

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

Bronx Engineering and Technology Academy

**High School X213
99 Terrace View Avenue
Bronx
NY 10463**

Principal: Rashid Davis

**Dates of review: March 8 – 9, 2010
Lead Reviewer: Michael L. Schurek**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Bronx Engineering and Technology Academy is a high school with 404 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 34% Black, 60% Hispanic, 0% White, 4% Asian and 1% other students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 84% of the students enrolled and girls account for 16%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 84.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

This school exposes the majority of its students to rigorous college-level curricula through ten advanced-placement courses that can be used to earn college credit, thereby ensuring that students are ready for challenges beyond high school. Students describe their study as academically challenging and appreciate the school's safe environment and the high level of support they receive through staff mentoring, tutoring and summer school. The school focuses on educating the whole child and uses this lens to involve students as peer mediators and leaders, enabling them to build character by helping each other succeed. Partnerships with colleges and engineering firms and organizations expose students to college and industry professionals, providing opportunities through internships and networking that motivate students to excel.

The school tests students early and often, especially in State Regents exams, to enhance individualized instruction through item analysis and to build student stamina and test-taking skills, a practice that increases advanced Regents diploma awards each year. A wide array of data is used to develop individual student goals each term and progress in terms of credit accumulation and graduation achievement is closely tracked. However, this data is not used to establish skill-specific learning goals for subgroups and students in need of improvement, thereby missing an opportunity to identify areas of need and develop next learning steps for individual and groups of students. Despite this lack of practice, the school has earned extra credit for exemplary proficiency gains for English language learners, special education and lowest third black students.

The principal has established a strong vision for the school's further development and clearly communicates high expectations to his constituents, a practice endorsed by parents, who appreciate the school's open communication. Teacher retention rates have been steadily increasing as the principal increases leadership development to strengthen teacher capacity. Despite this, collaborative inquiry teams have not yet developed strategies to share with the school to accelerate learning and do not include a vast majority of teachers, missing important leadership development opportunities. Professional development activities are differentiated and carefully targeted to align with school goals. Current professional development emphasizes differentiation, an area considered to be a work-in-progress, to improve the varied abilities of the staff.

Student achievement is carefully monitored by the school and measured against interim benchmarks to determine progress. These checkpoints enable the school to make adjustments along the way to increase student outcomes that include program changes, individual student interventions and professional development initiatives, resulting in steady gains towards long range goals.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The curriculum offers a wide range of experiences that prepares students for the rigors of college and facilitates students' ownership of learning.
 - Curriculum offerings are aligned to State standards and New York State Regents requirements and include technology-based drawing, engineering sketching and robotics, successfully engaging all levels of learners and meeting student needs.
 - Students on all grades and levels are exposed to rigorous college-level curricula through advanced placement courses enabling the majority of students to earn college credits. This practice results in a positive academic tone that builds self-esteem and helps students to excel.
- The principal is creating a learning community which works collaboratively to achieve high student outcomes with a vision to continue to accelerate learning.
 - The principal uses the long term goal of graduating 80-90% of students with advanced Regents diplomas to generate supporting action plans designed with interim measures of progress. All action plan benchmarks have been met or exceeded this year indicating that the school is on target to accelerate student achievement, as evidenced by the 5% increase of students on track to graduate.
 - Families and students feel supported by the English language and college financial aid workshops provided for them by the school which help them understand that their aspirations can be fulfilled. By expecting success on the college level, not just the high school level, the school is raising the expectations of the wider culture.
- The school is a safe place where students are engaged in learning and they appreciate the good level of support they receive for their personal and academic development.
 - Every student is mentored by a teacher as part of the school's Angel Adoption program. These teachers meet students regularly to offer their help and push students to stay on track to graduate and succeed. As one student described it, "The teachers here don't give us a chance to fail. They'll come and find you."
 - Students influence the school through the student government and the principal's open door policy where they present themselves as professionals. Their suggestions have enabled students from grades 9 through 11 to become peer mediators. In addition, 12th grade students are trained to become peer leaders to work with underclassmen regarding the college application process. As a result, 80% of all students are on track to graduate, up 5% from last year.

