

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

The Bronx High School for Performance and Stagecraft

**High School 262
1619 Boston Road
Bronx
NY 10460**

Principal: Mark Sweeting

Dates of review: February 24 - 25, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Elena Papaliberios

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Bronx High School for Performance and Stagecraft is a high school with 367 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 46% Black, 51% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 19% of the students enrolled and girls account for 81%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 79.3%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 67% eligibility.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The school does a good job in collecting data and utilizing tools that enable it to monitor student progress. This data is used as part of the advisory program. Every teacher is an advisor to a group of 10 to 15 students who they meet twice a week to discuss their progress and to set overall school goals. The school is working towards moving the student goal setting process to include instructional goals in each subject area. Currently, there is no system in place to set differentiated, measurable and actionable instructional goals for individual students. The inquiry team meets regularly and has analyzed data that led them to select the ninth grade as their target population. A mid-year change in programming was made to cluster these students into one class and this helped to target reading interventions and monitor student progress with increased rigor.

The administrative team directs the work of the staff in setting overall school goals as they create the Comprehensive Educational Plan collaboratively with teachers and other staff. More delegation of duties is planned this summer as they start working on next year's goals. The administration has yet to establish formal structures to revisit this plan, or any other school plan, at regular intervals during the year in order to analyze it and set benchmarks or checkpoints for meeting the school's goals.

Although some professional development has taken place in differentiation of instruction, there is insufficient alignment in the use of the observation process and data collection to impact professional development across the school to improve teachers' skills. Progress is further constrained as not all teachers have individualized professional development plans. The creation of curriculum maps by individual teachers in each subject area including dance, vocal, and drama has effectively focused teachers on content and grade team collaboration. However, most teachers do not deliver lessons that are differentiated to meet the learning needs of students working at different levels.

The principal is very visible and accessible to students, parents and staff. This has created a very positive atmosphere in the school. Students are very clear on the credits they have and what they need to graduate. They feel that teachers genuinely care about students in this school. Parents expressed how pleased they are that their children are "attending a small school where dancing and singing are offered and the teachers stay on top of the academics."

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school collects a range of data and provides teachers with individual student profiles, which are used by teachers in their role as advisors to learn more about their individual students.
- The school works collaboratively in the development of the Comprehensive Educational Plan under the direction of the administration to set school-wide goals based on analysis of data.
- Useful curriculum maps are in place for all subjects, including the arts.
- The principal's high visibility and accessibility to students and staff has made a very positive impact on the culture of the school.
- The inquiry team has been effective in using data to identify a reading program and provides strategies to support the progress of students in greatest need of improvement.
- The principal has a clear vision for the future of the school, which is shared very effectively with his school community.

What the school needs to improve

- Create structures for teachers to involve students in individual instructional goal-setting practices that support accelerated student progress and increased achievement.
- Establish personal development plans for all staff and ensure that all school plans have interim checkpoints and benchmarks to promote effective monitoring and evaluation.
- Expand the observation and feedback process to include analysis of student outcomes and to include all teachers in order to improve instruction at all levels.
- Further improve the alignment of professional development policy and practice to the outcomes of data analysis, to include interim checkpoints to inform lessons, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year.

Part 3: Main Findings

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school makes effective use of a data tool developed by their support organization to analyze overall student performance. This analysis also includes individual student profiles, which are distributed to every teacher in the school. This is helping teachers to learn about the students they have in their classes as well as those who are in their advisory group. Scholarship reports are analyzed every marking period and reviewed with teachers so that they constantly have the most up-to-date information.

Common planning time is used for analyses of this data by grade level and by cohort in order to effectively monitor student progress. Teachers also dedicate one day a week to looking at the data related to students who are in the bottom third of the school. This practice has helped to provide more direct intervention to students and, as a result, they are now more focused on earning credits toward graduation.

Teachers are not yet confident in using data to plan instruction that matches work to the different levels of achievement within the same class. To tackle this issue, a consultant was hired this year to provide professional development on differentiation, and educational paraprofessionals who effectively work students are programmed to assist special education students and actively support groups of students in various classes. The school recognizes that there are large numbers of female students who comprise over 80% of the population and have developed an arts program to meet their specific needs

Parents are kept well informed through a monthly newsletter, phone calls, and letters. There is a principal's monthly mailing to parents, and progress reports are sent three times a semester. Attendance continues to be a struggle in this school, although it is improving. It has moved from 75% to 79.3%, and is currently at 81%, far from the 90% standard. Academics and attendance have been aligned with the arts program; if a student is absent during the day, they cannot perform at an after-school event. This has made a strong impact on the students who now take their attendance and academic performance more seriously. Attendance incentives, such as points earned and recognition ceremonies, have also helped raise attendance this year.

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.

Teachers do a good job in setting overall graduation goals with students. However, the school does not have structures in place for involving teachers in setting individual, measurable, and differentiated instructional goals for their students. This leaves students with a lack of direction as to what their next learning steps should be.

The administration has involved faculty more actively this year in developing overall school goals for students. Every teacher acts as an advisor to a small group of 10 to 15 students and meets with them regularly to go over their academic record and to set goals for the semester. This has had a positive impact on students who were not sufficiently focused on their work before. Students explained how this has helped them to understand how important it is to earn credits.

