



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Bronx Latin

Intermediate / High School 267

**800 Home Street
Bronx
NY 10456**

Principal: Ms L Pineiro

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Reviewer: Martyn Groucutt

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bronx Latin is a new and currently expanding school with students enrolled in grades 6 through 8. It will expand to grade 12 in the coming years. It is part of the New Visions for Public Schools group of small schools in New York, situated on a campus with three others.

There are currently 156 students enrolled at the school, seven in receipt of collaborative education to address identified needs, while another four receive related services. Currently, 53% of the students are Hispanic, 42% are Black and the remainder are White or from other backgrounds. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school's attendance rate over the last school year stood at 93.5%, slightly above the City average of 92.8%.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The vision of the principal is creating a school that has learning at its very center.
- The excellent collaboration and support between staff and students creates a positive learning environment.
- The insistence on high standards, hard work and regular attendance creates an environment for success.
- The use of Socratic techniques and seminars helps to create independent, objective learners.
- Teachers use a range of strategies for teaching and learning, which engage different learning styles and types of intelligences.
- The stress placed on the importance of writing skills helps to develop academic maturity.
- The development of rubric-based inter-visitations by teachers enables them to learn from good practice.
- The creation of an environment where students feel safe and well supported enables them to concentrate on learning.
- The collaboration with external groups, in the arts for example, adds breadth and vitality to the curriculum.
- The school council gives students a real voice in the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop differentiated instruction at an individualized level.
- Evaluate student work, in more detail, so that it is developmental and makes clear what would have made a piece of work even better.
- Make all classroom displays as good as the best, creating effective learning environments in all rooms.
- Ensure that the use of data is equally rigorous for all subjects, including Latin, where it will not be so readily available.
- Ensure that access to, and use of, technology enables it to be equally effective as a tool for teaching and learning across the whole curriculum.
- Develop classroom management strategies for the more challenging grade 6 students.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

This school has made an exceptional start, using data in very effective ways to underpin its work and maximize the performance of its students. Its results in State and City wide tests in English language arts and mathematics are well above the average for the district.

The Bronx Latin curriculum is based around the study of three inter-disciplinary units in each grade, aimed not just at learning content, but also seeking to enable students to master challenging skills and learning strategies. At its heart is the study of classical texts as well as modern great works, and Latin is learned by all students. For example, learning in grade 6 is based around studies of the classical societies of Rome, Greece and Egypt, while still covering requirements for English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. The instructional program meets all the City and State requirements and in its first two years students' results in external tests were above the average for the region.

Assessment of individual student progress is measured in many of the traditional ways, but here it goes far beyond any notion of 'teaching to the test'. For example, Socratic seminars are used to measure individual progress, with the school being supported in these by well-qualified visitors with expertise, who use a rubric based measurement tool to judge the effectiveness of student participation and learning.

The school is a safe and welcoming environment in which there is a tremendous mutual support and respect between students and staff, which is in itself a great aid to effective learning.

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 well developed.

The Bronx Latin School not only uses the data made available from the City and State following testing of its students, it also measures a broader range of learning and skills through rubrics that have been developed around writing, collaborative learning and being able to acquire, integrate, articulate and share new knowledge. Support in developing this has come from various educational professionals.

The school is also skilled in using the regional data, using individuals' scores to track progress. They are identified as 'pushables' and 'slippables'. One difficulty is in finding comparable data for performance in Latin, which is not available from any of the normal data sources.

The school does look carefully at the results it obtained in comparison to the other schools in the district, and with one exception, it is outperforming all the others.

Individual student performance is monitored at the Socratic seminars, where students' abilities to think and express themselves objectively are measured using an agreed rubric. This is accomplished at 'exit project round tables' that are held, from peer feedback on in-class presentations, tests on document analysis, self-reflection and periodic teacher quizzes and tests, amongst other forms of in-house data collection. The school knows all its students very well and uses its data to push them on, though there is room to further refine the data on different groups of students, such as making comparisons between the performance of boys and girls, different ethnic groups and any other groupings of interest in different areas.

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 well developed.

Teachers use their first professional development time to look at test results. Using tight rubrics they undertake a skills analysis leading to focused discussion on strategies for developing weaker areas. As results of diagnostic assessments are received during the year, detailed item analyses are undertaken as part of the normal routine of monitoring individuals' progress. Whole class, as well as individual, results are analyzed. Special education students are tracked so that the efficacy of their individual education plans can be monitored. One measure of success is that there have only been three incidents of students being held over at the end of the year.

Student learning is also promoted through the engagement of students and parents in the education progress. Students are treated as young adults and are involved in conferencing which helps them to establish their goals. Parents are also seen as partners, although in a school that makes heavy demands on study a few have found this rather daunting. There is a general expectation of high standards. This involves school, students and parents working together in a collaborative spirit, which is challenging, but also rewarding. This is certainly evidenced by the support given by the majority of students and parents to the school and its ideals. It is also fostered by the attitude of staff towards the school council, which students feel gives them a real voice in the running of the school.

