

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

DBN:	08X375
District Name:	District 8
School Name:	Bronx Mathematics Preparatory School
School Address:	456 White Plains Road Bronx, New York 10473
Principal (Interim Acting):	Anya Munce- Jarrett
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year-1) - Comprehensive
Area of Identification:	English Language Arts - All Students; African American Students; Hispanic Students; English Language Learners; Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students
Dates of On-site Review:	March 6-7, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“The Bronx Mathematics Preparatory School (Bronx Math) provides scholars in grades 6 to 8 with a disciplined college preparatory education focused on skill and content mastery in mathematics. Through our curriculum and achievement-oriented school culture, Bronx Math prepares scholars for college and college level work. Our particular focus is on mathematics literacy combined with a strict attention to character development.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- The Principal, newly assigned in January 2012, has identified priorities for the school and has shared her vision with the school community, i.e., students, teachers, and school leaders.
- Students, parents, and staff report that the new Principal has an open door policy and communicates well with all members of the school community.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- Teachers collect data from multiple sources, including teacher-created pre- and post-tests, as well as from the Scantron Ed Performance Series. However, school leaders indicated that there is limited use of data by teachers to drive instructional planning and practice for all students.
- Teachers use data from baseline assessments to inform grouping within the classroom. This grouping, however, was organized by overall performance (from zero to four) on the baseline exam, rather than by conducting an item skills analysis.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leadership, with the support of the Network, should provide professional development (PD) on how to analyze data to meaningfully drive instructional practices, such as student grouping, differentiating instruction, and monitoring student progress.
- When using data from baseline assessments, teachers should disaggregate student data by skill to understand specific student weaknesses and group students accordingly to support specific skill proficiency.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- The school has recently adjusted instruction from an integrated Humanities curriculum to a discrete English language arts (ELA) curriculum and currently has no written ELA curriculum. As of February 2012, the school has begun to use a balanced literacy handbook for educators to support instruction for all students.
- While there was evidence of grouping students, there was limited evidence of differentiation of tasks, materials, and strategies by student ability. There was limited evidence that teachers were planning to accommodate specific needs of students with disabilities.
- In most classes that were visited by the review team, instruction was teacher-directed and the use of teaching strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners was limited. Additionally, teacher questioning did not elicit discussion or develop higher order thinking skills among students. Observed teachers did not regularly provide adequate wait time for students to respond to questions. In some classrooms, teachers talked over students who were engaging in off-task conversations.
- Student work was posted with teacher feedback throughout the school. Additionally, there was evidence of student work in student portfolios within classrooms. However, the feedback provided by teachers on posted work and portfolio work was inconsistent. Student work was evaluated with statements such as

“Nice Job,” “Great Work,” or a check-plus symbol rather than teachers celebrating student strengths, identifying areas of needed improvement, and suggesting next steps for progress.

- Every classroom has a SMART Board; however, teachers used them as projectors, not as hands-on interactive, instructional support. Additionally, students did not use computers to support their written work during class time.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The District/Network should work with the school on the development of curriculum in all core areas and ensure that it is clearly aligned with the current New York State Learning Standards. The curriculum must be aligned to the new P-12 Common Core Learning Standards in English language arts and literacy to prepare for implementation in school year 2012-13. All curricula should be developed by knowledgeable and trained individuals (national, State or local) who understand the key elements of curriculum development.

All teachers and school leaders should participate in PD on how to plan and implement a curriculum with rigor, as well as on delivery methods that are student-centered. The curriculum should be relied upon as the basis for assessing individual student mastery and progress. Walkthroughs and formal evaluations should include how well the teacher knows and implements the curriculum for the subjects being taught.