- The principal and his cabinet have established effective systems for evaluating instructional and organizational decisions and make adjustments to improve student learning.
 - Teachers effectively use scholarship data each semester to monitor student achievement. Administrators meet with teachers at this time to identify areas of need and discuss solutions. As a result, teachers are visiting other schools and each other to observe effective differentiation practices. In addition, a school based option for a session time change to use for extra after-school professional development has been approved to expand teachers' abilities to differentiate instruction and increase instructional coherence.
 - Administrators regularly assess class curricula and adjust their course design as needed. A recent change in math Regents exam content has caused the school to increase seat time for current math B students. This adjustment is designed to enable students to achieve Regents' grades above 75% and qualify for advanced Regents diplomas in alignment with school goals.
- The school's extensive guidance services and partnerships support students and families in continual learning and ensure that their personal, social and emotional needs are met.
 - The Integrated Service Center's Youth Development Team works with staff by conducting professional development that focuses on the whole child, not just the academics, resulting in a high degree of respect between students and staff. In addition, students' successes are consistently celebrated through special assemblies and large public displays of their achievements, thereby building self-esteem.
 - The school has a large guidance department that meets regularly as a team to ensure that the needs of the school's students and families are met. This team provides direct assistance to families throughout their enrollment in the school, such as connecting students to numerous college scholarship programs, an area of great need in the community.
- A thoughtful, thorough approach is used to plan for differentiated professional development that is targeted on achieving school-wide goals.
 - The school's service center, support organization, assistant principals and college partnerships provide professional development to teachers in differentiation and college level rigor, two areas that underscore the school's philosophy of learning, enhancing both areas.
 - Administrators encourage teachers to visit colleagues' classrooms both in and outside of school, share best practices, attend requested training activities and provide professional development for peers. These activities foster ownership and have motivated teachers to volunteer their time to attend and conduct workshops designed to accelerate student learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Use student data to set differentiated learning goals in all subjects for student subgroups and students in need of additional support to specifically target their needs, track their progress and raise student outcomes.
 - All students formulate goals each semester and have their progress closely tracked regarding credit accumulation and Regents' scores. Teachers administer performance assessments three times each year in English language arts and mathematics to generate goals that are remediated and tracked in ARIS. However, the school does not establish differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, thereby missing opportunities to ensure their success by making adjustments and tracking progress in all subjects.
- Strengthen teachers' responses to all student work, to include guiding comments and level of performance based on rubrics, to convey clear next steps for improvement to the students and their families.
 - Rubrics are utilized to rate student work by teachers and to self-assess by students. However, it is not an established practice to use these rubrics to suggest specific improvements and provide students with opportunities to raise the quality of submitted work.
 - While the school communicates student scholarship progress to parents regularly, it does not indicate specific next learning steps to help families understand their child's progress and performance.
- Deepen differentiation of instruction so that all lessons engage students, provide multiple entry points and offer suitable challenge at their levels.
 - All curriculum offerings align with State standards; however, current levels of student engagement vary across classrooms because some teachers do not plan differentiated activities, missing opportunities to engage both the highest and lowest achieving students.
 - The school has adopted the "workshop model" to establish instructional coherence. However, some teachers still plan teacher-directed lessons, failing to support the school's focus and effectively motivate students.
- Expand the numbers of teachers engaged in collaborative inquiry on teams to improve student outcomes and empower all teachers to make key decisions and prepare for leadership roles.
 - Approximately 45% of teachers meet on teams to conduct collaborative inquiry. These teams are in their beginning stages and have not yet developed strategies to push student progress that can be shared with the staff to adjust practices to improve outcomes. Many teachers, who are not studying administration, are not included on these teams, thereby missing opportunities to share leadership and expand strategy development to increase student outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: The Bronx Engineering and Technology Academy	Δ	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?				X
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			X	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?				X
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			X	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?				X
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?				X			
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X				
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?				X			
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X			
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?				X			
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?				X			
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals 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 progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?				X			
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?				X			
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X			
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed