



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Bronx Early College Academy

Public School 324

3223 Independence Avenue

Bronx

NY 10463

Principal: Constantino Chito Trillana

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Reviewer: Bruce Berry

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bronx Early College Academy is a public school with 83 students in grade 6. The enrolment is 72% Hispanic, 25% Black and 3% Asian. There are 11% English language learners and 12% special education students. The school opened in September 2006 and will build towards having grades 6 to 12 over the next few years.

The school has 93% Title I eligible students, above the average for City schools. The attendance figure for this academic year is above the average for City schools at 2% to date.

The school is part of the Early College Initiative, which has links with the City University of New York and Lehman College. Students will have the opportunity to experience the demands of college life and gain up to 60 college credits during their time at the school.

This is an Empowerment School. Empowerment Schools have more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. Empowerment Schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is well respected by all members of the school community.
- The school uses periodic data well to track individual student progress.
- Teachers work well in teams to plan curriculum and instruction.
- The school has effective practices for servicing the needs of special education students and English language learners.
- The Corrective Reading Program is providing high levels of engagement and is improving students' reading levels.
- There is a caring culture in the school.
- Students are positive about the support they receive from the principal and the teachers.
- Parents have high praise for the work of the school and the dedication of the staff.
- There are good procedures in place which are leading to high levels of attendance.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop procedures in the use of the outcomes of periodic and school data to track progress at classroom and grade level more regularly.
- Engage all the school community in developing plans and goals which focus on improving student behaviour and engagement.
- Further develop instruction practice to provide more challenge, pace and interest in order to fully engage students in their learning.
- Ensure the school runs smoothly by developing clearly understood procedures and routines for students to follow, in and out of classrooms, which are consistently applied by all staff.
- Provide focused professional development for improving instruction and classroom management.
- Improve planning and goal setting procedures to include interim goals and diagnostic assessment of progress towards meeting the goals.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is an undeveloped school.

The school opened in September 2006 and is part of the Early College Initiative. The principal has gained the respect of all members of the school community and teachers provide good support in creating a caring culture in the school. As an Empowerment school periodic data is used well to track individual student progress. The school has introduced the Corrective Reading scheme to raise the reading levels of students which are currently very low.

Parents are very supportive of the school and of the care shown for their children. They praise the hard work and dedication shown by the principal and the teachers.

Some instruction practice is good and includes structure, pace, challenge and interest for the students. There is, however, inconsistency in instruction which is leading to different levels of engagement and progress for students. Student behavior is unsatisfactory and the school lacks clearly understood rules and routines for students to follow which can be applied by all teachers. There is insufficient strategic planning to address the key areas of improving instruction and student behavior.

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.

Being part of the Empowerment program, the school uses a commercial package to provide periodic data which provides regular updates on individual student progress. The school uses the periodic data well to track individual student progress. With the Early College status, the school has a partnership with City University of New York and Lehman College and is supported by staff from those organisations. With the help of the University staff, tests were carried out which revealed low levels of achievement in reading and mathematics for the students entering the school. A major revision of curriculum and instruction has been carried out to target the needs revealed by the data from the tests.

The school has effective practices for serving the needs of special education students and English language learners. External agencies provide good support for the school in servicing a group of students with specific identified needs. Progress of students is monitored regularly against the goals as identified in the individual education plans. English language learners are fully integrated into general education classes and receive early morning and after school language support sessions each day with the principal. The performance of ethnic groups is tracked through the periodic data analysis.

The school is targeting high achieving students in reading, where they are using the Junior Grade Books scheme and in living environment, where the students have a Saturday program and are being prepared to take the Regents test in the summer. Because the

school opened in September 2006, it does not, as yet, have data to compare with other schools or its own past performance. It is using the periodic data to track individual student progress, but does not, as yet, have procedures in place to regularly use the outcomes of periodic and school data to track progress at classroom and grade level.

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 undeveloped.

The school sets goals collaboratively which focus on raising achievement in English language arts and mathematics across the school. The goals are challenging and measurable and focus on the whole school as well as individual students. Periodic assessment data has revealed, however, only marginal improvement in mathematics and no progress in reading. As a result, the school has introduced the Corrective Reading Program which is now providing high levels of engagement and is beginning to improve students’ reading levels. There are, however, inconsistencies in teaching and the management of students’ behaviour which significantly hamper the students progress more generally. The school has no plans to address these issues or to implement clearly understood procedures and routines for students to follow, in and out of classrooms.

