Quality Review Report

2018-2019

Jonas Bronck Academy
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 10X228

400 East Fordham Road
Bronx
NY 10458

Principal: Brenda Gonzalez

Dates of Review:
April 11, 2019 - April 12, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Elsa Kortright-Torres
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

Jonas Bronck Academy 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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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#### Systems for Improvement

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<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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</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

School leaders consistently convey high expectations to staff. Teachers establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates high expectations for all students and provide clear focused feedback.

Impact

Communication of high expectations has resulted in a culture of mutual accountability and in an environment in which all students own their educational experiences and are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- Leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff. Teachers stated that they receive communication from school leaders on a daily and weekly basis through verbal interactions and emails. Through the Progressive Redesign Opportunity Schools for Excellence (PROSE), teachers prepare a portfolio based on their professional goals that includes work related to goals, lesson study that includes a video, work related to culturally responsive teaching or social emotional learning, and any other contributions to the school community. There are ten PROSE PD days each year for teachers to engage in PD related to culturally responsive practices, questioning, and topics that support the instructional foci. Mutual accountability for expectations is evident, such as for school leaders to provide learning opportunities during PROSE PD. Teachers hold each other accountable in Professional Learning Teams (PLT) to collaborate, conduct research, and analyze student performance data to inform instructional and curricular decisions. Teachers reported that they hold high expectations of each other to be active members of their grade level teams, providing turnkey training and sharing ideas as necessary.

- Teacher teams and staff establish high expectations for learning by having a unified set of beliefs that scholars must persevere, be respectful and exhibit integrity. In the beginning of the school year, incoming students participate in a weeklong orientation, receiving information about the uniform, attendance, and electronics policies as well as about academic scholarship initiatives such as Access for All and Path to Success. Students are encouraged to participate in after-school programs offered through school-based organizations and participate in the Specialized High School Exam. Students reported that the school provides a variety of programs that prepare them for high school and beyond. For example, an accelerated science curriculum was developed for sixth and seventh graders to be prepared to participate in either Living Environment or Earth Science courses when they get to eighth grade. Students reported that talks with guidance counselors about high school, college and careers begin in grade six. Students shared that there are expectations for all to attend college and apply for high schools early on.

- Teachers and leaders prepare students to take high school courses and provide Mandarin as a foreign language. In addition, students conduct student-led parent teacher conferences. These have been successful with almost 100 percent participation. Teachers send a weekly email to students and their parents to inform them of events such as College Day, Science Fair, field trips as well as of learning targets. One student shared and all agreed that they know their next steps because teachers send weekly emails reminding them of upcoming standards. A grade seven student shared that the goal of the school is for all students to meet standards and take Regents courses. One student said, “I know exactly what I need to work on because I check my progress in Engrade and I want to go beyond reaching mastery.” Students stated that they know the standards they need to accomplish by grade level because they are posted in their classrooms, are listed in their progress reports, and are part of their grading system. The majority of students interviewed know which high school to attend, what career to pursue, and what experiences they need to have at the school to support their goals of getting into the school of their choice.
Findings
Teachers use assessments that align to the school’s curricula. Teachers use various strategies to check for understanding such as a color-coding card system and conferencing.

Impact
Teachers’ practices result in effective adjustments to meet student needs; however, these adjustments do not yet consistently result in meaningful feedback and students being aware of their next steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers create rubrics, assessments, and standards-based grading policies aligned to the curricula. In English Language Arts (ELA) and social studies teachers use rubrics that provide feedback regarding whether students meet or exceed standards. For example in an ELA poetry unit rubric, the teacher provided feedback regarding the topic, organization, language, conventions, and poetry characteristics. Similarly, in a grade eight social studies project about the Harlem Renaissance, the teacher used a rubric so that students receive specific feedback about their presentations. Students also received a grow and a glow. One student shared that in an essay about a social justice issue, the feedback provided by the teacher was for the student to give specific examples and be clear about his opinion. In another student work sample, the teacher wrote “Good start! Let’s work on being more specific. Tell me more about mountains and waterfalls.” While students receive actionable feedback, students in the representative group could not recall feedback that they applied to other assignments to improve results and thus was meaningful. While students use rubrics and check on their progress using an online platform, not all students interviewed were able to recall specific feedback that was meaningful.