- The school leadership, with the support of the Network, should provide PD to build teacher capacity for differentiating lessons and using formative, summative and interim assessment sources. Additionally, school leaders should regularly monitor teacher development and integration of the use of differentiated instructional strategies learned in PD to support positive student outcomes.
- The school leadership, with the support of the Network, should provide PD to build teachers’ capacity to develop and integrate higher order thinking skills into daily instructional practice. Teachers should also consider using common planning time to plan collegially for the development of higher order thinking questions for daily lessons and unit designs. School leadership should also seek out model literacy classrooms within the school. Additionally, PD should focus on how to integrate wait time into lessons to increase time for student thinking and self-monitoring.
- The school leadership, with the support of the Network, should provide PD to support teachers in using rubrics to provide specific, meaningful and quality feedback to students in a consistent and timely manner. Additionally, teachers should consider using common planning time to examine student work and develop a common lens for rubric expectations to increase student achievement.
- The school leader should seek the assistance of the Network to provide teachers with on-going PD incorporating SMART Board/technology use into their lesson plans to support interactive and hands on learning. School leaders should review technology usage through observations and walkthroughs.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- In February 2012, the Principal initiated the implementation of a balanced literacy program based on identified school needs. Document reviews and staff interviews indicated that there has been limited PD to support the implementation of this new literacy program.
- A review of documents, interviews and classroom visits by the review team indicated numerous scheduling conflicts and inconsistencies. For example, teachers in two observed writing classes were not provided with a list of students programmed for that class. Staff interviewed by the review team indicated that Academic Intervention Services (AIS) personnel were used to provide coverage for a writing class that did not have a regularly assigned teacher.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leadership, with the support of the Network, should identify appropriate PD opportunities for teachers to build capacity in using a balanced literacy approach to instruction. The school leadership should work with the Network to identify middle schools that serve similar populations of students and are successfully implementing a balanced literacy program. The school leadership should then have teachers conduct inter-visitations to see successful models of balanced literacy programs.
- The Network should provide substantial technical assistance on scheduling and programming practices to ensure that the school is able to sustain its continuous improvement efforts by providing consistency for staff and students.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- There is some evidence that Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) is being implemented in the school. For example, students are expected to be on time to class; however, student response to teacher directions, passing bells and movement through hallways was not always positive. Behavioral expectations are posted throughout the school; however, they are neither consistently stated nor implemented by staff, especially during transitions inside and outside of classrooms.
- Classroom library books are limited in number and by genre and are disorganized. In classrooms visited, student access to classroom libraries was limited due to the placement of bookshelves and baskets within the classroom.
- There is limited evidence of texts that support native language arts.
- Parents reported that they had not received Individualized Education Program (IEP) progress reports for students.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leadership should consider developing a committee to support the continued development and implementation of the schoolwide PBIS. The school leadership should regularly conduct walkthroughs to ensure that all members of the school community model and practice the behaviors and protocols outlined by the PBIS program. The school leadership should use the school's Town Hall Meetings and advisory periods to reinforce positive behavior routines.
- The school leadership, with the support of the Network, should provide PD for teachers on effective and efficient organization of the physical space in the classroom. PD should focus on the management of materials and equipment, as well as ensuring easy access for all students to use these materials and equipment.
- The school leadership should complete a thorough needs assessment of classroom materials and prioritize the purchasing of needed books and resource materials to support the balanced literacy curriculum, keeping in mind student subgroup needs.
- The school leadership, with the support of the Network, should provide PD for teachers of students with IEPs in how to provide regular reporting of IEP progress to parents.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- A review of documents by the review team indicates that the school does not have a comprehensive and long-term PD plan.
- The review team observed the first meeting of a grade-level common planning team. While there is a structure for recording activities that take place, the observed grade meeting was not supported by a written, planned agenda and not all meeting materials were prepared for distribution at the start of the meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leadership should survey staff to determine their needs and interests and engage the Network in supporting the development of the PD plan. Additionally, the school leadership should ensure that the developed plan aligns with the school's CEP and the Principal's vision and mission for the school. The PD plan should support the integration of literacy across the content areas. Teachers who support the instruction of students with disabilities should receive PD to learn strategies to better meet the needs of their students.
- The school leadership should ensure that common planning time is supported during every meeting with a pre-planned written agenda aligned to the school's PD plan. Additionally, the following week's agenda items should be discussed and preset by the grade team members to ensure continuity and appropriate preparation for the next meeting to maximize teacher discussion and planning time.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDING:

There is a library available to students; however, it is currently being used as an AIS classroom. There is a certified librarian in the school; however, it was reported that she is currently teaching AIS. The library collection has limited resources available to support the literacy needs for all students.

RECOMMENDATION:

The school leadership should establish a plan for the library to support the school's balanced literacy program and ensure regular access to the library and media center for all students. The library should be a resource to integrate literacy across the content areas.

PART 4: CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The findings and recommendations noted in the report are intended to guide the school's inquiry, planning, and the development of the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) for school year 2012-13. The school should also continue its efforts in the implementation of the following Regents Reform Agenda initiatives: P-12 CCLS, Data Driven Instruction and the Annual Professional Performance Reviews for teacher effectiveness.