The school’s goals were developed during professional development sessions where staff members collaboratively developed the Comprehensive Educational Plan (under the direction of the administration. This practice has helped the school to focus their analyses of data directly on improving students’ outcomes.

The school has recently implemented a two-week summer program for incoming students where baseline assessments are administered. This practice has made a great impact on how teachers now monitor the progress of ninth grade students. Baseline writing samples are still displayed in the classroom so that students and teachers are able to see the progress they have made over the course of the year.

Parents and students feel that teachers have high expectations of all students, including special education students. The school identified needs swiftly and, importantly, teachers call parents to tell them that students can do better and propose working together to support them. As one parent whose child had not done well in a previous school confirmed, “He is a junior now and is passing his subjects. I am very happy having my child in this school.”

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school is building its curriculum, although there remains more to do. Curriculum The performing arts program is limited and does not align sufficiently well with State standards. However, curriculum maps have been developed by teachers in all subject areas promoting consistency across the grade. They are revised according to need and the school is in the process of beneficially adding skills-based curricula. The interests of students are taken into consideration when developing the arts curriculum. Most teachers, however, do not use their in-class assessments to differentiate their lessons and to deliver instruction. As a direct consequence, not all students are able to master the material.

The administration has strategically budgeted for and supported math instruction because their data indicated that 41% of all students were failing math. A math coach was hired to support teachers, a math prep class was created to support failing students, and new engaging materials such as the jeopardy game were purchased for teachers to use. This has helped to raise math scores across the ninth grade.

The principal's high visibility and accessibility to students and staff has made a very positive impact on the culture of the school. He asks students to introduce themselves to visitors in a professional manner and encourages them to be true to the school's motto, which is to graduate on time.

The principal and staff have cultivated a very positive and safe environment that is conducive to learning. Students feel that the school is a very comfortable and safe place where everyone knows each other and everyone helps each other. A new ninth grade student said, "I did not know why everyone was being so nice to me; they would come over to talk to me and wanted to help me. I told my mother this was strange at first."

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school is beginning to increase some rigor into the way it plans for professional development. Administrators have used the observation process to create a "teacher collaborative growth plan" with a few of their teachers. They use three informal observations, and teachers, along with the administration, come up with three areas of growth that they will work on together. Then the administrators conduct a formal observation at the end of that process. However, not all teachers benefit from these opportunities to improve instructional practices with the result that the administration has yet to develop individual professional development plans for all their teachers. Although professional development sessions have taken place on the differentiation of instruction, they are not targeted to the individual needs of teachers. Student outcomes data is not used to plan professional development sessions and teachers have limited involvement in the professional development process.

The inquiry team meets every other week and has focused its inquiry on ninth grade students. The team felt that if they improve their students' reading comprehension at the very beginning of students' time in school, it could influence their students' success in future years. The work has already made a positive impact on the school's programming. The 26 target students have now been programmed to be in one class. This has allowed for targeted reading interventions and the school has invested in the Jamestown Navigator Reading Program to support their learning. The English teacher who is on the team will be sharing strategies with the entire staff in order to support the progress of students in greatest need of improvement.

The school is forging partnerships that enrich the curriculum. Currently, it is working with Paradise Studios to record a music CD that will include the participation of 19 of the school's students. A College Now Program is in place with Monroe College where some students take business and math classes. The Children's Aid Society provides after school dance classes. Although these programs helped some students advance in their chosen artistic field, the school recognizes that there is a need to further increase

outside collaborations to support the performing arts program, the academic programs, and the personal growth and development of students.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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.

Teachers and administrators review academic data every marking period to monitor the curriculum and to determine the academic interventions needed to support student success. The peer-tutoring program came about as a direct result of these assessments, and students report that it is an effective way for them to learn. Not all teachers make full use of interim assessments to identify students' strengths and weaknesses, leaving some students not knowing exactly what they have to do to improve. Few teachers are part of the teacher development program, and the lack of individualized professional development plans prevents teachers from developing their own goals in order to improve their practice.

Although the Comprehensive Educational Plan clearly identifies measurable outcomes, no formal structures are in place to revisit it, or any other school plan, at regular intervals during the year in order to analyze it and set benchmarks or checkpoints for meeting the school's goals. However, school administrators use all data sources such as the Progress Report, Quality Review, and LSO data tool to monitor and assess the success of their organizational decisions. This process has been effective in assessing their common planning structure as well as their attendance plan.

The principal describes this school as "a school on the move". He clearly articulates his vision to have all his students graduate on time. This is widely shared and posted throughout the school and it has significantly impacted the way students look at their academic record. The principal lives the vision on a daily basis. He welcomes students every morning at the school corner and takes the opportunity to talk to students and remind them of tutoring sessions being offered, to be on time to school, or any other requirement that they might have missed. The school motto is visible throughout the building, "Are you G.O.T. (graduating on time)?", and every student and staff member has internalized this. Students spoke about instances when the principal stops them in the hallway and asks them, "How many credits do you have?, Are you G.O.T?"

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Bronx High School for Performance and Stagecraft	△	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?			X	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?			X	
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			X	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?			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 student’s learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?		X		
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			X	
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?			X	
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYQ, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?			X				
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?		X					
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?			X				
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X				
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?		X					
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?			X				
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?			X				
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X				
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent do...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?		X					
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?			X				
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?			X				
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed