



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**P.S. 091 Bronx**

**Elementary X091**

**220 Aqueduct Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10453**

**Principal: Meredith Struhl Nasjletti**

**Date of review: November 24, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Maria Giacone**

## The School Context

P.S 091 Bronx is an elementary school with 750 students from grade 1 through grade 5. The school population comprises 20% Black, 73% Hispanic, 2% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 35% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Teachers consistently engage in analyzing data and student work in inquiry-based teams. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

### Impact

The work of teacher teams in analyzing student work and data has resulted in progress towards goals for groups and individual students, and shared leadership to ensure that teachers have input in making key decisions regarding school-wide practices.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet regularly during common planning time to look at student and teacher work and ensure progress towards goals for groups of students. Analysis of student data revealed that writing was an area of need and teachers designed a writing continuum to assess student work and track progress along various genres of writing across grades. A subsequent review of student work revealed that the third graders struggled with narrative the literacy committee worked with the third grade inquiry team to design narrative writing tasks with a writing process approach. Across grades, progress is tracked and used to create individual goals for students.
- Teachers are engaged in professional reflection and have a process to look at student work that leads to an action plan. The process includes administering an initial assessment, looking at the resulting levels of student work, analyzing what went well and what was particularly challenging for students, analyzing the reasons why students committed errors to uncover the underlying misconceptions, and developing action plans to address students' needs. During the second grade team meeting, teachers analyzed student work in mathematics regarding number sense and place value. Based on data revealing percentages of students at each Level from 1-4, teachers analyzed reasons why students may have faced challenges in order to address possible misconceptions through adjustment of instructional strategies. Then they devised an action plan to support students at each level.
- Teachers acknowledge that they have voice in making school-wide curricular decisions, stating that their perceptions and findings are taken into consideration. As an example, teachers developed a pacing calendar that allows a 90 minute block for mathematics which was expanded from 70 minutes, instituting a significant change in instructional practice which allows students additional time on task. To address the writing goal, teachers expanded the Expeditionary Learning curriculum to include additional writing instruction. One teacher said, "We decided we would create a skills period with writing and carry that over to social studies." As a result, students show improvement in writing.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices and scaffolds inconsistently provide multiple entry points to engage all learners including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities in challenging work products and discussions.

### Impact

Targeted scaffolds to address the needs of specific students or groups of students are inconsistent resulting in uneven levels of engagement in tasks requiring higher order thinking and discussions.

### Supporting Evidence

- Although in most classes students were seated in groups, group work was not specifically tailored to meet the needs of subgroups in the class. In one of seven classes visited the fifth grade teacher worked with a small group of students while other groups had differentiated materials. In other classes, specific grouping to address the needs of subgroups within the classes was not in evidence.
- There were many visual aids and prompts across classrooms including charts, posters, diagrams, and photos, and in a fifth grade class, pictures and a different graphic organizer were supplied for ELLs. Across classrooms visited, however, scaffolds to address the needs of English language learners and students with disabilities were inconsistent resulting in uneven levels of student engagement.
- There were some opportunities for students to turn and talk. Across classrooms teachers asked questions eliciting responses from individual students, or asked some students to respond to others. Most questioning was teacher to student. For example, in a second grade class, the teacher asked students questions about what they had read, but only a few students participated in whole group discussion. In a fourth grade class, individual students were asked to refer to another student's answer. Partner or small group discussion to contemplate a higher order question and think through an answer was inconsistently demonstrated.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and that curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

### Impact

The school's curricular decisions build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all learners. Across classes teachers make intentional decisions so that a diversity of learners including ELLs and students with disabilities have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged..

