



**Department of
Education**

Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

**Charter School Annual Site Visit Report
Charter Schools Office
2010-2011**

**BRONX GLOBAL LEARNING INSTITUTE FOR GIRLS CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT**

JUNE 2011

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

Bronx Global Learning Institute for Girls Charter School is an elementary school serving approximately 200 students from grade kindergarten through grade three in the 2010-2011 school year.¹ The school opened in 2008 with grades kindergarten through one. It has plans to grow to serve students grades kindergarten through five.² It is currently housed in DOE space in District 7.³

The school population comprises 32.8% Black, 58.1% Hispanic, 0% White and 0.5% Asian students. 86.9% of students are designated as Title I, compared to 87.9% in the district.⁴ The student body includes 25.8% English language learners (ELL) and 4.5% special education students (SPED), compared to district averages of 19.1% designated as ELL and 20.7% receiving SPED services.⁵

The school has not yet received a Progress Report grade due to the need for students in testing grades. The average attendance rate for the 2009-2010 school year was 92.0%.⁶ The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.⁷

Annual Review Process Overview:

The NYC DOE Charter Schools Office conducts an annual site visit of New York City Department of Education authorized charter schools in order to assess three primary questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a viable organization; and is the school in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The visits are conducted by representatives of the New York City Department of Education Charter Schools Office and last the duration of one school day. The annual site visit begins with a meeting with the principal and school leadership team. Subsequently, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators, teachers, and students. Areas of evaluation include, but are not limited to: academic goals and mission; curriculum and instruction; school culture and learning environment; assessment utilization; parent engagement; government structures and organizational design; community support; special populations; and safety and security.

The following experts participated in the review of this school on June 2, 2011:

- Sonya Hooks, Senior Director, NYC DOE Charter Schools Office
- Sylvia Rabner, Consultant

¹ NYC DOE ATS system

² NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

³ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

⁴ Demographic Data drawn from NYC DOE ATS System on June 30, 2011

⁵ NYC DOE ATS system; data pulled on June 30, 2011

⁶ NYC DOE School Progress Report

⁷ New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

Part 2: Findings

Areas of Strength

- The school has a warm, inviting, safe and congenial culture.
 - On the day of the visit, reviewers observed happy and respectful students in classrooms and hallways.
 - There is a school-wide behavior management system in place that focuses on positive reinforcement of student achievement, including a “Scholar of the Week.”
 - School leadership is committed to the mission of the school.
 - School promotes project based learning.

- The school has an innovative curriculum with great depth and enrichments that are offered to all students.
 - The school has an excellent performing arts program that offers violin and dance as part of the school day.
 - The curriculum model is dual-language and all students are taught in English and Spanish and given assessments in both languages.
 - The curriculum is rich in exemplar works; a great example of this is Million-Dollar Words, a school-wide initiative to reward students for developing language proficiency.

- The school has developed a system to provide intervention to at-risk students.
 - There is a Special Education coordinator on staff that provides intensive intervention to 4-5 students each day and provides math support to third graders.
 - Interviews with school leadership revealed that an early-childhood teacher was trained in Reading Recovery and provides early-literacy intervention to students that are having challenges in first grade.
 - There is a second- and third-grade literature specialist that “pushes-in” classrooms and “pulls-out” students to develop literacy skills.

- The school administers a range of assessments for all students and uses data to inform instruction and decision making.
 - On the day of the visit, teachers noted that at-risk students are assessed bi-weekly to ensure that instruction is addressing their needs.
 - Assessments are used to inform principal, school leadership and teachers of at-risk students.
 - After review of assessment data, school leadership noted that a Saturday Academy was created to provide additional support to students in math and English language arts.

- There is evidence of a strong foundation for professional development.
 - Teachers noted that there are many instances for development and acquiring feedback. Each teacher had two formal observations, many informal observations, and subject-specific observations administered by a consultant.
 - Professional development is also given to teachers for: each grade level once each week; full faculty once each month and two full weeks in the summer.

- The school is strong at communicating with families about students’ progress and school activities using a variety of methods.
 - The school sends a monthly newsletter and produces a grade-level newspaper.
 - Teachers send “happy-grams” to students and families to reinforce positive behavior.
 - Progress reports that include assessment results are sent home four times per year. (Title I sends progress reports monthly.)

- Teachers meet with parents one time each month.
- The Parent Teacher Organization is very active in supporting the school academically and in other areas.

Areas of Growth

- The school should continue to focus on ways to expand and define the use of data to improve student outcomes.
 - Academic programming was not always adjusted after reflection upon the assessment results.
 - Instructional staff suggested the creation of a school-wide guided reading system with levels like “F” and “P.”
- The school should continue enhancing professional development for teachers.
 - Teachers noted the desire to have more co-teaching opportunities and more collaborative team time with a focus on cross-grade collaboration.
 - There is little evidence that professional development is differentiated.
- School leaders should continue to reflect on how to enhance dual-language instruction and curriculum.
 - Spanish instructors noted the need for additional professional development.
 - Instructors also stated that alignment between English and Spanish curriculums could be improved.
 - School leaders and teachers indicated a need for better supplementation for non-native speakers.
- The school should consider focusing on a broader distribution of leadership.
 - Reviewers were concerned about the amount of responsibility on the principal, especially as the school grows.
- The school should consider focusing on building institutional knowledge.
 - Teachers mentioned the feeling of “recreating the wheel.”
 - One teacher suggested electronic capture of lesson plans and individual student plans and teacher-developed assessments.
- The school should continue documented outreach to special education students in order to match district averages.
 - The school’s population includes 4.5% SPED students which is lower than the district average of 20.7%.

Part 3: Framing Questions

FRAMING QUESTIONS:

Throughout the Renewal Process and the life of each school's charter, the NYCDOE Charter Schools Office uses the following framing questions to monitor Charter School success:

1. Has the School Been an Academic Success?
2. Has the School Been a Viable Organization?
3. Has the School Been in Compliance with All Applicable Laws and Regulations?

Annual Site Visit Rubric:

1. Has the School Been an Academic Success?
 - Academic Goals and Mission
 - School components and curriculum align together and holistically support the mission
 - School has high academic expectations and employs strategies for the full range of students served by the school, including those at risk and those with special needs
 - Curriculum and Instruction
 - The educational plan is flexible and is adjusted to meet the performance levels and learning needs of all enrolled students
 - School implements programming to address the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs
 - Teachers demonstrate the use of differentiated instructional techniques to support the varying ways by which students learn
 - School has implemented programming for students who need remediation or acceleration
 - School Culture
 - The culture is strong, intentional, supportive and sustainable and promotes student learning
 - The school motivates all students and respects the diversity of learners and cultures in the community
 - School offers programs, activities or support services beyond academics to address students' social and emotional needs
 - School calendar and day are set to provide extra supports to ensure that students are able to meet and exceed academic goals
 - Schedule for communication to parents/students is timely and allows for due process, includes strategies to prepare students for transitions and strategies for those students who are not on schedule, presents a clear and fair system that complies with students' due process rights
 - Structures that foster the development of authentic, sustained, caring, respectful relationships among all stakeholders within school
 - Behavioral expectations and social supports that reflect the school's mission and comply with all applicable laws and regulations
 - Assessment
 - Establishes a culture of continuous improvement and accountability for student learning
 - Develops assessments that shape and inform instruction on an ongoing basis and develop data that's used to gauge student, teacher and school progress through formative and summative assessment
 - Student learning measured with multiple forms of assessments/metrics
 - Develops educational goals and performance metrics that are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reflect the Mission and Time-Specific

- Develops assessments that are appropriately aligned with curriculum, instruction, and adopted standards
 - Provides evidence of how data will influence instruction, professional development and curricular adjustments
 - Parent Engagement
 - Parent engagement strategies that integrate and mobilize parents within the school community as conduits for student success
 - Capacity to communicate effectively with parents and families
2. Is the School a Viable Organization
- Governance Structures and Organizational Design
 - School has articulated appropriate roles, responsibilities, and decision-making structure for school community members (including Board of Trustees and school leadership)
 - An accountability structure that provides effective oversight of the educational program and fiscal components of the school is in place and utilized
 - Board regularly reviews a data dashboard of student achievement and fiscal management that forms the basis for Board discussions and decisions
 - Board has diverse skill set that lends itself to strong educational / operational oversight
 - Board has an articulated process for ongoing policy development, Board member development and self-evaluation
 - Organizational charts are aligned with mission; roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
 - Board has developed essential strategic partnerships with organizations that support the mission of the school
 - Community Support
 - School Leadership demonstrated responsiveness to the unique needs and interests of the community to be served
 - School has established a presence in the community and has buy in from community members
3. Is the School in Compliance with Applicable Laws and Regulations
- Special Populations
 - Well-defined plan and sufficient capacity to service the learning needs of Special Education students, English Language Learners
 - School adequately addresses the academic and non academic needs of students in need of remediation, students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and gifted students
 - There is a coherent plan for meeting the non-academic needs of students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and other populations
 - School employs a process to identify students at risk of not meeting expectations and creates intervention plans and follow up
 - School demonstrates a comprehensive recruitment, enrollment and retention approach that is sensitive to the diverse needs of students
 - School admission policy and lottery preferences serve to create a student body that reflects community demographics and give a preference to community school district residents
 - Safety and Security
 - School is well maintained
 - Transitions and student gatherings are orderly and well supervised
 - Expectations for student behavior are well known and are enforced fairly
 - School is current with all safety recruitments and drills.
 - AED machines are in operation and school staff is trained in CPR