- Teachers use various ways to check for understanding and make adjustments during a lesson. For example, in a grade six ELA lesson, the teacher prompted students to write what they wonder using a Know, Wondering, Learning (KWL) chart about a news advertisement about selling slaves. The teacher circulated and took notes. The teacher paused to ask students what being compliant means when a student shared that being a slave had to do with being compliant. In a grade eight social studies lesson, the students worked on gathering evidence after engaging in a fishbowl strategy about the New Deal. The teacher was also using a computer platform to be able to see student work in real time. Seeing that some students had not begun and needed support, she told the students to check their emails to see the notes she sent. When asked, the students said that they needed to first write their opening sentence and then use the organizer to answer the questions. Although across classrooms teachers consistently checked for understanding and adjustments were effective, occasionally, there were missed opportunities such as in a grade seven class when students were engaged in a fishbowl activity about the Bill of Rights. There was a missed opportunity to pause, ask more open-ended questions to give feedback on the students’ understanding.

- Teachers use a color-code system for students to alert the teacher when they need help. In a grade six math class, some students put the red card face up on their desk that indicates they need help. The teacher asked the students to raise their card up to do a quick check for understanding. One student, seeing that everyone else had a green card meaning that they understand, turned the card to green after being in red throughout the activity. There was a missed opportunity for the teacher to make an adjustment for the student or have students explain their thinking. In addition, this system is not yet used in the vast majority of classrooms and occasionally students are not aware of their next steps.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure the alignment of Common Core Learning Standards and content standards. The instructional shifts are strategically integrated through an interdisciplinary approach and rigorous habits are emphasized in the curricula across grades and subject areas.

Impact

Purposeful planning results in schoolwide coherence in the curricula and the promotion of college and career readiness for all students. Across content areas, students consistently demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricula reflect alignment to the Common Core and strategic integration of the instructional shifts. For example, in a grade six ELA lesson plan, the students read two informational texts on slavery and combine details from both to compose a written answer to a question. Instructional shifts such as applying learning to real life and the use of academic vocabulary is emphasized in the lesson. Similarly, in a grade eight social studies lesson plan, students are charged with citing evidence from text to support analysis of sources. In both of these lessons and throughout units of study, there is evidence of vertical alignment of the instructional shifts such as having a balance of fiction and non-fiction text and using text evidence to support ideas. The students use the Topic sentence, Evidence, Analyze, and Conclude (TEAC) strategy in all grade levels and subjects to write short responses to questions. Coherence of strategies such as using TEAC and supporting claims by using evidence supports learning to prepare students for college and careers.

- In a grade seven math lesson plan aligned to the Common Core, the students are charged with analyzing different scaled images and explaining the significance the scale factor has on a scaled copy. Students are also provided with examples of real-life applications such as making images smaller and larger to fit on PowerPoint slides. In a grade six math lesson plan, students are charged with solving real-world and mathematical problems by writing and solving equations. Students across grades in math use the Topic sentence (restate the question), Evidence, and Analyze/Defend (TEA) to structure their responses. Student must defend or analyze their thinking by using mathematical evidence and language. In a grade eight science lesson plan students explain the effect of the amount of enzyme on the rate of reaction and cite specific evidence from texts to support their claim that enzymes affect the chemical reaction rate. The strategic integration of citing textual evidence, real world applications, and using academic vocabulary into the curricula promote college and career readiness skills for all students.

- A rigor statement is posted in the school and teachers use it to plan lessons and units that are rigorous and cognitively engaging for all students. Lesson plans and units consistently reflect tasks in which students must complete higher-order thinking tasks and answer questions that promote active discourse. Words such as analyze, argue, defend, explain and make inferences are used in objectives across the school. In a grade seven math lesson, students must analyze different scale images and explain the significance of scale factors. There are supports listed for specific students with disabilities and ELLs such as prompting, providing visuals, and providing vocabulary reference materials. In another unit, students are charged with challenging and exploring their beliefs regarding freedom, liberty and the effects of dystopian society within a novel and students’ own lives as they participate in a Socratic seminar. In the unit plan, listed under multiple entry points, is a list of students and supports such as sentence starters and questioning stems. The establishment of a common definition of what rigor is in the school, results in units and lessons having academic tasks in which all learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, must demonstrate their thinking.
## Additional Finding

### Quality Indicator:

**1.2 Pedagogy**

### Rating:

Well Developed

### Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect a common set of beliefs that students learn best when they are challenged, question, and think critically about the world. Teaching strategies consistently and strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports.

