



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music

**High School 442
2780 Reservoir Avenue
Bronx
NY 10468**

Principal: Dr. William Rodriguez

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Reviewer: Mary Ayala

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music opened in 2003, and was designed following the guidelines of the Bronx New Century High School Initiative and New Visions for Public Schools; receiving funding, support, and training from both organizations. The school is one of five smaller schools that share space with Walton High School on the Walton Educational Campus. The school serves 335 students in grades 9 through 12 and approximately reflects the borough's demographic of 68% Hispanic students, 29% Black students and 2 % White students, and 1% Other.

There are 16 special education students, 4.7%, and 19, 5.7%, English language learners. The school receives Title I funding.

The school came into being as a result of the vision of its founder and principal who saw the need for a high school of music in the Bronx. It has a collaborative partnership with Lehman College of the City University of New York where students walk to the music building for lessons and ensemble practice. This school will graduate its first cohort of students this year.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal supports teachers' planning and delivery of lessons to enhance the performance of students.
- The principal has assigned faculty well to provide effective one-on-one support for struggling students.
- A respectful, collaborative culture and high expectations underpin efforts to improve student outcomes.
- Students participate in a quality music program as a result of the school's positive relationship with nearby Lehman College.
- The school is successful in developing proficient and confident musicians, thereby impacting favorably on their other academic performance.
- The school generates its own internal data in English and mathematics that is used successfully in planning for improved student progress.
- A wide variety of professional development opportunities are provided on-site, which contributes well to the school's goal of continuous improvement for staff and students alike.
- The school provides a good range of additional tutoring opportunities which is successful in raising the achievements of struggling students.

What the school needs to improve

- Use the good examples in English and mathematics to develop benchmark and periodic assessments to better monitor student progress across curriculum areas.
- Use this data to analyze the progress of groups of students, and to make comparisons with the performance of other schools and against the school's own previous performance.
- Continue to refine the schedule so that teachers receive regular, common planning time.
- Define individual, group and school-wide goals with more specificity with timelines and interim milestones so that efforts can be monitored and plans can be adjusted.
- Establish rigorous assessment practice to students' work to enable better planning of appropriately differentiated activities to raise achievement.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The music program is the most well developed aspect of the school, as all students are adjudicated against the high expectations of the New York State School Music Association. Students have performed at the Lincoln Center School Music on the Plaza series and at Magic Music Days at Disney's Magic Kingdom in Florida. Numerous trophies in the principal's office attest to the high quality of the music program. Students benefit from a positive relationship with the music department at nearby Lehman College.

The rigor of high expectations for music performances and the on-going monitoring of progress provide the school with a model that can be applied to other courses of study. As a result, the school is in the process of developing a similar rigor and measurable outcomes of success for its academic programs. A good beginning has been made in English language arts and mathematics courses, with attention given to data analysis and consequent informed planning. As this work moves forward and expands to include social studies, science, and technology, attention will need to be given to a deeper analysis of data, the use of goals with measurable outcomes, and more frequent monitoring of student progress against these goals.

Currently, the goals of the Comprehensive Education Plan are overly broad and focus primarily on improving student performance in mathematics and literacy, preparing students with the skills necessary to successfully compete in the technological world of the 21st century, and strengthening home-school relationships. Students, parents, and staff appreciate the small size of the school and acknowledge that it fosters both individual creativity and collective excellence.

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 uses available data from students' middle school records and generates internal data in order to group incoming students in English classes. Freshmen are given a reading comprehension test and a baseline writing assessment. Based on these results, students are then placed in honors, "on-level" or literacy classes. The mathematics department makes good use of a diagnostic cycle developed by the region that includes two pre- and post-tests per semester. Beyond these efforts, the school relies primarily on course grades to shape their instructional discussions. The school is deficient in systems that allow for adequate recording of progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and music, although there are clear intentions to develop more diagnostic data.

Course passing and failing grades provide an understanding of the performance and progress of individual students, classes, and grade levels. However, there is insufficient evidence that this data is disaggregated further in order to provide performance profiles of

ethnic groups, English language learners, or special education students. The school does not measure its performance in comparison with similar schools.

A very good feature is that the school generates considerable internal data with regard to its music program. All students are required to be adjudicated against the rigorous standards of the New York State School Music Association. Detailed records of their performance level and performance quality are tracked from year to year and provide an objective measure of their progress. In addition, a teacher has produced a detailed analysis of results from the most recent Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test. This information is shared with other teachers as an additional resource for curriculum planning.

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 school does not currently set objectively measurable goals for improvement. Rather, the Comprehensive Education Plan, as developed by the school leadership team, contains generalized statements about emphasizing higher-order thinking skills, problem-solving, and organizational skills in core courses. There is an overarching expectation related to general improvement but there are no objectively measurable goals that correlate directly with available data.

