

Quality Review Report

2009-2010

Bronx Haven High School

High School 381

916 Eagle Street

Bronx

NY 10456

Principal: Lucinda Mendez

Dates of review: December 14 - 15, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Elena Papaliberios

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bronx Haven is a transfer high school with 104 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 38% Black, 61% Hispanic and 1% White students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 34% of the students enrolled and girls account for 66%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 74.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Bronx Haven is lead by a principal who is very committed to the success and development of the school's students. She is keenly aware of the opportunity that this type of school can offer students who have not been successful in other settings. She has excellent relationships with students and parents, who speak highly of her and the accessibility of the administration at this school.

The principal and school leaders have made sound budgetary decisions to allocate resources and personnel to support the instructional program at this school. Technology supports have been purchased and software is widely used by teachers.

The school has a very strong advisory team comprised of counselors from East House Settlement as well as a counselor from the Department of Education. Parents are very pleased with the school's support and feel that having their child's advisor, who really knows their child, as a point person is very important. Parents indicate that the attendance outreach is effective and they value the internship program at the school as one of the strongest parts of the school program. Internships successfully motivate students to maintain a high average and improve academically.

Teachers have access to PowerSchool, a web-based program, where they input all student classroom assessment data. They gather and analyze this data on an ongoing basis. Teachers consistently provide biweekly progress reports to students and parents. Parents praise the school for getting these reports to them, allowing parents to track their child's progress and for students to be able to self-monitor. Students regularly know how they are doing in each class and feel that the biweekly reports help them to stay focused. There is an inconsistency, however, in the way data is used to provide individualized support to students since differentiation is not evident in most of the classrooms.

The school has evaluated their decisions about the curriculum and hired a coach/consultant to provide professional development to all teachers. These sessions have improved teachers' skills as they develop their curriculum incorporating Understanding by Design methodology and infuse literacy across the curriculum. Most teachers are not engaged in inquiry at this school. Although they are able to participate in professional development as a faculty, they are not involved in collaborative teams where student work and student data is reviewed to determine areas of concern and steps to improve student outcomes. This practice excludes teachers from taking a leadership role in the school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Administrative and organizational decisions are closely aligned to the school's instructional transfer model, and budgetary decisions support the development of the academic program and student progress.
 - A strong advisory program supports the school's transfer school model with a guidance team comprised of mostly members of the partnership organization, East Side House Settlement. The team is committed to the social and emotional development of all the students and has been successful in maintaining students' motivation.
 - Recent purchases of computer based programs such as Plato and Achieve 3000 support students' academic development. In addition, teachers speak of the effectiveness with which the administration is able to purchase the books they need to teach their classes and the positive impact the new ReDesign coach/consultant has on the development of curriculum.
- The positive environment of mutual respect and caring attitudes and a helpful advisory program support students emotionally and socially.
 - Students speak very highly of their advisory program. They turn to advisers whenever they need any type of help. Equally, advisers go to students' homes if they have been absent; meet with them regularly and discuss their academic as well as their personal issues. Students feel respected by all staff, as a student said, "I feel that here I am not just a number like I was in the school I came from – here they know me, everyone knows me."
 - Relationships are excellent with parents, staff and students. Parents are very comfortable speaking to the principal or any teacher at any time. They feel part of the school as advisers call their home regularly and parents appreciate hearing both positive and encouraging feedback about their children.
- Effective structures monitor student progress and enable students and parents to monitor their progress throughout the year.
 - Biweekly progress reports enable students to monitor their own progress in each subject and discuss them with their advisers. Parents receive these reports and discuss them at parent meetings to check their children's progress and next learning steps. These enable parents to support their children's learning at home and raise progress.
 - Teachers and administrators also monitor student data electronically. They check each student's attendance, classwork, homework, and exam grades to ensure students are on track to meet their learning goals. Plans are in hand to enable parents to access this information through a web-based program to allow them to access current data regularly.

- School-wide data is gathered and carefully organized through computerized programs such as Achieve 3000, Plato, and Power Schools, so that trends in student performance are accessible to teachers.
 - Computerized programs assist teachers to aggregate and organize all useful data and make relevant classroom level decisions. In addition, students use programs to improve their skills and teachers use the output data to determine trends and areas where students need additional support.
 - Administrators use computerized programs to analyze school-wide student performance which impacts on accurate programming practices.
- The school has developed effective internal capacity as well as successful external internships to support social and emotional growth of all its students.
 - Counselors provide students with excellent support to stay focused on their studies. When asked, “What do you like best about this school?”, many students spoke of the advisory program and the paid internships they were able to obtain through the school. Parents are grateful for the internships which provide their children with financial support as well as a sense of responsibility that they did not have before. Students are motivated to keep their average above 75 in order to earn an internship.
 - Focused planning, trips and assistance motivates students to aspire towards applying for college entrance and provides parents and students with the information about scholarships and financial aid to enter college.
- The school has begun the process to evaluate the impact of decisions about the curriculum and is building coherence across all subject areas.
 - The principal made a conscious decision to focus on instruction this year and hired a coach/consultant to provide training on curriculum development. This training is beginning to filter into the classrooms and positive results are evident in social studies classes where students’ reading comprehension skills have improved.
 - Professional development sessions are held weekly with all teachers and are led by a consultant from ReDesign. Teachers are beginning to re-design their curriculum using Understanding by Design methodology with a focus on the infusion of literacy across all content areas. This training was clearly evident in the history class that the reviewer visited

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a rigorous curriculum that is aligned to state standards using the professional development program to provide consistent instruction.
 - The existing curriculum is being revised and, although the school has started to re-write the curriculum using the Understanding by Design method, a comprehensive curriculum map has not yet been developed in all subject areas.

- Establish data-led, differentiated, measurable learning goals for all students and procedures to evaluate students' progress rigorously.
 - Although teachers consistently generate progress reports based on classroom assessments, many do not use this data to establish individual learning goals for students or suitable targets for on-going improvement. This hinders students' progress and achievements.
 - Students enter the school at different levels. However, teachers do not assess their individual needs accurately to differentiate planning, instruction or support correctly. Equally, there are no systems in place to review the effectiveness of the in-class assessments currently undertaken.
- Develop inquiry teams to improve student outcomes and promote shared leadership.
 - Teachers do not have opportunities to analyze assessment data and student work in collaborative teams using an inquiry approach. They do not research the best practices to improve instruction or students' learning outcomes.
 - The principal, assistant principal/teacher and counselor review school-wide data and identify trends. However, most teachers do not take a key role in making decisions that affect student learning across the school. It also inhibits the development of teachers' leadership skills.
- Undertake formal classroom observations and provide relevant feedback and individual professional development goals and plans to improve instruction.
 - The principal conducts informal observations on a regular basis, but has not documented observed teachers formally. In addition, student data is not used to set individual goals, interim targets or professional development plans to provide teachers with suitable support in order to improve instruction.
 - Individual professional development plans are not in place. This prevents teachers from focusing on improving their own pedagogical skills and prevents the principal from assessing teacher growth in order to improve student outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Bronx Haven High School	△	▷	✓	+
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>	△	▷	✓	+
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>	△	▷	✓	+
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