



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

South Bronx Preparatory: A College Board School

Intermediate School/High School 221

360 East 145th Street

Bronx

NY 10454

Principal: Brian Rosenbloom

Dates of review: February 15 - 16, 2007

Reviewer: Candido DeJesus

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

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

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Information about the school

South Bronx Preparatory is one of two schools sharing space in the same building. The school opened in 2004 and has been going through a growing process by which it has added a grade every year. Currently the school contains grades 6 through 11. Next year the 12th grade will be the first high school graduating class. The school is organized to provide a seamless approach to extending a supportive environment for students from the start of their middle school experience to the end of high school. The high school (grades 9, 10, 11) is located on the first floor of the building while the middle school (grades 6, 7, 8) is located on the second floor. Teachers, students and administrators consider themselves one school and operate as one school as much as possible. About 14% of the 504 students at the school receive special education services and 5% are English language learners mostly from Spanish speaking backgrounds. About 30% of the student body is Black and 70% is Hispanic. The school is eligible for Title 1 funding. Attendance, at 92.6% in 2005, was slightly higher than similar and City schools.

Some teachers from the former school have remained in the new school while other staff members were recruited from elsewhere.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal, with the support of his assistant principals, provides inspirational and effective leadership.
- The school provides a strong advisory program, inclusive of all students, that is effective at contributing to academic and social development especially for students in need.
- Budgeting decisions are closely driven by the needs revealed by student data and the school's focused plans for the improvement of each student and groups of students throughout the school.
- Staffing decisions effectively support the mission and vision of the school to create a collaborative environment where every teacher and every student will be successful.
- Scheduling decisions are helpful in creating longer blocks of teaching time and opportunities for teachers to engage in professional development.
- The school uses its affiliations with youth development partners well to promote and support the high expectation that each student at the school will go to college.
- There is a positive tone to the school environment that makes it feel like a strong community and which emphasizes high expectations for each teacher and every student.
- Students feel safe and secure in the school and value the support provided by the staff.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue using student data in mathematics to support teachers in developing best practices and realigning their instructional strategies with improvement plans and goals.
- Increase the amount of writing expected in all content areas across the school in order to support current efforts for rigor and improved literacy.
- Expand parent involvement and professional development opportunities for parents in order for them to better support the academic improvement efforts of the school.

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The strong emphasis on student support characterizes the school's efforts to provide a personalized learning experience for each individual. The strong leadership and a dedicated staff have created a positive culture in just a few years. A sense of community drives the activities of the teachers and other adults in the school. High expectations are supported by a number of excellent partnerships with outside organizations. The curriculum ensures that students are able to meet graduation requirements and advanced placement courses are also on offer. There is an effective advisory program which supports all students, especially those that are most needy.

The school has become proficient at collecting performance data and generating its own information on each student. It uses this information to successfully develop plans and goals for academic and social development. Planning and goal setting is a long term process that begins in the 6th grade and is followed through until the 12th grade. The school has even developed a plan to track students in college and assist them in sustaining the academic rigor necessary to receive a college degree. The developments within the school are leading to steady improvements in attendance and academic success.

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 student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Data information is well organized and used effectively to make comparisons across classes, grades, subject areas and groups of students. Information from the school report card, for example, is used to make comparisons between the school's own test results and those of similar schools. Given the early stages of the school, there is insufficient data to make meaningful analysis of trends over time. Summative assessments include Regents examinations, standardized State tests and marking period tests. The school also undertakes a number of formative assessments including the Princeton Review and simulated examinations. This range of periodic assessments gives a constantly updated understanding of individual student progress. In addition, diagnostic data has been used constructively to identify specific weaknesses in skill areas, particularly in mathematics.

The three guidance counselors play an active role in analyzing student progress and collecting additional qualitative data about individuals to enable them to link progress in social development with academic improvement. The close tracking of individuals enables the school to both identify and monitor the progress of English language learners and special education students. The data is also used carefully to identify those students who need additional support to gain the required credits. Analysis of the report card enables the school to note the relative performance by sub groups such as gender and ethnicity. Comparisons of data demonstrate that almost all students in the school sustain improvement over the course of a year.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The overarching goal is for students to succeed at the secondary school level by providing a coherent educational experience which ensures steady and sustained progress for them as they move from grade 6 to grade 12. Plans and goals are collaboratively established with the school’s main partner, the College Board. The staff are aware of and share the vision and mission of the school.

At individual level, data is used well to maintain high expectations and set challenging goals for students, who each have a documented plan covering 6th to 12th grade. This plan is the basis of frequent discussions between students and staff at advisory meetings and is being constantly upgraded as a result. The tracking of credit accumulation is used systematically to give regular feedback to students about their progress to date and also to inform the well-focused credit recovery program. The ultimate aim for all is a high school diploma. Data is used well to focus attention and support on students scoring in the lowest academic levels of English Language Arts and mathematics. A large number attend rigorous after school and Saturday programs, for example. Through the use of a collaborative team teaching model, the school has rapidly closed the achievement gap between special education students and general education students in the same classroom. Special education students in these classes have improved more rapidly than in self-contained classes.

