



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**The Bronxwood School
Elementary School 112
1925 Scieffelin Avenue
Bronx
NY 10466**

Principal: Susan Barnes

Dates of review: October 18 - 19, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Janet Warner

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bronxwood is an elementary school with 615 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 57% Black, 42% Hispanic and 1% White students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 88.7%. The school receives Title 1 funding for 89.5% students.

This year the school is oversubscribed, with 130% enrollment. Additional buildings are under construction.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has an effective system for managing behavior and promoting personal responsibility, which leads to a positive learning atmosphere.
- Improved parental involvement is on-going as a result of the use of a wide variety of strategies and a strong parent coordinator.
- Staffing decisions have resulted in more targeted support for students.
- An effective and more differentiated approach to professional development has helped staff improve their practice.
- The school makes good use of specific intervention programs which successfully help students progress.
- Improved strategies are in place to ensure student data informs and drives differentiated instruction.
- A rigorous system of teacher observations, expert coaching and mentoring is helping to improve the quality of teaching.
- Successful early childhood education practices are shared amongst teachers and are effectively meeting the needs of the younger pupils.
- The principal and her team cultivate an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect and ensure that the school runs efficiently.
- The teaching staff work well together in order to further improve student achievement.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the use of assessment folders and portfolios is consistent across all grades.
- Develop a more effective measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools.
- Ensure that there is more opportunity for all students to participate in creative activities both within and outside of the school day.
- Further involve both the students and their parents in the data dialogue and information-sharing process in order to set time limited individual goals.
- Use data more consistently to inform the setting of individual learning goals.

Part 3: Main findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

All at Bronxwood are working hard to ensure that improved teaching and learning strategies and a well-developed behavior strategy are employed to help students achieve higher results, especially in English language arts. The school is also striving to improve the level of parental involvement and student attendance in order to support student progress. The use of more individualized student data is ensuring that more focused differentiation is taking place. This is in direct response to the recommendations made in last year's Quality Review.

While the curriculum is not broad enough to fully serve the needs of students in all the grades, a program of interventions effectively helps students in greatest need of improvement. While the teaching team willingly undertakes extensive professional development in order to be able to use data more effectively, the use of data to set individual learning goals is inconsistent. Good teacher collaboration contributes to the atmosphere of trust and respect that has been cultivated in the school. Additionally, good early childhood education practices are widely shared throughout the school, positively impacting student performance. These are some of the reasons teachers are fully committed and loyal to the school.

The school has made good progress in setting up inquiry team and is beginning to analyze the data it is collecting. It is not yet refining and developing its analysis of the progress made by different groups of students and by similar schools, but plans do so when the ARIS data becomes available.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school uses data from many sources to drive all instructional decision making. These include SAMS, DRA and ECLAS. Other assessments are used to determine placement in extended programs. Predictive data has begun to be utilized in an analytical way. The principal has attended training in the use of such data and will use it appropriately when it becomes available from the Department of Education via ARIS. The introduction of assessment portfolios is helping to ensure that individual pupil data and examples of work are shared across grades but this information is not always updated consistently across

the school. Two testing coordinators and two academic intervention specialists ensure, via the use of personal intervention plans, that the performance and progress of special education students is closely monitored and as a result these pupils make good progress. More student data is now being analyzed in greater depth. The inquiry team is in the process of identifying the lowest third performing students and analyzing its composition. Analysis of the performance of English language learners and of different gender groups is carried out but is not as effective as the analysis of other groups due to the nature of the data available. This also applies to comparisons with similar schools, where the data is utilized in a basic way but does not give the in-depth picture that is possible with individual student data. All staff receive training in the use of data. Administration and other members of the inquiry team turnkey training, and lead teachers and teacher center specialists also deliver training. There is still some inconsistency in the use of on-line data since some systems are new and practice among teachers varies.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school administration team consistently uses data to monitor the performance of all the students. They set specific whole school targets for improvement based on data via weekly curriculum team meetings which are disseminated to staff, pupils and parents. Some teachers ensure that students set individual goals but such goals are not time limited or used consistently across the school. Those who set goals for students set separate targets in math, English language arts and science which are written at the back of the students’ journals. Students commented on how this strategy helped them to know exactly what they were aiming for next in their learning.

The academic intervention team and the pupil personnel committee meet regularly to discuss identified groups of students and their progress. As a result, plans have been implemented to improve student to adult ratios in classrooms and literacy and math coaches have been hired to model lessons. Math results have improved by 14% and English language arts by 1%, which is still below city targets. The use of paraprofessionals, a literacy coach and extensive team teaching help to ensure pupils who are in greatest need of improvement make steady progress. All intervention programs are closely monitored and modified if found to be ineffectual.

