



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Bronx Academy of Health Careers

High School 290

800 East Gun Hill Road

Bronx

NY 10467

Principal: Marvia Lindsay

Dates of review: November 21 - 22, 2007

Lead Reviewer: John Collings

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Bronx Academy for Health Careers is a high school with 444 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 50% Black, 44% Hispanic, 1% White, and 9% other students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 28% of the students enrolled and girls account for 72%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 84%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 70% eligibility.

The school shares a campus with six other high schools. The school has been in existence four years. The 2007 cohort was the first to graduate.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Students make exemplary progress because of a well-planned integrated curriculum and a commitment to small classes.
- Students benefit significantly from very effective individualized and small group support.
- Good curriculum planning enables knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in one area of the curriculum to be applied and consolidated in another.
- The school uses a wide range of data well to identify the performance and progress of all students and to identify areas for improvement.
- There is good communication with parents about the performance and progress of their children to support them to improve.
- Good professional development is helping teachers make greater use of differentiated instruction to plan work to meet students' needs.
- The school runs well because there are clear procedures and the principal has a clear vision for the future.
- There is a very good climate for learning where the vast majority of students enjoy coming to school and have high aspirations.
- There is very good support both academically and personally for students outside the school day to enable them to make the best possible progress.
- Very good links with external entities ensures the curriculum is enriched through visits, visitors and work experience to raise students' aspirations.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop differentiated instruction so that all students, especially the higher achievers, receive challenging work based on their prior achievements.
- Refine and articulate school goals more clearly so that they are understood by the school community and ensure progress towards goals is systematically reviewed.
- Define benchmarks and time-frames to enable students' progress towards their longer term goals to be more closely monitored.
- Continue to develop strategies to improve attendance and tardiness.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

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

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Students make very good progress throughout the school. The dedication of staff contributes significantly to creating a supportive and nurturing environment. The integrated planning of the curriculum helps students consolidate their learning. This results in the vast majority of students wanting to come to school, positive about learning, and with high aspirations. Small classes and individualized attention also make a significant contribution to the students' progress.

The school communicates well with parents and provides regular opportunities for parents to discuss students' assessments. Parents and students know how well students are doing and what next steps they need to take to improve. Staff use data well to monitor the performance of all categories of students and to set students long-term goals. However, there are no agreed benchmarks against which progress towards students' longer-term goals can be monitored.

Good professional development is continuing to support teachers in adopting the workshop model and differentiating instruction based on students' prior achievement. While this is beginning to have an impact on student learning, it is not sufficiently embedded as common practice. As a result, some higher achieving students are not receiving work that is sufficiently challenging.

The curriculum is well planned. By integrating different subjects wherever possible, knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in one area of the curriculum are applied and consolidated in another. Due to this reinforcement, students understand the underlying concepts more thoroughly, which is a significant reason why students make such good progress overall. The range of electives reflects the school emphasis on health careers. There are good links with outside entities which significantly enrich the curriculum, for example, with colleges, the Montifiori clinic and many local institutions who offer work experience in the health field.

There are good academic and personal support systems for students and parents. Additional classes within and beyond the school day support students academically to gain sufficient credits to graduate. There are also good systems within the school and on the campus which support students' personal development. This ensures, wherever possible, that students complete their education, graduate and enter college.

The school vision and goals are well considered and based on data and perceived need. While the leadership can articulate these, the means of monitoring progress towards them is less systematic and not understood by the whole school community.

The inquiry team has met and identified its focus and the target group of students. It is currently deciding the measurable objectives for evaluating its work.

The school has made good progress since the last quality review in using data to monitor differences in the performance and progress of ethnic and gender groups, and in using formative assessments to inform and plan work to meet individual needs. The vast

majority of students are engaged in learning and have high aspirations. However, the school continues to struggle to engage a minority of students whose absence and tardiness continue to be a concern.

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.

The school collects a wide range of data to enable a good understanding of the performance and progress of students. Data is aggregated effectively to monitor the performance and progress of classes and grades and the information used to create a motivating curriculum meeting students' needs and expectations.

The performance and progress of special education students is also continually updated through individual education plans, and in special education and collaborative team teaching classes. Careful monitoring allows these students to be placed where possible in mainstream classes where they can perform successfully and make good progress. English language learners are also carefully tracked and supported, including students who test as proficient but are not yet fluent and confident users of English. The school is further refining and developing monitoring through the ongoing six-weekly assessments.

The school systematically compares its performance and progress with previous years, and can demonstrate that student progress is very good compared with similar schools. The decision to create small classes, based on data on prior achievement, has helped staff better meet students' needs. Good professional development has also supported teachers in using data to plan integrated approaches to the curriculum which engage and motivate 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 proficient.