Parents are generally supportive of the school and acknowledge the great improvement in their children academically and socially. Advisories play a great part in keeping students and parents abreast of how individual students are progressing towards gaining a high school diploma and graduating on time. The school’s efforts to date, however, in engaging parents more proactively in their children’s learning have not been overly successful. Parents do not fully understand what the student data reveals about the needs of their children and how they can be better partners to support their children at home. Within the school itself, however, there is a strong commitment from all of the adults to secure the goals set for the students.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The curriculum meets mandated requirements and provides a suitable program which will enable senior students to graduate with a high school diploma. Advanced placement courses are also offered to provide additional challenge for high achieving students. The analysis of test results has shown a steady growth in English language arts, which has not been so strongly reflected in mathematics. The detailed item skills analysis of State examinations undertaken by the school to explore this difference more closely has led to a subsequent realignment of the mathematics curriculum. This information is also being used to plan after school, Saturday programs and additional interventions.

Teachers are aware of their responsibilities for the progress of the students in their classes. They use data carefully to plan differentiated instruction so that the varied needs of the students are more closely met. Discussions occur among teachers about pacing, assessment and learning standards on a frequent basis. Notwithstanding the improvements in English language arts, there remains a drive to improve literacy, particularly writing, further. At present, the amount of writing undertaken across the subjects and classes is variable, however, and not as extensive as it should be.

Scheduling is appropriately informed by the needs of the students. Teaching periods, for example, are 75 minutes long, providing more time on task for student work and more opportunities for collaboration among the teachers. The school schedules push-in, rather than pull-out, periods for support staff to enter classrooms and co-teach in order to maximize the contact time with students. This also reduces the student to teacher ratio for instruction and provides more opportunities for focused work. In this way, data is used particularly effectively to provide differentiation and individualization of instruction for English language learners and special education pupils.

The school also modifies its budget according to the needs revealed by student data by including more interventions and personnel, such as the additional guidance counselors. Each student has two sets of textbooks, one for home and one for school, in each subject area. As a result, students can readily access their textbook information immediately at either place. Students feel that they are well supported and that they have a number of adults in the building that they trust and consider mentors. Student attendance has improved greatly in the last few years but, nevertheless, remains a high priority for the school.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The principal is seen as the guiding force behind the rapid improvement of this school. His commitment and relentless effort for school improvement is shared by his cabinet. New teachers must share the school's vision and must willingly attend professional development on-site and off-site.

The College Board provides a mandatory training at the start of the school year and at four Saturday retreats during the year. The program is rigorous and effective at integrating teachers quickly into the school culture. The school leadership models effective teamwork in their meetings and in their collaboration efforts with teachers. Administrators spend much time undertaking informal visits and spot checks to evaluate the quality of teacher instruction. Subsequent discussions with teachers provide helpful feedback, leading to improvements in practice. Teachers often observe each other's lessons to gain more experience about what works well and to strengthen their own repertoire of skills. Conversations among teachers, both informally and during meetings, frequently include discussions on the achievement and progress of their students. Staff members are actively encouraged to evaluate each other's work for the purpose of providing positive feedback. Teachers are proud to be subject area specialist, team members, mentors and confidants of students. Clear systems and structures are in place to ensure that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

The College Board and a number of other active partners align their activities very effectively with the improvement plans and goals of the school. Partners also examine

student data and plan with the school staff. They monitor student progress along with the staff. Field trips to colleges and skill building activities sponsored by collaborators are successful in strengthening the study skills of students and their resolve to get a college education.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Decisions concerning the school's Comprehensive Education Plan are made collaboratively with the administration and the school leadership team. High expectations along with very strong outside partners have put in place instructional strategies and effective support strategies that are demonstrating successful improvement in student outcomes. Data is analyzed across schools, grades and classes to identify trends to be singled out for revision. College acceptance is the ultimate step in the school's long term plans.

The use of data is embedded in the plans and goals set for the improvement of each student. Both verbal and written information is used well to give feedback on progress so that students know where they stand and what they have to do to succeed. They are advised, mentored and treated with respect. Periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress are used regularly to change their individual plans and modify the variety of effective intervention strategies. The analysis has also led to changes in the curriculum. Clear protocols demonstrate that accountability processes are put in place for administrators, teachers and students. For example, administrators regularly collect written plans every two weeks from teachers that demonstrate instruction based on data. The structures in the school enable it to respond flexibly to areas of need, revealed through data analysis, by realigning practices and resources where necessary. The school continues to sustain the growth and progress of its learning community. It is well placed to secure further improvement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: South Bronx Preparatory School (IS/HS 221)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

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 student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students* 		X	
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 		X	
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		X	

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and 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 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.		X	
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.	X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.		X	
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.		X	
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.		X	
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.		X	
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		X	
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	