



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**East Bronx Academy for the Future**

**High School 271**

**1716 Southern Boulevard  
Bronx  
NY 10460**

**Principal: Sarah Scrogin**

**Dates of review: May 29 - 30, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Dov Rokeach**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

East Bronx Academy for the Future is a middle-high school with 608 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 36.3% Black, 61.2% Hispanic, 1.5% White, and 1.0% Asian students. The student body includes 13.5% English language learners and 16.0% special education students. Boys account for 57% of the students enrolled and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 83.6%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 79.7% eligibility.

This secondary school was founded in the fall of 2004 as part of the New Century High School initiative. The school started with grade 6 and grade 9 classes. This year is the first year that the school has a full complement of grades. The school will graduate its first class in June 2008, comprising the students who began grade 9 in September 2004. The school is located in the South Bronx and is part of one of the poorest Congressional districts in the country. The school is part of the middle schools choice program and had to accept many neighborhood male students, which led to a disparity in the percentages of male students compared to female students. This influx of students has also led to some overcrowding. The school does not have adequate physical education facilities and must rely on outside institutions for support.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is a dynamic leader who has promoted the development of a school culture that emphasizes teaching and learning.
- The school's emphasis on student engagement in the classroom has a positive influence on their attitude and behavior.
- Teachers work together to create comprehensive curriculum binders that include curriculum maps, unit plans, student data and student work samples.
- The school communicates effectively with parents through the development of monthly progress reports and newsletters.
- At high school level, teachers make very good use of school-created periodic assessments for English language arts, science, and other content areas.
- Data is effectively gathered and analyzed by grade and by most subgroups.
- Embedded team structures promote holistic planning that supports both student and adult learning.
- Appropriate academic interventions are implemented based upon an ongoing review of student data.
- The school uses the informal and formal observation processes to support the development of its staff.
- Students, parents, and teachers are pleased with the school.

### What the school needs to improve

- Develop an integrated data system, including all subgroups, to extend interim planning and goal setting for individual and groups of students and staff.
- Extend the utilization of data to better identify enrichment activities for higher achieving students.
- Extend student specific goal setting by using student portfolios that travel with the students throughout their time at the school.
- Expand extra-curricular and enrichment activities to engage students and parents before and after school.
- Continue to refine and communicate to the entire school community effective school procedures related to discipline and safety.

## 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.

“It is refreshing to have an administration who understands teaching and learning,” exclaimed a teacher who had recently transferred from a different school. Under the leadership of a dynamic principal, the East Bronx Academy for the Future has established a positive culture that embraces the need to accelerate the progress of all students. Well-defined team structures promote holistic planning and facilitate both student and adult learning. Extensive curriculum mapping that is constantly reviewed and refined, based upon the analysis of student data and outcomes, is evident in all classrooms. The school’s effective use of school-designed periodic assessments is an essential component of the wide array of data that is used to monitor performance and set appropriate student specific goals. As a result, the school projects very high graduation results for its initial high school graduating cohort in June 2008. Nevertheless, the lack of a fully integrated system thwarts the ability of staff to extend interim planning and goal setting based upon all available data such as gender and giftedness.

The school has achieved significant progress since the last Quality Review in May 2006. An energized school staff points to a reduction in incidents relating to safety and tone. However, a minority view persists that some teachers are not fully backed by the administration when students misbehave. The majority of personnel indicated that adherence to school norms is increasing and they see a marked difference in grade 9 students who have attended the school since September 2004. Frequent school to home communication augmented by the use of GradeBook Wizard, an online grading system, has increased parental involvement. The use of data supports meaningful goal setting and promotes collaborative planning among parents, students and teachers. However, the school has not fully integrated the student work samples into student portfolios that would travel with the student throughout his/her enrollment at the school.

The school has an effective inquiry team that meets on a regular basis. The team reviews all available data to suggest meaningful classroom interventions that often include pull-out services such as counseling and academic intervention services. The school has some outside partnerships that expand its curricular and co-curricular offerings. Nevertheless, the school does not have sufficient school-related activities to engage students and parents before and after school.

### 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.

Formal and informal student data that is effectively disaggregated by grade, performance levels in English language arts and math, ethnicity, special education status, English language ability, credit accumulation, and Regents results contribute to consistent data gathering. The school's online grading system helps teachers, administration, and parents monitor student performance on a regular and sustained basis. Parents receive this data on a monthly basis in the form of a progress report. The data is effectively included in teacher curriculum binders, supporting the use of data to inform teaching and learning. The data promotes highly effective personalized education and allows for the rapid identification of academic intervention services, when appropriate. The school effectively uses the progress reports and learning environment surveys in both middle and high schools to assess its progress compared to similar schools. However, the school does not sufficiently integrate the data into a comprehensive data system that would further extend the data analysis to include the rapid analysis of each subgroup by grade, gender, special education status, English language ability, attendance and giftedness.

The school effectively uses actual student work to understand the needs of individual students. During weekly Teacher Talk and Kid Talk sessions, teachers review the student work to monitor progress and to identify trends that require differentiated instructional strategies, especially for at-risk students. The school does not sufficiently use these impressive structures to fully address the needs of students who require an accelerated curricular approach.

