



**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**

**Dates of review: December 3 - 4, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Jacqueline Pentlow**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music is a high school with 354 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 32% Black, 64% Hispanic, 3% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 39% of the students enrolled and girls account for 61%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 87.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 68% eligibility.

The school is specialist music school, accepting students with musical aptitude with no minimum academic requirements. The school opened in September 2003 with the first students graduating in 2007.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has a clear vision for the school and with his cabinet develops excellent links to benefit the students.
- The excellent music program is developing proficient musicians and using music as a tool to promote good academic success in other areas.
- The teachers know the individual students well, enabling them to give good academic and pastoral support.
- An excellent atmosphere of mutual respect and trust supports students in making good progress in their learning.
- Good communication with the parents is contributing to the high performance of the students.
- The student council and peer mediation groups support students and make a positive contribution to the calm atmosphere in the school.
- Common teacher time and exchange of data enable teachers to share effective strategies and make good use them in instruction.
- The professional development program for established and new staff is positively affecting the quality of instruction.
- The link with Lehman College provides a practical musical environment in which the students are inspired to fulfill their music potential.
- There is good support for students with identified learning needs to ensure that they can access and keep up with the demands of the curriculum.

### What the school needs to improve

- Analyze data of all student sub groups and gender to enable trends to be identified and comparisons made with past performance.
- Ensure teachers are held accountable for checking notebooks, developing student note-taking skills and increase their understanding of student skills.
- Ensure there is a consistency of teacher practice in tracking student progress and that common systems are in place to analyze the information and make valid comparisons over time.
- Fully establish a practice where all teachers routinely use the information available to measure the effectiveness of, and revise, intervention plans.
- Set interim measurable goals with suitable timeframes leading to the final goal.

## 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 Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music is a relatively new, successful school that provides an excellent music education alongside the normal academic demands of the traditional high school curriculum. The principal and founder, and assistant principals provide a good learning environment. The link with Lehman College provides facilities that are not available for them in the main school building. The school collects a good range of data on how the students are performing both in music and general subjects. The principal uses the data very well to compare the performance and progress of students. The school now uses the very good procedures for tracking progress in music in other subjects. The school does not undertake a detailed analysis by ethnic group, gender or progress over time and is therefore unable to identify trends and focus on specific areas for improvement.

The students and parents are very positive about the school identifying the mutual trust and respect as being something very special. The students talk very positively of the personal and academic support that they receive. Being a small school, the teachers know all the students by name and show interest in how they are performing in all their subjects and not just the ones taught by them. This supports good learning and prevents the compartmentalization of different areas of the curriculum. The students also identify the peer mediation program as a particular strength of the school. They have seen it in action and it contributes significantly to the calm atmosphere within the school. High expectations are made of them and they respond. One student stated, "The local diploma is not on the list here" and "we all share a passion for music".

Common planning time is scheduled on a daily basis so teachers are able to exchange information. They discuss strategies that are successful with particular students and routinely share information on how students are performing in their classes. The teachers value the amount of professional development available to them and the positive impact it has on their skills. All students have a notebook in each subject to develop their note-taking skills. These are not checked or made full use of by all staff. The school is also aware of the inconsistency in the way which teachers track student progress and file student work. This means that they do not have the work for later comparisons on the amount progress made.

Since the last quality review periodic assessments occur in all subjects, all teachers have a common planning time, differentiation is happening in the classroom and data is compared with other schools. The analysis of data focusing on some specific groups and the setting of goals with specific timelines has improved and is still developing. The whole school use of the data is better but the use by staff is inconsistent. The inquiry team has been set up and a group of students identified as a focus for their study.

## **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 substantial quantities of formal and informal data in all subject areas. In most areas it analyzes this data well to gain a better understanding of school and student performance. They use the data on a whole school basis to identify which cohorts are out performing others and then link this to the teaching they are receiving. Analysis of ethnicity and gender is not used effectively to ascertain patterns that may be developing. Currently the amount of past data that the school has is limited, it is aware of the need to accumulate and monitor this to show a more accurate comparison with the schools past performance. One reason for this is that it is relatively new and small school and the current quantity of data available is small. The school is therefore unable to identify possible trends and the opportunity to focus on specific areas of improvement.

The school compares itself to other music schools and because it recognizes the need to be a successful high school, it compares itself to other general small high schools, showing that it is performing well on all counts. The teachers are receiving good ongoing training to use the data in what it shows them overall and what it shows them about the performance and progress of special education students and English language learners in their groups. The teachers are beginning to use this knowledge in planning instruction. This training is on a whole school, class and an individual basis where teachers discuss, with the assistant principal, the data relevant to their own classes.

