric. During the teacher meeting, all teachers agreed that feedback from school leaders and teacher leaders has increased their instructional capacity.
Findings

All teaching staff work on teams that promote shared leadership and focus on improving student learning. Distributive leadership structures are embedded and influence key decisions.

Impact

Effective teacher leadership plays an integral role relative to shared improvements in teacher practice that lead to mastery of goals for targeted students and affects teaching and learning throughout the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Grade level teacher teams establish a minimum of two goals for their respective teams that are designed to support schoolwide goals. Team goals include methods to measure success, identify the schoolwide goal to which it is aligned, and establish a timeline for implementation. One of the sixth grade team goals is to have student data portfolios up to date by the end of unit three and ensure that all relevant student work is included in the portfolios, which evidence alignment to the schoolwide goal of providing rigorous instruction. Another goal is to have all content area teachers collaborate to make a unified unit three project to share on project share day. Team leaders are responsible for ensuring that the team’s goals are designed to improve teacher practice and accelerate student achievement. Team leaders are expected share agendas and minutes with school leaders. In addition, team leaders meet with administration monthly to review progress of teachers’ increased instructional capacity. Distributive leadership structures have led to the development of effective teacher leadership that affects student learning across the school.

- School leaders and teachers participate in weekend curriculum retreats before the launch of each major interdisciplinary unit. During this process department and academy teams review student work and achievement data from the most recent interim assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses, unpack Common Core Learning Standards and New York City Performance assessment rubrics, in order to draft UbD unit drafts for submission. Teacher teams are expected to make instructional decisions about content, pacing, and pedagogy, based on feedback from the team, which aligns to student need and grade level content expectations.

- Teachers and school leaders have participated in extensive professional development around the use of grading, scoring, formative assessments, and criteria rubric that are all mastery-based. To support this work there is a data coach that creates and manages systems to track student mastery using online mastery based grading books and to provide training on managing the mastery-based grading systems. Consequently, all teachers track mastery of learning targets and Common Core Learning Standards using mastery trackers. Furthermore, teacher teams systematically analyze data from the mastery trackers and student work, resulting in improvements in teacher practice, as evidenced in classroom observations and Advance reports. Furthermore, data from interim assessments in ELA and math reveal an increase in performance by students across grades.