**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.**

The school's structure is well suited to understand student needs and to set appropriate student specific goals. The school requires the development of school goals, grade level goals, course level goals, and student level goals. Each grade uses its available common planning time to discuss specific students and to identify classroom strategies. Each team keeps minutes that describe the needs of students, and they are diligently monitored by the principal and assistant principals. These grade meetings help formulate specific grade interventions that are based on student outcome data. However, student portfolios from previous grades are not made available to facilitate student specific goal setting. Teachers and administration review and discuss school wide goals at the adult learning sessions that are scheduled on each Wednesday. Parents receive comprehensive progress reports on their students along with a monthly school newsletter. The progress reports define specific student assignments or next steps, supporting a personalized educational approach. However, the school does not develop sufficiently explicit student benchmarks that would extend the understanding of each student's next learning steps.

The school emphasizes parental participation through an active parent association. Parents are encouraged to attend parent association meetings and school specific activities. Well-defined Kid Talk protocols often include both parents and students, augmenting the gathering of useful information. The expanded School Leadership Team helps to define school priorities relating to personnel hiring, broad instructional priorities, and needed student interventions. However, the School Leadership Team does not sufficiently review interim and annual goals that are measurable.

**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 well developed.**

The school emphasizes student engagement to accelerate student learning and to reduce discipline issues. School staff utilizes curriculum maps, unit plans, and student data to align instructional strategies with student and classroom goals. The inclusion of the unit plans of other teachers in their own curriculum binders promotes continuity of instruction and interdisciplinary activities. Teachers employ a balanced instructional model and carefully identify small groups based upon the data in their curriculum binders. The school has a broad ranging curriculum that includes the arts, robotics, college algebra, and independent study. However, the wide array of data is not always sufficiently utilized to identify enrichment activities for higher achieving students. Students engage in required laboratory work in science laboratories that are well equipped and comply with safety procedures. For example, a teacher verified that all students wore gloves before examining and dissecting a shark. Teachers are comfortable using technology, when appropriate. After school activities are available; however, there are insufficient activities before and after school to extend the learning of students.

The school constantly reviews data to strategically make personnel and budgeting decisions. For example, the school analyzed the performance of its English language learners and determined that some students needed push-in services while others needed pull-out services. Previously, the school used a one size fits all model. Procedures to improve attendance include the use of the automated telephone system and the publishing of attendance data on a daily and monthly basis. The principal attributes reduced attendance rates in the high school grades to the school’s efforts to maintain long term absentee students on register until they can secure an appropriate alternative placement.

**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 proficient.**

A well-defined and respected formal and informal observation process promotes staff capacity. For example, teachers report that they are pleased with the frequency of the observations and welcome the feedback received. Student outcome data and feedback obtained from instructional walkthroughs, Teacher Talk, and Kid Talk inform professional development decisions. Each year, the school conducts a survey of adult learners to gauge the success of its professional development program. The school effectively uses its Learning Environment Surveys and Progress Reports to identify strategic topics for professional development. The school supports the use of the newest technology through a partnership with Teaching Matters, a non-profit organization that focuses on technology education in New York City. Partnerships with Teachers College and the National Academy for Excellent Teaching augment a comprehensive and sustained professional development program. New teachers receive significant support from a dedicated member of the coaching team and a collaboratively developed mentoring plan. As a result, these teachers are integrally involved in school wide planning and are having a positive influence on overall school culture.

The improvement in the instructional program has positively impacted school tone. However, the development and implementation of a consistent ladder of referral related to student discipline and safety is a work in progress. As a result, parents, students, and staff report that the school implements discipline procedures, at times, in an inconsistent manner. Parents and students also indicate a need for additional before and after school activities to address requisite safety issues that often coincide with entry and dismissal.

**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 has well embedded structures that support progress monitoring and accelerated learning. Teacher Talk and Kid Talk minutes are reviewed on a regular basis and utilized to adapt school plans. Students with disabilities receive appropriate services through the careful review of their individualized education programs. The principal conducts regular goal setting meetings with teachers to review all available data, including formal and informal observations, to ensure student progress and to suggest necessary changes in plans and practices. The administrative team has periodic planning meetings on Saturdays to assess school wide progress. At the beginning and end of each semester, the administrative team analyzes long-term trends and takes action, when necessary. For example, the school hired a full-time attendance coordinator and purchased an electronic attendance calling program to address attendance concerns.

The school has a comprehensive periodic assessment program that includes Department of Education produced assessments and school-designed assessments. Classroom teachers use the data to effectively differentiate instruction in the classroom. Teachers, supported by Teachers College and the National Academy for Excellent Teaching, collaboratively design the periodic assessments. The work of this team is purposeful and data driven and used to validate recommendations for the refinement of the assessments. The school's use of Department of Education produced periodic assessments with its middle school students is not seen as useful as the design your own component in use with its high school students. The school is planning to include the middle school group in the design your own component.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: East Bronx Academy for the Future</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				X	

### Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				X	

### 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 students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				X	

### 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.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?			X		
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?				X	
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				X	

<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>