### Supporting Evidence

- Engaging in a review of their selected curricula, Core Knowledge and Expeditionary Learning, the school modified units to add additional writing components across grades including Kindergarten where there had been little emphasis on writing. A skills section for grammar, conventions and sentence structure was added across grades as well. This has led to expanded units that include more opportunities to write in a variety of text types including narrative, informational and research writing in alignment with the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards.
- A review of baseline and mid-year assessments and student work were tracked on a school-devised writing continuum and revealed that reading comprehension and language conventions in writing were areas of need. Faculty and administration added a guided reading component to ensure that the instructional shifts were addressed enabling students to read critically and draw evidence from text.
- The school has instituted a practice of using the analysis of student work and data to guide curricular modifications. School leaders and teachers explained that during common planning time, teachers review student work to determine areas of focus and modify tasks to address students' needs. The team then reviews the modified tasks before giving them to students to determine what misconceptions students may encounter. This allows for further revision of tasks. For example, when second grade students demonstrated misunderstanding of fact families where subtraction and addition are related and yield the same answer, a task was modified to use dominos as manipulatives as a hands-on model, to uncover the thinking behind those relationships and provide access for all students.

**Findings**

Across classrooms, teachers use common assessments and rubrics aligned with the school's curricula to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subjects.

**Impact**

The school's use of assessment analysis results in actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student progress resulting in adjustments to instruction and curricula tasks to meet students' learning needs.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers have created rubrics to ensure coherence across content areas. These rubrics are used to provide actionable feedback to students. A review of student work showed that students' writing pieces were all accompanied by rubrics and teacher comments that were aligned with rubric indicators. For example, a next steps comment stated, "Include more information from the text that shows how the bullying affected Danny."
- During a student meeting, students spoke about how they have incorporated feedback from teachers that is rubric-based as well as using student-written exemplars as models to improve their writing. Students say that teachers confer with them and give them strategies on how to improve their work. One student said, "We use rubrics to develop goals." Another said, "I practiced how to add details and dialogue. Mine was an exemplar. It starts getting easier."
- Writing growth is monitored on each grade through data recorded on a school-created writing continuum, which is aligned with the Common Core Writing Standards and tracks student progress in specific genres of writing within a grade and across grades at benchmark intervals. The writing continuum allows teachers to track student progress in specific genres of writing. The results recorded on the writing continuum are discussed in teacher teams and are used to adjust instruction. For example, opinion writing was strengthened in the lower grades by breaking skills into parts. The third grade results in narrative writing led teachers to include prompts and drafting as a process that allows students to revise independently.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

High expectations are consistently conveyed to the entire school community including teachers, students and parents and ensure opportunities for collaboration, professional development, and feedback in order to foster a culture of high expectations for all members of the school community. School leaders provide training to support the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

### **Impact**

There are systems and structures that communicate and promote high expectations and accountability for staff, students and families providing supports to meet college and career readiness benchmarks and increase student achievement.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The school-wide instructional goals of writing throughout the grades, and Danielson Framework for Teaching component 3b Using questioning and discussion and 3d Using assessment in instruction, are recognized by teachers as the focus of their work. School leaders have emphasized the importance of the role of questioning to prepare students for writing. To this end, teacher teams have developed rubrics to ensure a common approach and set of expectations for writing. Across grades data is recorded to assess progress. A review of lesson observations revealed that teachers have received feedback in these areas to enhance classroom instruction.
- Workshops for parents are planned collaboratively with school leaders to address areas of concern to parents. An example was a workshop on how the Common Core Learning Standards are being implemented and ways parents can help their children achieve their school goals. Additionally, informational flyers are sent home in a variety of languages including Spanish and Bengali. During a parent meeting, parents described how the newly revised handbook makes clear the school's goals and expectations.
- Part of the work of teachers during time devoted to parent engagement includes regular contact with parents regarding student progress. Packets are prepared for parents that describe the processes students engage in during class time and contain a list of questions parents can ask their children in order to address the Common Core instructional shifts. To keep abreast of their children's progress towards individual goals, parents receive progress reports for their children every end of the month. One parent said, "We work as a community and communication with the school staff is excellent."