One area which is not so well developed is that of using teacher assessments to support students in knowing what they could have done to have improved a piece of work. The practice is a little inconsistent in this aspect. Similarly, there is not much evidence of rubrics being displayed prominently on bulletin boards to provide focused reminders of the standards needed to move up to the next level, and the quality of classroom display is inconsistent.

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 well developed.

The nature of the curriculum, centered on inquiry-based learning, reflects the philosophy of the school. Rigorous instruction and high expectation underpin progress being made by the students across the curriculum. Teachers plan and collaborate effectively, witnessed by rubric-based inter-visitations to classrooms. Decisions about scheduling are made in

the light of the analysis of evidence, as in the decision to increase the amount of writing being taught as a response to identified weaknesses. Curriculum mapping is detailed and done in teams – a response to the challenge of covering the curriculum while instruction is based on the project model. This is a real strength of the staff, who have been chosen because of their shared beliefs in the ideals of the school.

Simulations of the New York State standardized tests are given, and results are analyzed to identify skill areas for focus at the Saturday prep sessions for the lowest performing students. The budget is used well to support the needs of students. For example, the school has purchased software to support to develop mathematics skills, an example of technology supporting differentiation. However, the school has identified a need to refine skills in differentiation, a focus for professional development this year, and the use of technology as a tool for promoting teaching and learning across the school is inconsistent.

Students are actively engaged in their learning, but there are also very rigorous procedures for monitoring absence and lateness. Teachers ring the homes of students who have not arrived in school without a previous explanation. As a result of this engagement and rigor, levels of attendance are above the City average. The strength of relationships also creates an environment in which students trust adults on the staff.

The school has identified the attitudes of students in grade 6 as a current difficulty; they are new to the school and are not familiar with the standards expected. Professional development support has not yet been targeted sufficiently to help staff maintain expected standards of behavior and learning.

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 well developed.

The principal provides inspirational leadership for the school and the whole team of teachers show a real support for the ideals of the school. In order to work at the school teachers have to show a commitment to collaborative working. Before hiring decisions are made all applicants are interviewed by principal, representatives of the teachers and the students and deliver a model lesson using Socratic techniques. In this way, the model for teaching and learning is consistently used by teachers. The school runs smoothly and procedures are clear and well understood.

Professional development is very clearly guided by evidence identified through data analysis which stems from interim assessments, regional diagnostics and results from State exams. This is used to in part to judge the effectiveness of teaching and to target the needs of students. Professional development also enhances teacher skills in Socratic questioning, and the ability of teachers to appreciate different learning styles and types of intelligences. Much work is undertaken in teams, a good example being the development in differentiation, which will be led by two of the teachers.

The principal undertakes both formal and informal observation of classroom teaching. The teachers observe each other through inter-visitations based on a clear rubric which leads to professional discussions between staff. The principal uses debriefing after an observation to discuss professional development needs and teachers have the confidence to discuss their performance openly.

Partnerships with community based organizations add depth to the curriculum. The lead partner, Kips Bay Boys and Girls Club, provides opportunities to develop physical education. Several arts based groups, such as 'Learning Through the Expanded Arts Program', the American Ballet Theatre and Community Works (conflict resolution through drama) have added enormously to the experiences offered to students.

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 well developed.

Goal-setting for individual students is a normal part of life at Bronx Latin, enabling progress to be monitored carefully. This is reported home in the usual report card format, but also in an additional written report compiled by teachers made up of written comments that reflect the progress and areas for development across all areas of the curriculum.

Teachers use the analysis of results to inform their judgments on progress and there is flexibility in adapting goals in the light of developing needs. A range of strategies are used to provide additional support when this is necessary and teachers are willing to give their own time, both during and after the school day, in order to provide extra help. Tutoring at the start of the day and the Saturday academy are also tools for meeting identified needs. There is an expectation that hard work and dedication to the process of learning itself will be shown by all students and the rise in achievement, as students progress through school, is testament to the success of this idealism.

In addition to the usual types of in-year assessments - interim assessment, quizzes and so on - the school uses its Socratic seminars and exit projects, which reflect its thematically based teaching. An education consultant from Mercy College worked with the staff to develop their expertise in designs for exit projects and implementing roundtables, so that their maximum benefit in terms of illustrating progress goal setting and achievement could be gained.

Accelerating and maximizing the achievement of every student, and helping them to understand the *nature* of the learning process is at the heart of what the school is trying to achieve and it has got off to a remarkable start.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Bronx Latin (IS/HS 267)	∅	✓	+
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