The use of “Try Hardest” and “Perfect Attendance” assemblies ensure that high expectations are consistently communicated to the students. The school finds some challenges when trying to engage with parents, but is constantly trying varied and innovative strategies. These include workshops, outings, son and father and mother and daughter activities and monthly “Open House” sessions to involve them. Parents are also encouraged to meet in the “Parents Mall” at the school and a very active parent coordinator works tirelessly to encourage parents to participate in workshops and train as leading learners. As a result, the school is succeeding in gradually increasing the numbers of parents attending parent conferences. The parents interviewed were all very clear that they felt they could speak to the principal at any time with concerns as she runs an “Open Door” policy. At the current time, parents are not specifically asked to provide information about the learning needs of their children.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

Core curricular approaches such as Everyday Math, Writing Workshop and the use of leveled reading books ensure that all students are continuously assessed and their progress is monitored. Student grouping is very fluid and changes according to data collected, including self-assessment, conferencing, teacher observation, unit tests and running records. As a result, differentiation is focused and individualized. A variety of teaching groups is used for different purposes in order to differentiate student learning. These include the use of peer support in mixed groups and specific grouping according to performance levels. The identification of skill gaps and the use of standardized scores further inform differentiated teaching approaches. The curriculum includes art, movement and music across all grades. A full time art teacher teaches art to students in grades kindergarten through grade 3. The school funds a teaching artist to provide art to students in grades 3 through 5. Music and sports are readily available across all grades.

Teachers are accountable for the performance and progress of their students and carry out regular assessments in order to target their instruction to meet students’ needs. Teachers are happy to work together and there is very low staff turnover. Data is always used to decide budgeting, scheduling and staffing. For example, strategic decisions about employing paraprofessionals, academic intervention services staff and math and literacy coaches in order to improve the performance of different groups of students were made as a result of student data. The use of technology is also being introduced to improve classroom delivery and student engagement in learning. The school works hard to improve attendance with the use of certificates for 100% attendance, celebration assemblies and the use of an attendance committee to look at issues connected with attendance and punctuality. As a result, the attendance figures have improved slightly at the present time and it is hoped will be on target by the end of the year.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

Regular formal and informal observations help the administration team focus professional development very effectively to meet teachers’ needs. In addition, a survey is used to pinpoint teachers’ training needs to successfully differentiate the professional development provided. Teachers receive detailed and informative feedback from all observations. Shared preparation times, interclass and interschool visitations, attendance at workshops and the turnkey approach to embed new data initiatives, ensure that teachers work in a very collaborative way to ensure that teaching is better focused according to need. Teachers benefit from high quality demonstration lessons delivered by a math coach which is having a positive impact on their practice. Model classrooms have also been set up in order to demonstrate good practice to new teachers. Examples of students’ work are displayed in order to reinforce teaching points and celebrate success. Effective practices in early childhood education have been shared across the kindergarten grade. Academic

intervention service teachers and behavior management specialists work very well together to ensure that both the academic and personal needs of the students are taken into consideration in planning to meet their needs. The “High Five” incentive scheme and “Character Building” initiative which have been introduced are proving to be effective across the whole school. The school also has an on-site Students Against Violence Everywhere room and a partnership with Special Education Training Resource Centers. Staff, students and parents testify to the fact that discipline has improved and the school is a calmer place where successful teaching can now take place in well-ordered classrooms.

Very effective partnerships have been developed with many community based organizations. These enhance both students’ and parents’ engagement in learning and broaden their learning experiences. For example, the Lincoln Center and the Orchestra of St Luke’s maintain a residency program with the school. A music grant has provided the school with wind instruments which has resulted in a start being made in developing a school band. Community programs continue instruction after school and help to provide some creative activities. Agencies such as NAACP, Baychester-Eden Housing and Mercy College offer outreach to parents through recreational, educational and enrichment programs.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The principal regularly reviews data and actively monitors the instructional program to ensure that it is having the intended impact. Classroom observations, academic intervention conferences and “Let’s Talk” one-on-one meetings with the principal ensure that teachers are made accountable for the progress of their students. Students have benchmarks and progress is monitored against these across the year. Plans in the school are regularly evaluated and revised, although time frames are usually long and contain no interim stepping stones. All teachers are expected to keep planning logs which are checked on a fortnightly basis. Curriculum maps are used and revised each year. Periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures are used to monitor pupil achievement in order to make decisions about practices and the use of learning materials. The introduction of promised technology from the Department of Education will fine-tune this so these decisions can be brought down to individual student level.

The principal and all her staff have a well developed and carefully thought out vision for the school. A fair, honest and consistent approach is helping to bring about small but encouraging improvements in behavior, attendance and parental involvement. The school is striving to meet its city targets in English language arts and maintain its “Good Standing” status in math, science and social studies. It is continually evaluating its approach to balanced literacy and numeracy, including leveled libraries, on-going assessments and the implementation of quality programs such as Fletcher’s Place and Lucy Calkins. All members of the school community subscribe to the school mission of “Learning for All Whatever it Takes” and administration and staff are continually developing further systems and procedures to enhance performance and progress across the school.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Bronxwood School (PS 112)	△	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score			X		

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	△	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?			X		
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?			X		
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?			X		
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?			X		
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X		

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	△	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area?				X	
2.3 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?			X		
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?		X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X		

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?			X		
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?		X			
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?				X	
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X		

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another's instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				X	

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

To what extent do . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?			X		
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to make strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?			X		
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?			X		
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X		