

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

The Bronxwood Preparatory Academy

**High School 514
921 East 228 Street
Bronx
NY 10466**

Principal: Janet Gallardo

Dates of review: January 6 - 7, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Rose-marie Mills

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Bronxwood Preparatory Academy is a high school with 363 students from grades 9 through 12. The school population comprises 49% Black, 47% Hispanic, 2% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 75% of the students enrolled and girls account for 25%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 82.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The Bronxwood Preparatory Academy is in its sixth year of existence, has changed location three times, and recently underwent a name change. In spite of these circumstances, the school community is striving for success, aims to provide students with a quality education, and instills in students that college attendance is their next step in life. The hallways of the school display expectations of attendance and academic successes, and the steps that are necessary in order for students to attend college. The school effectively analyzes student data and develops appropriate elective courses, intervention programs, and partnerships to meet the academic and socio-emotional needs of the students. Students and their families are appreciative of the frequent mailings, emails, and phone calls that inform them of academic progress, attendance data, intervention programs, and school activities.

Professional development is a school priority and teachers participate in two inter-class visitations each semester. This is in addition to formal and informal observations, bi-weekly grade, and subject meetings. Teachers also select outside professional development to attend with the understanding that they turnkey the information to their peers. This is leading to the creation of teacher leaders within the disciplines. Effective programming affords staff the opportunity to meet by grade and discipline on a bi-weekly basis. However, the grade teams that focus on inquiry are in the implementation stage. They receive minimal training on the inquiry process and support structures for them is lacking.

The school aligns the curriculum to State standards and the focus is on implementing three thinking skills across curriculum areas. Students benefit from a variety of elective offerings, clubs, Saturday Academy, and an after school program. The school community appreciates the caring, and inclusive leadership style of the principal and the effective use of resources to provide intervention and credit recovery opportunities. Students appreciate the small learning community where faculty knows their needs and the efforts the school makes to help them succeed.

Currently, the school has plans for success, but has no clearly defined interim benchmarks. This negatively affects the assessment of school-wide initiatives. Data on the impact of professional collaborations have not been analyzed hence the effectiveness of these structures are not clear. Notwithstanding, school leaders are aware of these limitations and are working to make the changes required for continued improvement.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty use an effective data analysis tool to analyze a wide range of data, which allows them to establish a clear understanding of the student performance in order to create relevant school-wide goals.
 - School leaders and teachers combine student assessment data from ARIS, scholarship reports, and report cards on an Excel spreadsheet so that strengths, weaknesses, and trends are clear. This gives the staff and administration a clear view of the performance of students by discipline and cohort. The information effectively guides the development of credit recovery courses, electives, and after-school programs.
 - School leaders and staff carefully analyzed a wide range of data and uncovered negative trends. This led to the development of the goal to increase reading and writing performance, across all content areas, through the thinking skills of cause and effect, compare and contrast, and interpretation. These skills are clearly posted throughout the school and students and parents are aware of them. School leaders are working with staff members to infuse these skills in lessons.
- The school provides a safe, caring environment where high expectations are clearly communicated and parents and students appreciate the support they receive.
 - “Mission Possible” is the caption for a section of the hallway that displays college information and the expectation that students will attend college upon graduation. Additional displays include attendance data, honor roll by subject, and overall performance, and student of the month. Students indicate that the displays motivate them to work hard and parents appreciate the push for excellence.
 - Positive interactions between teachers and students lead to an environment of care and mutual respect. Students indicate that they feel safe in the school and appreciate the care shown for them. Parents appreciate the small learning environment where the staff understand students’ needs and the efforts that they make to help their children.
- Professional growth is a high priority and faculty profit from frequent inter-class visitations and varied opportunities to enhance their skills and develop leadership capabilities.
 - The effective use of a novel inter-visitation plan results in professional development that meets the needs of individual teachers and builds consistency and coherence in teaching and learning. Teachers, along with an administrator, visit their peers twice per semester during formal observations to reflect on their pedagogy and offer suggestions.
 - Staff frequently attend outside professional development activities, based on their need and expertise. This strategy is effective in improving pedagogy and in developing teacher leaders. Each grade and discipline has a teacher team leader who coordinates the meetings. Additionally, staff members appreciate

the offerings of professional activities and take responsibility to turnkey information to their peers during meetings.

