



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Bronx High School of Business

High School 412

**240 East 172 Street
Bronx
NY 10457**

Principal: Enrique Lizardi

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Reviewer: Jill Bavin

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bronx High School of Business is one of six small schools in the Taft Educational Campus. The school was created in July 2002, following the decision to phase out William Howard Taft High School. The school's first 12th grade class graduated in June 2006. The school is justifiably proud of its small drop out rate, which at 3% accounted for 2 students of the graduate cohort of 45 in 2006.

There are approximately 484 students enrolled from grades 9 through 12. Sixteen percent are special education students, with more than half of them learning in self-contained classes. The majority of students, 62%, are Hispanic and 35% are Black. Just over 2% are from Asian and other backgrounds, while less than 1% are White. Fourteen percent of students are English language learners. There is a balance of new and experienced teachers working in the school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is highly respected by staff, students and parents.
- The school holds a wealth of information about students' performance and progress and is using it increasingly effectively.
- The cabinet places a high emphasis upon teacher accountability, the continuing improvement of instruction and very cost effective budgetary decisions.
- There is a strong, well-structured professional development program.
- The school is well managed on a daily basis and is a calm orderly community where students feel safe.
- There is a very effective program of teacher observation, strongly led by the principal and his cabinet.
- The principal leads the school, ably supported by his cabinet, with an evident commitment to high expectations of all, which is clearly communicated to everyone.
- Attendance is very rigorously monitored and addressed, and the student drop out rate is commendably low.
- The school makes very good use of data to influence budget and staffing decisions.
- Very thoughtful scheduling decisions help the school to maintain its calm, purposeful culture that is focused on learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend the analysis of student performance and progress to disaggregate ethnic groups.
- Make sure that all action plans consistently identify clear measurable targets, allocate responsibilities to named people and include specific timeframes.
- Further develop best practice so that teachers more consistently plan to meet different student needs within the class, especially to challenge higher performing students.
- Ensure that teachers give students consistently clear feedback, explaining what they have done well and how to improve their work further, especially when work is displayed.
- Build on the existing good practice of interdisciplinary dialogue and planning between teachers of different subjects.
- Continue with plans for more curriculum links between subjects.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

Bronx High School of Business (BHSB) is a new school which has been open for four and a half years, led by the same principal. He has been very effective in re-defining the culture of the school; which is now a safe, purposeful community, with high expectations of students and staff. The prime focus on graduation success is underpinned by a high level of accountability within the school. The principal has made good use of much data to develop some very effective procedures to track students' progress as they move through the school. This means that the cabinet has very clear evidence that most students who graduated in 2006 made very good progress. It also means that they know precisely in which classes students learn best.

The principal and the school are held in high regard by parents and students who are very pleased with the changes over recent years. The school unapologetically and unambiguously focuses on the mandated curriculum and helping students to graduate. This means that although business courses are available to students, they are not prioritized to the same extent as the mandated subjects. While this is an issue of debate for some students, the principal is a realist who is taking a determined and pragmatic approach to reach his ambition of 100% student graduation and preparation for college. The school now needs to build upon its good systems and strategies to ensure more consistency in practice to bring about further improvement in the future.

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.

The school holds a wealth of data about student performance and progress. Graduation data is finely disaggregated according to gender, ethnicity and income levels as well as graduation performance levels, such as 'local diplomas', Regents, Regents with Honors and Advanced Regents. It is too soon for the school to make annual comparisons.

The school recognized that the system for tracking the progress of those students who graduated in 2006 was not as detailed as they wanted grade by grade. Consequently, the school is now generating far more of its own data through very regular interim and diagnostic assessments across classes and grades. The school is making very good use of this data to constantly update its understanding of the performance and progress of special education students, English language learners and higher performing students. Although it holds the necessary information, it is not yet analyzing performance and progress according to ethnicity. Similarly, although the school recognizes that the high student mobility rate is affecting test results, the existing data has not yet been used to extrapolate the progress of those students who are in school the longest. Individual education plans are monitored regularly by the special education teachers, who have more planning and review time than their colleagues to allow them to meet the extra needs of

their students. The principal makes close comparisons between Bronx High School of Business student attendance and performance and that of its 'sister' schools. This makes an effective contribution to his very good understanding of his school's strengths and areas for development.

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.

The principal has successfully established systems for collecting, analyzing and sharing a wide range of assessment data effectively through department meetings. These are led by lead teachers and analyze data further, for example by focusing on item analysis. There is a strong expectation that teachers will use the information and professional discussion to guide their planning and instruction. Under the principal's leadership the school takes proactive steps to identify students at risk of not achieving as they should, for a variety of reasons, and providing various intervention strategies, before they fail. The school has equal concern about raising achievement for all students, but takes particular care to support those with greatest academic difficulty. The school responds to the areas of greatest need for the majority of students with several specific literacy or mathematics programs. It also offers enrichment programs for the higher achieving group of students. The cabinet uses its analysis of data to develop relevant action plans which address a wide range of specific areas for improvement. These supplement the Comprehensive Education Plan with a rapid response for shorter term goals for the school, specific students or groups of students. They are shared at department meetings and contribute very effectively to a shared commitment to further improvement. Most of these plans identify measurable outcomes in terms of student performance, but not all have equally measurable goals and timeframes.