**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.**

Communication is very good, within the school and with the parents who value this. The school goals for the year are set during a collaborative process and focus on improved student academic performance and identified staff professional development. The school shares the goals, agreed in the Comprehensive Education Plan, with staff who identify with and support them. Goals are not time scaled so progress towards them is insufficiently focused. Staff collaborative activities take place on a daily basis and are used well for subject planning and for discussing effective strategies to motivate particular students. This impacts positively on the good monitoring of the progress of all students, including English language learners and those with special educational needs.

The school tracks individual students identified as having a particular need or in need of further improvement very carefully. This close attention results in appropriate interventions being implemented and students can then access the full music program which is dependant on academic success. Teachers see identified students individually on a frequent basis. This is a check to see that they are keeping up with the required work and they get support in that. If additional needs are identified due to the student

falling behind with the work or a lack of understanding, then effective strategies are quickly put in place that will equip the student with the skills to improve the standard of the work. The students know and appreciate the fact that the teachers know all aspects of their work and talk freely of how it helps motivate them to do well. The students know that the expectations of them are high and it is part of the culture of the school that it is, “when they go to college and not if”.

**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 music curriculum is of an extremely high standard and the general curriculum is good. As well as the mandatory subjects, there are opportunities for voluntary service, clubs covering a wide range of interest and visits to a variety of local museums. The school uses music not just as a means in itself, but also to motivate students to succeed in other areas, helping them to develop organizational skills that are transferable to other areas. The students recognize this and the way in which the teachers know about their performance in all areas of the curriculum, show interest in their personal situations and encourage them to succeed. Staff and parents recognize this atmosphere of excellent mutual respect as a key to the success of the school. The student council supports the personal development of the students with a range of social activities. The school has very good procedures for ensuring that the English language learners and those with identified social needs receive a daily check on their progress with revised intervention strategies and support when needed. Students talk positively of the way all the staff support them when they are falling behind in a particular area, so that they can rapidly rectify that situation. Students also talk enthusiastically about how the teachers deliver interesting lessons and provide work that is particularly suited to their needs.

This year the school has insisted that the students have a notebook in each subject to develop the note-taking skills, a skill they will need in college. All students now have those notebooks but teachers do not routinely check them. This results in not all students being given guidance on how to improve their note-taking skills. Teachers similarly miss opportunities to gather more information on the understanding and knowledge of particular skills of students and consequently the opportunity for focused improvement. The school recognizes that there is an inconsistency of tracking and filing of student work resulting in a smaller pool of information about the progress of their students. The school uses its budget effectively and is pro-active in reaching out to organizations that provide grants and funds that the school can use to improve the instruction and thus learning of the students. From the inquiry team meeting teachers have already begun the process of providing peer mentors for students to help with specific subject areas and skills, taking the model that they use to assist teachers in developing their skills.

**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.**

Teachers' instruction is observed at least weekly and they receive instant constructive feedback. The school leaders focus on specific areas of instruction to monitor it is being carried out and the impact it is having on learning. The leaders then use this information to provide professional development sessions as needed. In order to improve the self-evaluation and instructional skills of staff they are being included and trained in learning walks. New teachers are relieved of non-instructional duties so that they can concentrate on giving good instruction and developing positive relationships in the classroom. All of these contribute to the improving quality of instruction provided. The students identify the peer mediation program as a significant way in which student behavior and relationships have improved. Students and staff talk of the positive impact on the day-to-day running of the school, the behavior in class and thus the improvement of learning. Those acting as peer mediators value the responsibility placed on them and maturely keep all confidentialities.

The links with outside agencies are excellent and provide enrichment activities which broaden student experience. The school has numerous musical links, all supporting and developing the musical and performance skills, of the students. The association with Lehman College provides an environment in which the students can perform and engage in high quality musical experiences on a weekly basis. This inspires them to strive to achieve their full potential as musicians. The school also develops non-musical links to enhance the wider education of the students and with those agencies which provide financial or other support.

**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 and founder started the school because there was no music provision in the Bronx. He has a clear vision for the school, establishing it and putting structures in place to ensure that it has a momentum to carry it forward when he is no longer at the helm. The school is already establishing a good reputation and his vision that students from the Bronx are able to engage in musical performance has become a reality.

The quality of monitoring and revision of plans and strategies is constantly improving but still lacks consistency overall. It is better at whole school than teacher level. Overall goals are set for the year and monitored to assess progress against them. Interim goals are not time scaled and this creates problems when the school wants to measure progress as there are no specific bench marks. All subjects now effectively use detailed assessment and tracking schemes. The school implements frequent, informal, assessments between the formal grade work periods enabling them to check student progress more accurately and provide support where required. Tracking and monitoring at individual student level is effective but there is not sufficient evaluation of the information to identify patterns and trends in specific groups of students. The assistant principal initiates the analysis of the data produced and then carries out in-depth discussions with each teacher to interpret what the data is showing. The teachers themselves do not yet carry this out routinely resulting in a lack of action on available information.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music</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 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		
<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?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>					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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>					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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					X