Students in greatest need of improvement are identified through analysis of periodic data and the school’s own data. Appropriate intervention activities are planned and pull-out, after school and Saturday sessions provided to support the students. All members of the school community share high expectations for student achievement. Parents have high praise for the work of the school, the dedication of and the high expectations set by the staff. Parents receive regular feedback on their children’s progress and are able to approach teachers at any time to discuss any academic or social issue.

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 school designs its own curriculum, which is aligned to State standards. The curriculum, designed by the principal and faculty, was urgently rewritten during the first semester when the outcomes of data revealed much lower reading and mathematics levels than those anticipated when the curriculum was originally planned. The Corrective Reading Program has enabled the school to respond appropriately to students’ difficulties in reading. Teachers plan interventions for students identified as in need of improvement where the outcomes of data suggest they are needed. There are not, however, clear plans and goals for addressing inconsistencies in pace, challenge and engagement for students in lessons.

Budget and staffing decisions are responsive to the outcomes revealed, as shown by the introduction of the Corrective Reading Program. The school uses its funding for the Early College program from the City University of New York and from the Gates Foundation to sustain the school and purchase resources, such as the Corrective Reading Program.

Scheduling decisions, however, are not based on a clearly formulated planning process which links curriculum and instruction demands to the allocation of time for each subject.

Not all instruction practice fully engages students. The reading program has well defined and timed activities, which fully engage students at a pace which is appropriate for effective learning to take place. Other instruction, with similar well planned and timed activities, also provides the pace and challenge to fully engage the students. However, some instruction lacks structure, pace and challenge and does not fully engage students in their learning. The length of some lessons has a detrimental impact on student engagement and leads to a loss of valuable instruction time.

Students are positive about the support they receive from the principal and the teachers. There is a caring culture in the school and students are able to approach any teacher about any academic or social issue. There are good procedures for monitoring absence which are leading to high levels of attendance.

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 undeveloped.

Being part of the Early College Program, the school has assigned program officers who helped start the school, make staff appointments and provide support and professional development for the staff. Appointment procedures appropriately include a model lesson and an interview which tests candidates' knowledge of instruction, the use of data and other areas on student development.

Teachers work well in teams or pairs to plan curriculum and instruction and make good use of common planning time to carry out data analysis, check student progress, plan the curriculum and deal with other matters relating to student achievement. They benefit from the school's well conceived professional development program which is supported by its partners, the City University of New York and Lehman College. The program is not, however, having an impact on improving instruction and classroom management in order to improve achievement. The principal makes formal and informal observations and provides feedback to teachers but his observations are not having the necessary impact on improving instruction to raise achievement across the school.

The principal is well respected by all members of the school community and is supportive of staff and students. He is not, however, driving the school forward effectively. The school lacks a framework for strategic planning and has not taken actions required to improve instruction, student behaviour and routines for students. As a result the school does not run as smoothly as it should.

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 undeveloped.

There are whole school plans and goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan for improving achievement in respect of reading and mathematics. However, the planning and goal setting processes do not include interim goals and diagnostic assessment of progress towards meeting the overall goals. The plans and goals do not impact on instruction and student behaviour due to the absence of clearly defined and consistently applied student routines.

Periodic assessment is used to track individual student and grade level progress. At present the data is not used to track progress at classroom and teacher level. The outcomes of the periodic data are revealing unsatisfactory progress for the majority of students, but the school has not developed strategies to improve this.

The school uses the outcomes of data to make major changes during the academic year. The curriculum was rewritten when the data revealed levels in reading and mathematics well below those for which the school had planned. The Corrective Reading program was also introduced when the data revealed no progress was being made.

The lack of strategic planning and direction in the school has led to re-active rather than forward looking planning and goal setting. Rules, routines and systems are changed too often, without sufficient consultation, planning or review. As a result the school is not making the headway it should towards improving the students' achievements.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Bronx Early College Academy (PS 324)	∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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		