The school reviews course passing and failing information at the end of each marking period. Administrators meet with teachers to discuss course grades and what adjustments may need to be made. These may include scheduling changes or curriculum modifications. Students who are in danger of failing are provided with in-class support and are also advised of after-school and Saturday tutoring opportunities. In addition, there is informal articulation between the academic subject and music teachers on behalf of struggling students. Because students know their music participation is jeopardized by poor classroom performance, they frequently increase their efforts to achieve better grades.

The school does well in conveying high expectations to students and parents/caregivers. Communication occurs regularly through letters and phone. Many teachers call and give parents hints about how to help students at home. The school's recognition from music competitions and adjudications and increasing invitations to perform publicly generate acclaim and also reinforce high expectations. The school community, staff, students, parents, and external partners, together have high expectations. Assigning clearly recorded, measurable goals to these expectations is a critical next step in planning for improved student performance.

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 in English and mathematics classes is used to good effect to support improved student outcomes. For example, the development of rubrics and portfolios in

English classes are providing appropriate ways to review and measure student work over time. Mathematics teachers are working closely with a peer coach to scrutinize assessment data and align what is taught with identified skill gaps. The school is currently considering how to bring a similar cycle of data analysis and planning approach to social studies, science, and technology classes.

Teachers are held accountable by the principal for improving instruction and student outcomes. Student performance in their courses is reviewed with an administrator at the end of each marking period and discussions ensue about possible adjustments. Some initial differentiation occurs at the planning stage as a result of freshmen placements in English and mathematics classes. Lesson plans, in general, show insufficient differentiation for individual needs with a tendency for lessons to have a common input and occasions for independent student work.

Student progress is supported by the school's budget and approach to staffing. Teachers appreciate the principal's mindful budgeting to secure necessary classroom resources. Scheduling remains a challenge to the school, especially in the context of sharing space on the Walton educational campus. Students reference class mix-ups and occasional limited course offerings due to this circumstance. Currently, teachers do not have the benefit of a common planning time. Instead, they find ways to meet with colleagues informally and discuss the needs and progress of individual students.

The level of student engagement varies across the school with higher levels observed in music classes. This is not surprising, in that their interest in music is the primary reason students apply to attend this school. Music teachers and subject area teachers intentionally communicate with each other to improve student outcomes in all classes. Students are able to articulate that achieving a certain excellence in music performance provided them with the confidence necessary to tackle the challenges of their academic classes. However, many teachers still confront side conversations and off-task behaviors as they attempt to deliver instruction.

Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic and personal needs with insight and sensitivity. When students are falling behind, teachers provide in class, lunchtime, or after-school support. In addition, teachers reach out to parents to enlist their support and help on behalf of student progress. Students feel that adults are genuinely concerned about their success and are working on their behalf. A well-defined process for promoting good attendance and reporting absences is in place and parents appreciate the accountability.

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.

An effective staff selection process is in place whereby candidates interview with content area teachers as well as administrators. Ultimately, new staff are selected based on their content area knowledge and understanding of the community in which they will work. Although the work of the school lacks specificity with regard to measurable goals, there is an outstanding level of commitment to the success of all students. Music teachers and subject area teachers consistently leverage their influence with students on behalf of improved achievement. Building its capacity to use data as a planning tool is a focus of

the school. Although the school will have more baseline data as its first cohort of students approach graduation, it is yet to incorporate all that it could into planning.

The school provides a substantial amount of professional development through voluntary sessions called "Lunch 'n Learns." However, there is not always a direct correlation between these offerings and the needs identified by performance data. Rather, the content seems to emerge primarily from teacher needs surveys. For example, sessions have been offered on classroom management, diversity and cultural awareness, organization, and record keeping because they are what teachers requested. The school has yet to design a coherent framework for professional development that includes and aligns both school-based and regional offerings with a particular emphasis on teaching and learning.

Although teachers do not have common planning time, they make time to meet with each other to talk about practice in pursuit of improved student outcomes. The principal recognizes the need for collegial conversations and has made this a priority for designing the schedule for the coming school year.

The principal visits classrooms on a regular basis and uses observations from these visits as a basis for one-on-one conversations. He is a respected spokesperson for improving classroom practice and has laid out a positive course for the school over its four-year history and his tenure. The school runs smoothly with clearly defined procedures that are well communicated and generally followed.

The school makes good use of guidance services and an on-site clinic to help students address personal issues that may impede academic progress. In addition, positive relationships between the high school students and the Lehman College professors are helping students understand what they must do presently in order to prepare for college success.

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.

The school makes good use of interim, diagnostic assessments in order to measure progress in English language arts, mathematics, and music classes. The next step is to apply this structure to social studies, science, and technology. There are discussions of all course grades at the end of marking periods that do allow for a comparison of student progress within and across classrooms. However, there are no other checkpoints to revise plans in a way that allows for measurable impact. Instead, one set of goals remains in place for a full year, thereby missing the opportunity to use data to inform short-term planning on behalf of improved outcomes.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music (HS 442)	∅	✓	+
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		