The principal has successfully communicated his high aspirations to the entire school community. As a colleague expressed it, 'this principal doesn't allow kids to languish'. Parents report that the reputation of the school is improving in the local community. They and the students appreciate the immense focus on helping students to graduate and believe, 'there's no excuse to fail'. This is a school community pulling together to improve students' life chances.

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 places considerable emphasis upon the mandated curriculum because of its mission to prepare students for college. The interpretation of data is driving curriculum development, for example by scheduling an extra writing period, because of an identified weakness through test item analysis. When students are referred to extra literacy or mathematics programs their attendance and progress is closely monitored and what they are offered is adjusted accordingly. The school provides a sequential program for business studies and is seeking to develop this further as students would wish, but is rightly concerned that these developments do not undermine graduation success.

The principal's precise analysis of test results by class and subject are routinely discussed with individual teachers which holds them to an extremely high level of accountability. Special education students are very well supported with a modified curriculum and by strong, well differentiated instruction. Students are grouped in classes according to their ability which helps most of them to make good progress, and teachers have a secure knowledge of each student's needs within each class. Nevertheless, opportunities to challenge higher performing students are often missed because they revise work with their peers unnecessarily. Teachers routinely share class learning goals with students; but in spite of detailed knowledge of each student's performance, teachers rarely share different expectations of students within a class for a specific lesson. Their written feedback celebrates student success but rarely explains what has worked well and the immediate next steps for improvement. Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are made thoughtfully, always with a thorough consideration of students' needs and an astute knowledge of staff strengths and weaknesses. For example, English teachers regularly co-teach science and mathematics to help ensure that any literacy weaknesses do not undermine students' learning in these subjects.

Most students appreciate the school's culture of focusing on learning; they trust staff and feel safe in school. They are actively engaged, participating and keen to demonstrate their achievements most of the time. However, on those rare occasions when instruction does not fully meet their needs, a small group of students loses focus. Students, staff and parents know that the school places a high emphasis upon attendance and punctuality. Not only does individual student absence trigger immediate action, but the principal has a closely monitored strategic action plan for improved attendance overall.

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 is extremely careful to select staff on the basis of their commitment to unlimited expectations of students and willingness to be held to account for their students' learning. He seeks passion and capacity for development, knowing that with this basis he and his team can develop other skills.

There is a very well organized program for professional development that balances whole school, department and individual needs. It is extremely well supported by the highly effective classroom observation undertaken by the principal and co-coordinator for instruction. Teachers receive very clear and constructive feedback and its impact is monitored for a direct and positive effect upon the quality of instruction and, therefore, the rate of student progress. Additionally, teachers value the school's well established program of 'inter-visitation', whereby teachers observe each other teach and give each other feedback, as well as mentoring each other and co-teaching.

The tight structure of regular department meetings for sharing data and evaluating student progress plays a crucial role in the school's drive for improvement. Comparative data is seen by all and staff candidly evaluate their performance as well as students' and revise relevant action plans accordingly. Cabinet members may chair these meetings, observe or visit as an invited guest, but department meetings often run independently without a cabinet member present. However, the cabinet keeps a close check, through the lead teacher, that meetings are fulfilling their function.

The principal is highly respected as a leader who gives clear direction but then allows staff to take independent responsibility. He is perceived as primarily responsible for the school's successful development to date and is justifiably trusted to continue this improvement. The school runs smoothly on a daily basis. The principal works effectively with the other principals in the building to share rooms and ensure that students move calmly and safely around the campus. The school is in the process of extending its links with community organizations that contribute to students' learning and well-being. Well established links include the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship which trained all 9th grade teachers to deliver a business curriculum. Newer links include arts projects that will enhance students' credits next year.

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.

The school's Comprehensive Education Plan clearly specifies the goals to be achieved by the end of the year and identifies steps required to achieve them. In conjunction with the principal's performance review it demonstrates that his clear strategic plan is based upon a realistic appraisal of the school's strengths and priorities for development, including inter-department, teacher, grade and class comparisons. Consequently, it provides a secure basis for continued school improvement. Measurable academic improvements arise from realistic and challenging targets based upon a close analysis of student performance.

Supplementary plans in the form of a wide range of action plans provide a key link between the strategic overview and medium or short term goals. These plans are shared with staff at department meetings according to their relevance, and so serve as reminders of school priorities in a format that has a direct connection with short term planning and instruction. This structured system enables regular and interim checks on progress towards stated goals to be reviewed both at cabinet and department level. This keeps everyone focused on the same priorities and makes the crucial link between strategic planning and classroom practice. This in turn ensures that the school is constantly making adjustments in response to its monitoring and evaluation. For example, the faculty is currently discussing ways to improve the scholarship levels for special education students since recently discovering they are not on track to meet the planned target. Most plans are written with explicit goals and measurable outcomes. However, on occasion, goals such as '100% mathematics pass rates' are not fully based upon the wealth of data the school holds and broken down into short term measurable steps against specified timeframes. The principal recognizes the need to ensure that every plan is equally useful. He is already rightly planning to revise plans for consistently specific goals and where previously action was assigned to a role, such as counselor or social worker, to identify the responsible person by name.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Bronx High School of Business (HS 412)	∅	✓	+
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	