



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**South Bronx Preparatory: A College Board School**

**Middle School - High School 221**

**360 East 145<sup>th</sup> Street  
Bronx  
NY 10454**

**Principal: Ellen Flanagan**

**Dates of review: May 27- 28, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Cheryl Baker**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

South Bronx Preparatory is a middle school-high school with 585 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 34% Black, 64% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 5.3% English language learners and 17.5% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 88.9%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 90.8% eligibility.

The principal is in her first year of leadership at the school, which opened its doors in September 2004 and will graduate its first class in June 2008. The school shares the campus with another middle school.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The mission of the school champions high expectations for achievement, leading to further education, which are reflected in all aspects of the school's work.
- The administration effectively focuses the school on gathering and utilizing data to understand its progress and that of students, grades and subjects.
- The principal encourages staff to extend their learning, reaches out to other schools to identify best practice and increases her own leadership capacity.
- The school's sound data-based strategic plan for future development engages all stakeholders in progress monitoring.
- The school successfully supports those most at risk, resulting in gains in their achievement.
- Rigorous monitoring of instruction by administrators and peers increases teachers' focus on teaching and learning and informs planning for improvements.
- The culture of clear, open, regular communication among and between all stakeholders inclusively supports effective learning.
- The advisory system, strong outreach by guidance personnel and effective links with community organizations comprehensively support students' development.
- Data is used effectively and routinely to measure progress towards goals, inform decision-making and revise actions when warranted.

### What the school needs to improve

- Enhance the delivery of rigorous curricula by ensuring alignment to State and national standards that is underpinned by vertical grade alignment.
- Broaden opportunities for teachers to meet, collaborate and plan across grades and subjects.
- Continue to support teachers in utilizing data from formative assessments and other measures of student progress to plan, differentiate and adjust instruction.
- Provide continued professional development and coaching for implementing the agreed teaching standards, including measures of impact on student learning.
- Build upon effective outreach to deepen parents' understanding and involvement in supporting their children in achieving college readiness.

## Part 3: Main Findings

### Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is well developed.**

The principal's previous experience as a leadership coach provides the school with experienced and knowledgeable guidance in the analysis and use of data for decision-making and improvement planning. This has resulted in significant progress in these areas, so the school now clearly focuses on its next steps. Detailed analysis and updating of student achievement is disaggregated, shared, and used to assess effectiveness of plans and actions. Teachers are beginning to be supported in their growing familiarity with the assessment tools provided by the City and the school has made good progress in designing its own. The work of the inquiry team provides significant guidance in identifying the most effective data analysis practices, interventions for learning and the impact on learning. The current school-wide emphasis on developing and utilizing formative assessments to drive instruction is beginning to show results in increased engagement. The school is working towards deepening differentiation for individuals. The curriculum is aimed at supporting the school's high expectations for college readiness. Efforts are underway to ensure tight alignment grade to grade and that the highest standards are in place to support this goal. Students benefit from very good support systems and close relationships that nurture their academic and personal development. The school culture is conducive to learning. Many members of the first graduating class have been accepted into institutions of higher learning. Students are involved in planning and goal setting for their academic improvements and parents welcome the personalized counseling they received from the administration this year. The school benefits from the strong and consistent support of its primary partner, The College Board, especially in the area of professional development. A plethora of other partnerships broadens students' curricular and extracurricular experiences. The previous Quality Review recommended increased focus on math instruction and parent involvement and both have been addressed through actions and planning. A suggestion to increase writing across the curriculum evolved into a more specific focus on links between social studies and English language arts skills, which is the inquiry team's focus.

#### **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 the student's progress over time.**

#### **This area of the school's work is well developed.**

When the principal and her team first analyzed data regarding credit accumulation and the 2008 and 2009 cohort's preparation for graduation, results drove an accelerated and

restructured approach to the use of student achievement data across the school. Consistency and regularity were increased and a deliberate focus on monitoring school, cohort, class and grade level data resulted in a highly informed and effective approach to understanding what each student knows and is able to do. The performance and progress of ethnicities and genders is monitored and compared to ensure that any concerning disparities are addressed. For instance, slippage among a group of grade 7 males for whom behavior was interfering with learning resulted in an effective intervention. Compared to their citywide peers, the schools ethnic groups and special education students have made notable progress. Recent changes in the personnel for special education and for English language learners provide even more support and monitoring of progress for these groups, each of which are showing good improvements.

Very astute analysis of student progress grade-on-grade, deep analysis of student performance at transition grades and increased focus on the disaggregation of State assessments has focused the school's work on understanding disparities and effectively improving overall performance through instruction. Comparisons with other College Board schools provide very good references by which the school understands its successes and needs. The principal professionally collaborates with other principals and proactively incorporates best practices to improve teaching and learning at the school. To this end, the school has piloted assessment tools such as Acuity, Scantron and created its own periodic assessments in math and social studies, which are producing useful targeted data. Teachers are developing skills in data gathering and analysis through assessments as well as their longitudinal studies of a select number of students.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