The school has an effective collaborative system for setting goals for students and a regular cycle of six-weekly review that helps students understand how well they are achieving. It is beginning to refine the process of monitoring to include annual goals, but does not yet identify benchmarks that enable students, parents and teachers to recognize whether students are making enough progress in the short term to achieve their longer-term goals.

The school uses data very well to identify a focus for students in the greatest need of improvement. It has, for example, identified the need to continue to support English language learners who, although testing as proficient, are not fluent and confident users of English. There is a focus on improving grade 9 students' reading so that they are not disadvantaged in Regent examinations. This is being developed through good classroom support, small group instruction and emphasizing reading in all subjects across the curriculum. This makes a significant contribution to the very good progress of students.

The school's high expectations of students are shared by the vast majority of parents. However there are still a number of parents whose aspirations for their children are not high enough. There is good communication with the school about the performance and

progress of their children through parents meetings, award ceremonies and the regular assessment reports.

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.

Students make exemplary progress in the school because of a well-planned integrated curriculum. By systematically looking for opportunities to integrate the curriculum, the school ensures that knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in one area of the curriculum can be applied and consolidated in another. Good examples are the integrated planning between art and history, English and social studies and math and science. This approach also enables teachers to concentrate on developing students’ reading and skills and the development of their vocabulary across all subjects. The strategic use of resources which commits the school to small classes ensures that students also benefit significantly from very effective individualized and small group support both within and beyond the school day.

There is a good emphasis on providing a relevant and engaging curriculum with an appropriate focus on biological sciences and other subjects to support college entry into health careers. This creates a very good climate for learning, where the vast majority of students enjoy coming to school and have high aspirations.

Teachers are held accountable for the progress of students in their classes. This system of accountability is new to the City and some teachers are finding it difficult to adjust to the revised expectations. The school has placed considerable emphasis on using formative assessment to inform differentiated instruction, although this is not yet used consistently in all classrooms. As a result, lower achieving students are supported well, but not all higher achieving students are fully challenged to enable them to achieve their full potential.

The school works very hard to support students and, where necessary parents. This support has developed mutual trust and respect between students, teachers and students, and between parents and the school. As a result the vast majority of students value learning and feel well supported both academically and personally. However, there are a number of students who enter the school with a history of poor attendance and, despite the school’s efforts, they are often absent. The school has recently implemented a suitable incentive scheme to improve attendance and tardiness, and is currently monitoring its impact.

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.

The school has good procedures for monitoring teaching which help improve the quality of instruction. There are frequent lesson observations, which most teachers find supportive. The resulting one-to-one conversations with the assistant principal and principal are used to set professional and personal goals for each teacher. The targeted program of professional development has increased staff’s capacity to use formative assessment to differentiate instruction. However, this is not yet fully embedded throughout the school.

Teachers have good opportunities to observe each other's classrooms and also classes in other schools on the campus. Teachers are encouraged to visit classes where good differentiation takes place to help them make greater use of the technique with their own students. Teachers new to the profession are very well supported through the mandatory provision and also by the supportive structures within the school.

The school runs very well and students feel safe. The vast majority enjoy coming to school, like their lessons and, as a result, make exemplary progress. The school supports students well in their personal and academic development through counselors, a social worker intern, an attendance teacher and their instructional staff. Additional classes within and beyond the school day support students academically to gain the credits they need to graduate. They also benefit from the campus support services, such as the health clinic. There are good links with outside entities that significantly enhance the curriculum and also widen the opportunities and aspirations for students in health related careers. These include Bronx Community College, Lehman College, Montifiori clinic and many work-experience placements within the wider community.

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 proficient.

The principal has a very clear vision for the school and has the full support of staff and most parents. She has established objectively measurable goals for improving student performance and progress in each subject which drive instruction. She has reviewed the school's progress and identified the next steps through which the school intends to raise performance and progress. These include making greater use of day-to-day assessment in order to ensure that teachers differentiate instruction to meet students' needs.

Teachers have a broad understanding of the school's goals although these are not spelled out in the school's documentation. This means that members of the school community do not fully understand their role in the implementation of school improvement plans. However, the school is reviewing current procedures to define goals more clearly. Monitoring procedures are also being refined, in the light of the principal's review, with appropriate plans to check on the impact of interventions more closely.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: X290 The Bronx Academy of Health Careers	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
Quality Score			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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				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 demanding, 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		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			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?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X		

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.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
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?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X		

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.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
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 make 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		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X		