



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Bronx International High School**

**High School 403  
1110 Boston Road  
Bronx  
NY 10456**

**Principal: Joaquin Vega**

**Dates of review: June 2 - 3, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Richard Cintron**

## Content of the report

### **Part 1: The School Context**

Information about the school

### **Part 2: Overview**

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

### **Part 3: Main Findings**

Progress made since the last review

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

### **Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Bronx International High School is a high school with 325 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 21% Black, 74% Hispanic, 3% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 68% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 83.6%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 100% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school collects a wide variety of both qualitative and quantitative data about student performance.
- A spirit of mutual support and trust exists between staff, students and parents and results in very positive relationships that enhance the learning process.
- Committed team leaders, who are active participants in making decisions, lead grade teams well.
- Differentiated professional development meets the needs of teachers and is very closely aligned to whole school goals.
- The school uses assessment data strategically to modify practices to improve student outcomes.
- Teachers new to the school or to the profession are very well supported by the administration.
- Students receive very good academic, social and emotional support from teachers and school support staff.
- Parents are very supportive of the staff and speak highly of their extreme dedication and commitment to their children.
- Effective partnerships with a wide range of outside organizations support the academic and personal development of students.

### What the school needs to improve

- Develop data about the progress of ethnic and gender groups to include grade 9 and grade 10 students.
- Extend the analysis of data to identify any trends or patterns across all core subject areas.
- Formalize individual teacher improvement plans for all staff members including experienced staff and provide a measure of their effectiveness.
- Ensure that whole school goals are shared and understood by parents and students.

## 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 school has worked extremely hard since its previous Quality Review specifically in the areas of organization and collection of data, leadership development, curriculum mapping, and building consistency of teaching practices across grade levels. The new principal, who took over the school in September 2006, and grade team leaders are directly responsible for the growth in scholarship and attendance as well as the further development of the school's positive culture. There is a strong culture of collaboration in the school leading to effective decision-making. A commitment to constant reflection and revision of practice is evident throughout and highlighted by the work of the inquiry team.

The principal is extremely well liked and respected by the school community for his ability and commitment to students' academic and social welfare. He empowers and supports teachers who work tirelessly to improve student achievement and support social and emotional growth for all students. The climate at the school is one of mutual support and trust among all shareholders. Students relate especially well to each other and to staff members who feel a close personal connection to every student. Parents are highly appreciative of the school's high standards and commitment to their children. Very effective partnerships further support the school's goals.

The staff does a very good job of collecting and analyzing a wide range of qualitative and quantitative student data and uses the data to establish measurable goals for the school and individual students. Parents and students are not yet a part of this process but plans are in place to increase their involvement. The school does not disaggregate the data for some students by ethnic groups or gender. The school's portfolio system allows staff to regularly assess students' strengths and weaknesses. The school looks at trends or patterns of student performance but inconsistently in their approach to core subjects. There is a commitment among staff members towards differentiated instruction in order to meet the needs of individual students.

Teachers have opportunities to participate in differentiated professional development to enhance their skills. Expectations for all students are very high with mastery of learning standards being the goal set for every student. Strong systems and structures are in place to support those students who struggle and encourage those students who excel to push themselves even further. The curriculum is rich and challenging for all students, both during and after the normal school day, allowing for even greater enrichment. Although progress has been good, extremely high levels of reflection and strategic planning continue to push the school and the staff forward towards even greater gains.

## **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 useful qualitative and quantitative data on all students. Because of the level of analysis, school leaders and staff have a very good knowledge of student's strengths and areas of growth. While data is updated continually so that teachers have an accurate understanding of students' progress throughout the year, some departments, such as the science department, do a better job than others at collecting and analysing the data on a regular basis.

The school leadership disaggregates the data to provide valuable information about the performance of some ethnic groups, gender and other subgroups. This type of analysis is presently only being done with grades 11 and 12. Very good comparisons are made with other International High schools as well as with schools within the network. Inter-visitations by teacher teams to examine best practices at these schools have resulted in staff discussions at professional development and faculty conferences to help move the school forward. The school provides on-going professional development in the use of data and teachers new to the school and the profession have strong support from senior team leaders in modelling data collection and how best to use data within the classroom. The school reflects regularly on its compilation of data and how best to improve and expand this to provide teachers with an even more accurate and updated picture of all 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.**

The school engages in a successful collaborative process allowing all staff to discuss whole school progress with their team leaders. Team leaders work effectively with the principal using this input, and the data collected throughout the year to establish school goals with clear measurable success criteria. Students and parents however, are not directly a part of this process and as such could not explain these larger whole school goals. The school is, however, very effective in helping students to set their own challenging, individual goals which are clearly understood by students and parents.

Grade teams as well as subject departments meet regularly to discuss how students are progressing against agreed upon "learning targets" and plans are made for students to either meet or exceed these targets in class or during the many academic intervention services that are offered after school. While some departments and grade teams are ahead of others, the level of collaboration in all teams and departments is very good with all teachers being committed to knowing their students as well as possible.

A strong feature of the school is the consistent use of data to identify students in greatest need of improvement. This process, along with the regularly scheduled grade team meetings, has allowed teachers to really focus on those students who need extra support and individualized attention both during and after school and allows those students who

struggle the most to have a very clear picture of how to improve themselves and where to go for help in order to do so.

Staff expectations of student performance are high throughout the school. One student mentioned that teachers expect all students to “exceed learning targets not just to meet them”. Staff constantly pushes students to do their best, especially in those subjects where they struggle the most. Parents speak at length of how they feel like they are a part of the process for helping their children succeed. They agree that the school goes out of its way to communicate with them and to make them feel at home whenever they come to the school.

**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 provides a broad and very rich curriculum closely aligned to the State standards. Modifications to the curriculum take place regularly to meet individual student’s learning needs and academic plans. Students greatly appreciate the opportunities to participate in an excitingly wide range of arts activities and real-life learning experiences throughout the city to expand their own horizons while preparing them for college and the work force.

Teachers consistently look for ways to individualize their lessons. They use assessments well to carefully differentiate lessons to match the individual student’s needs. Teachers monitor continually students’ progress towards mastery. Student portfolios provide subject teachers with a wealth of evidence that is closely analyzed by grade teams who compare student work from class to class. Students use this collection of their work to self-monitor their progress.

The principal and lead teachers plan strategically to maximize the budget to support student achievement and staff needs. There is real culture of trust that exists between staff, students, and parents that has resulted in a strong bond between all three parties. Students and parents really feel that all staff members truly care and want the best for them. Parents speak of how teachers help them make decisions that support their child and themselves. Teachers regularly go out their way to not only help students to learn but to help parents to understand what their children are learning and how to help them as well.

The school has increased dramatically the amount of attention it pays to attendance and student lateness resulting in a 6% rise in attendance this year. Students and parents appreciate these efforts and understand that improved student attendance translates to greater student achievement.

**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 a well-established system for monitoring the quality of instruction and identifying and providing professional development. The principal visits classes on a regular basis to observe teaching, give constructive feedback that helps teachers to improve their practice. In addition, teachers are provided with helpful support from senior grade-team leaders and coaches especially to improve their skill at differentiating instruction. Teachers accompany other team members as well as the principal on learning walks and report to their colleagues on best practices. Teachers see these visits as non-threatening and informative. However, individual formal improvement plans for experienced teachers are not documented and as such, the school does not know if it is efficiently using resources to improve every staff member's capacity. New and inexperienced teachers receive a high level of support from the principal and senior leadership at the school. Grade-team leaders and coaches work directly with new teachers and differentiate the level of support needed. These teachers speak of the strong level of support for improving their teaching practices and helped to feel part of the staff.

There are excellent guidance and advisory services for students' academic and social development. The school's social worker and guidance counselor provide counseling and work directly with teachers and grade teams to help those most in need. All staff members work together to quickly resolve any issues. The school has established very strong partnerships with community-based organizations, schools, and businesses to support the school's goals. Students spoke at length about the direct contact with some of these partners and the positive impact on their education and experiences.

**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.**

Close relationships between planning, goal setting and on-going monitoring procedures allows the principal and staff leaders to measure its success and adjust programs. The level of accountability is very high with all staff members constantly measuring their own progress against the overall progress of the school. All staff members use the data generated from periodic assessments and other grade-level diagnostic tools to make decisions in their own classrooms mirroring the school's goal setting process. This consistent reflection, discussion, and revision helps teachers ensure that every student has the necessary plan in place for them to meet or exceed their own individual learning targets. Conversations are held with all teachers concerning measuring their own success and how best to improve practice but this process is not formalized across the school nor are their clear interim goals set for all teachers.

At the end of each semester, data is collected to plan for the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning. Grade teams meet to revise curriculum, review student portfolios, and plan for the coming semester. Department teams meet to study trends across subject areas and prepare for Regents exams. Grade and subject area leaders meet with the principal to share their findings and discuss next steps for the school.

The principal and staff have a very clear vision of where the school is, along its journey over the past seven years, and where it still needs to go. They work exceptionally well together at ensuring that the development of the school is steady and that the entire school community has a chance to embrace the journey.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Bronx International High School</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>