As a result of the increased focus on institutionalized practices in analysis and use of data, the principal led the entire school in developing a three-year strategic improvement plan. Acknowledging the firm foundation created during the school's first three years, this plan effectively targets improvements to teaching to accelerate learning. It supports these with timelines, benchmark measures and well-organized structures for monitoring progress. With key components expressed in the three pillars of assessment, engagement and environment, all constituents have a clear understanding of the goals and actions and their collective result in realizing the high expectations the school has set for student achievement. Grade level teams, student advisories and the pupil personnel team are integral to goal setting and progress monitoring for students, classrooms, and grade levels. The highly personalized nature of the school creates a safety net for students, particularly those most at risk and this is effectively supporting their improvements. For example, the sharp focus on ensuring that every student is on track to graduate is evident in the analysis of each student's progress posted in the principal's office. Revised tracking sheets provide students and parents with a very clear understanding of what they need to graduate and move on to college. Credit recovery programs effectively increased results when changed from Saturday to after school. Interventions such as using Wilson reading support for English language learners is showing initial success and evidences the school's interest in applying and individualizing effective interventions for each student. Parents are appreciative of

increased involvement, especially being included in the frequent observations of learning. Even more, the personal outreach to inform parents of juniors and seniors of the requirements for graduation and college admission was seen by them as extremely beneficial. All recognize the value of institutionalizing this practice and beginning it at earlier grades so that parents understand how to better assist their children.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The school’s curricula reflect practices espoused by the College Board for English language arts. Math approaches include a number of resources that effectively support State standards and Regents preparation. A recent emphasis on incorporating formative assessment methods into instruction in all subjects to check understanding and plan more differentiated lessons is showing impact. The work continues to support and deepen these practices. Moreover, the school’s mission to prepare students for college includes expectations for taking and passing two advanced placement courses. Analysis of student success in this regard has led, necessarily, to increased focus on rigorous standards-based curricula that carefully aligns grade to grade and builds sufficient capacity for students to achieve well. Nonetheless, the first graduating class has achieved widespread college acceptance. The school proactively accesses resources to supplement its instructional program and extend learning through field trips, artistic and athletic activities. Currently, just art and physical education are offered regularly within the school day, in addition to the full complement of academic subjects. The school uses the California Teaching Standards to provide a common framework for understanding effective instruction and supports this with frequent learning walks. These have broadened accountability for instructional quality significantly. Teachers are working to expand their repertoires and make instruction consistently engaging and inclusive. The inclusion of instructional technologies supports engagement in some classes. In many classrooms, differentiation is emerging as a routine and effective approach to the delivery of the curriculum. Overall, students, teachers and administrators demonstrate mutual trust and respect. Students enjoy learning and they come to school regularly. Very well structured attendance monitoring and interventions have been put into practice. Attendance has increased modestly at the high school level and dropped by less than two percentage points among middle school students. Careful analysis by grade, gender and enrollment status leads to effective remedies for most. The principal, to make effective decisions for staffing, scheduling and budget allocations uses very astute analysis of all manner of data. Careful monitoring and increased accountability for expenditures has resulted in sufficient carryover funds.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

**This area of the school’s work is well developed.**

A marked increase in formal and informal classroom observations by administrators, teachers, parents and even students results in a keen focus on each teacher’s practice

and its contribution to the school's rigorous three-year improvement plan. Teacher's self-identification of their progress on the California Teaching Standards continuum effectively guide personalized goal setting with administrators and inform professional development programming. The school receives excellent professional development support through relationships with organizations such as the College Board and others. These programs are integral to institutionalizing practices, especially among those new to the profession and the school. Embedded practice engages teachers in extensive professional development through retreats. These avenues for development supplement regular weekly professional development sessions, one-on-one support from mentors, as well as grade level meetings. Still, there is little opportunity for regular vertical content team meetings to tightly align the curriculum that supports rigorous student coursework in preparation for college. However, students receive excellent counseling and support for their academic and personal development through the comprehensive established advisory program, from dedicated guidance personnel and administrators. All are united in their efforts to guide students so that they continue to make appropriate choices for their intellectual, social and emotional development. A broad network of outside agencies is very effective in supplementing the school's efforts to support the development of each child and family both academically and socially.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

The school's strategic plan for improvement is well developed and includes clear targets, interim measures of success, and rigorous expectations. The plan directly reflects and supports the school's mission and the principal's vision for the school. Regular monitoring of the three primary focus areas of assessment, engagement and environment includes all stakeholders. The principal's performance review aligns with the plan and is equally closely monitored. Plans for monitoring teacher's outcomes and instructional improvements are clearly linked to standards but, as yet, do not specifically identify timelines for improvements. Monitoring of progress of students in key areas, such as special education students and English language learners, is effective through periodic reviews of their individual plans and progress on mandated assessments. Additionally, these and other at risk populations are monitored weekly, through rigorous pupil personnel team interventions. Teachers are increasing their use of formative assessment for measuring incremental knowledge and are working towards routine readjustment of instruction based on this data. Likewise, teachers and school administrators are attuned to the data emerging through periodic and diagnostic tools used in various subjects. School-wide pre-Regents testing identifies individual student's areas of deficit and addresses these in advance of the formal assessment, resulting in impressive gains. The administrative team's fluid and proactive approach to monitoring the school's progress successfully addresses needs. Most significant is the regular gathering of data regarding teaching and learning gathered through learning walks. This continues to underpin the school's organized and focused future planning, coalescing all stakeholders.



<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?			X		
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>					X

<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?			X		
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					X

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>