- The school skillfully programs teachers by cohort and uses resources to effectively communicate academic progress and school activities to students, resulting in a knowledgeable and appreciative school community.
 - Frequent communication between the school and families ensures that there is an open exchange of information. Students and parents are aware of academic progress, school activities, and available programs through mailings, phone calls, e-mails, and flyers. A consultant carefully monitors attendance statistics and keeps parents aware of trends on a regular basis. Parents also receive training on ARIS and are grateful that it helps them keep them informed of their children's progress.
 - The administration has scheduled teams of teachers to share the responsibility for cohorts of students. These teams meet and plan activities together and brainstorm solutions to emerging issues. This creates an environment in which students are well known and there is collective decision making.
- School leaders make data-informed decisions that are explicit and support improvement in learning.
 - Department meetings run by instructional leaders focus on curriculum and instructional practices. Data-driven discussions regarding students' performance and the effectiveness of pedagogy result in changes to curriculum maps, content delivery, and after school course offerings.
 - Administration and teachers review Periodic Assessment data and Regents simulation test results to track students' progress. They alert families of failing students to failures and opportunities for remediation, thereby increasing the likelihood for student success.
- Worthwhile extensions to the school curriculum and effective partnerships create numerous opportunities to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of the students.
 - Collaborations with youth development agencies afford students and their family opportunities to access social and emotional services. Students receive services through a health clinic that recently opened in the building. Interns and guest speakers from "Global Classrooms", along with school staff, engage students through the exploration of international issues as well as in the acquisition of life skills.
 - The curriculum aligns to State standards and includes the electives introduction to careers in sports, criminology, and creative writing that engage the students. Students like the choices they can make based on their needs and interest.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase consistency in the delivery of data-driven differentiated instruction so that activities reflect the ability and learning style of students, and questioning stimulates higher-order thinking in order to maximize student learning.

- The school provides professional development on differentiated instruction to staff, but this practice remains inconsistent. Staff do not always use the resources available to make the lessons engaging, resulting in lessons that do not meet the needs of higher achievers and the large population of boys.
- Administration has introduced potentially beneficial school-wide initiatives, such as the use of exit slips, end-of-lesson reflections, and learning logs as assessment tools. However, staff use these tools inconsistently and some lessons do not have appropriate endings resulting in teachers and students having no clear evidence of what students have learned.
- Sharpen school improvement planning by implementing clear benchmarks against which progress is measured, readjustments made, and success evaluated.
 - The school reviews its professional development plan and the Comprehensive Educational plan annually. The lack of interim checkpoints to enable the school to monitor progress towards goals and revise plans in a timely fashion reduces accountability, long-term impact, and coherence between curricular, instructional, assessment, and organizational goals.
 - Increasing reading and writing across all content areas through the strategies of cause and effect, compare and contrast, and interpretation is a school goal. However, there is no interim plan to assess the effectiveness of these strategies or to promote staff ownership.
- Implement procedures to support and monitor teacher teams to ensure that inquiry work results in the creation of common assessments and the sharing of best practices in order to improve pedagogy and increase student outcomes.
 - The school has formed teacher teams, which are in the planning stage of developing procedures and protocols. The lack of formal training and clear structures to support the teams decreases teachers' accountability and limits the likelihood of improving pedagogy.
 - Teacher teams have identified target students using academic data and their knowledge of the students, but do not analyze work samples. This leads to a lack of an in-depth understanding of strengths and weaknesses and limits the implementation of strategies across curriculum areas.
- Expand the school's data management system further to evaluate and adjust assessment reporting, so that parents and students understand the next learning steps.
 - Students and their families receive numeric information about performance in each subject. This information does not tell them which skills and content they have mastered nor does it communicate the next steps.
 - The initiative to compile student work samples in folders in all classes in order to better access student performance is inconsistent in practice. Many folders contain student work with no evidence of feedback or assessment.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Bronxwood Preparatory Academy	△	▷	✓	+
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