### Impact

Instructional practices ensure that students produce meaningful work products. Practices ensure that all learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers ensure that students make connections between what they learn and real-life situations. For example, in a grade eight math class, students are learning about scatter plots and the teacher provided an article to read about arm span. The teacher asked questions such as “Do you know an athlete or celebrity whose arm span and height are equal in length?” before presenting the article and engaging the students in a think-jot-pair-share strategy. Students had to draw a prediction of the line based on the article’s information that human arm span and height have a one to one ratio. In a grade eight social studies classroom, students worked on their social studies portfolio after participating in a fishbowl strategy about Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal. Students analyzed their notes from the exercise to complete a graphic organizer to help them write an essay on whether the New Deal was a success or failure. Students must use different sources such as articles and notes from discussions to make their case. Using real-life strategies across grade levels, such as debating and annotating articles about current or historical events, engages students in critical thinking skills.

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, there is alignment of using strategies that promote critical thinking. In a grade six math classroom, the teacher encouraged the students to annotate a problem to discover the measure of a missing angle using the TEA strategy. Students discussed their process to solve the problem in groups and used a think-pair-jot-share graphic organizer. In a grade seven math class, students were provided with a graphic organizer to sort a set of cards by scale factors and then explain their reasoning. The teacher demonstrated the concept of scale factor by showing two self-portraits and asking questions about the multiplicative relationship. In a grade eight ELA classroom, the students were seated in a circle and charged with analyzing two quotes projected on the board. The students were reading Fahrenheit 451 and the day before had gone to see a theatrical presentation of To Kill a Mockingbird. First, the teacher facilitated an authentic discussion about the theater production to acknowledge students’ desire to compare the book to the production. These activities support the school’s curricula and the school’s belief that students learn best when they are challenged, question, and think critically about the world.

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers prepare high-quality supports to engage all learners. For example, in Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classes, students are provided with graphic organizers, sentence stems to facilitate discussions during fishbowl activities, academic vocabulary lists that include definitions, manipulatives, and anchor charts with strategies such as TEAC, TEA and CUBES. The teacher in one ICT class will have students compare lengths for possible misconceptions about scale factor. In classes with ELLs, students have access to translated materials. Across classrooms teachers display academic vocabulary with visuals in English and Spanish. There are also extensions for high-performing students such as moving on to write more and provide more support to their thesis statement. In another classroom, students that are finished are given a choice to complete an article review on “Everyday Compound or Poison” or describe the physical and chemical properties of each newly formed molecule.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

Findings

Leaders and teacher peers support teacher development through supervisory and observations. A strategic system drives the use of teacher observation data in the design and facilitation of PD.

Impact

There is coherence of schoolwide instructional practices and processes that promote professional growth. The PD plan is transparent and strategic and results in improved student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teacher peers support the development of teachers by having frequent cycles of observations. School leaders meet regularly to discuss and plan teacher observations with the purpose of providing support on schoolwide expectations such as embedding vocabulary into instruction, culturally responsive practices, student engagement, and questioning. A review of *Advance* reports shows that school leaders provide feedback that is strategic. For example, a teacher was provided with feedback that besides having turn and talk opportunities, there should be more opportunities for multiple students to engage in discourse through Scholar Led Academic Conversations. The teacher also reflected on the lesson and added that including higher-order thinking questions to promote those types of discussions would be beneficial. Teachers conduct intervisitations as part of their professional portfolio requirement where they conduct a lesson study by having the lesson videotaped and then discuss what went well and how the host teacher can improve the lesson. All teachers interviewed stated that the lesson study approach has resulted in professional growth and coherence of instructional practices such as the implementation of TEAC and TEA across grades and subject areas.

- Through a Professional Learning Teams (PLT) process, teachers are provided with PD on different topics that are informed by teacher needs and the school's goal to increase rigor. For example, a menu of PD topics initiated by teachers includes "Supporting Scholars with Inattentiveness Difficulties," "The Art of Questioning," "Creating Culturally Responsive Lesson Plans," and "Embedding Vocabulary into Instruction." Teachers interviewed shared that through the PLT, they are able to apply their learning to their pedagogy because they feel invested in the topic and they are informed by the needs of the students through the analysis of student work products. PROSE days are set aside throughout the year where teachers engage in professional learning, reflect, and plan. Teachers stated that these days are invaluable as they are able to receive meaningful PD and to collaborate to help improve learning in the school. PLT PD is shared with the entire staff using an online platform making it transparent and inclusive.

- School leaders and teachers plan meaningful PD by examining student work products during meetings and by using teacher *Advance* data. For example, after noticing that *Advance* ratings for student engagement and classroom environment dropped, a teacher decided to focus on the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities. The teacher included a protocol as part of a unit on *To Kill a Mockingbird* called world café in which all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, participated in activities that required complex thinking and promoted discourse. Student work products are analyzed during PLT and as a result of PD and lesson studies, teachers stated that the quality of student work products is noticeable in writing and student discussions in classrooms. PD and the work of the PLT related to culturally responsive practices and support for ELLs has improved student engagement and rigor of lessons as evident in student work products and observation data. A review of *Advance* data, shows an increase in engaging students in discussion and increasing student engagement, as demonstrated in increases in these components across observations for the year.
### Additional Finding

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

Most teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. There are structures in place such as PLT to build leadership capacity.

#### Impact

Teachers' collaborations strengthen teacher capacity and promote the implementation of the Common Core. Teachers initiate and lead initiatives such as implementing culturally responsive practices and embedding vocabulary instruction.

#### Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry work and professional collaborations. Teachers engage in inquiry work in grade-level and in content-area teams. For example, the grade eight ELA team met to conduct inquiry using a Student Work Analysis Protocol (SWAP). For example in the meeting observed, teachers reviewed *iReady* data on a specific student. The student is reading below grade level, however, there was an increase in her *iReady* lexile scores. A review of the student’s 3-year learning profile revealed areas of strength such as the ability to answer the questions and provide a conclusion in writing, and the areas of need as annotating and outlining. All teachers will implement different materials so that the student has access to the curricula, such as having a study guide and a vocabulary guide. A review of notes from teacher team meetings show that teachers analyze student work, use data trackers to capture noticings and wonderings and come up with next steps as exemplified in the meeting observed.

- The work of the teacher teams is promoting the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. For example, seeing that students struggled with citing textual evidence and making their thinking visible, the ELA team decided to implement TEAC across grades. In addition, teachers also decided to embed vocabulary instruction to ensure that students use academic vocabulary across subject areas. In math, teachers decided to use the TEA strategy in response to deficits in the math short response questions of the state assessments. Decisions about implementing instructional strategies such as these has resulted in strengthening teacher capacity. One teacher stated and all agreed that the work of the teacher teams has improved pedagogical practices because there is constant collaboration, sharing of resources, and communication.

- The PLT structure has resulted in teachers having a voice in decisions that impact student learning across the school. Teachers come up with topics to research according to their needs and professional goals. For example, teachers lead teams that focus on culturally responsive practices, embedding vocabulary, supporting student with attention deficits, and questioning. Based on their area of interest, teachers conduct lesson studies and meet to discuss areas of strength and opportunities for growth. Teachers also lead department meetings such as the ELA, science, math, social studies, and grade level teams. In the ELA team meetings, teachers conduct inquiry as well as align the curriculum to the Common Core by using resources such as Expeditionary Learning and Teachers College Reading and Writing Program. In the science department, teachers are working on aligning the curriculum to the Next Generation Science Standards. During grade level teams, teachers have ownership of developing curricula that prepare students for high school and college. Teachers stated that there are also opportunities for teachers to exhibit their best work by being model teachers. A calendar is shared with all teachers to participate in observing model classrooms. School structures such as these contribute to teachers having a voice in key decisions that impact student learning.