

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Bronx Law and Community High School

High School X439

500 East Fordham Road

Bronx

NY 10458

Principal: Michael Barakat

Dates of review: March 24 - 25, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Elena Papaliberios

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bronx High School for Law and Community Service is a high school with 405 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 36% Black, 60% Hispanic, 2% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 42% of the students enrolled and girls account for 58%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 82.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal created a list of data driven school wide goals to improve student outcomes.
 - The entire new administrative team conducted a comprehensive analysis of data and a set of goals was developed based on students' needs. The school has developed a list of five goals that are shared and supported by the entire school community. All teachers are involved in setting an action plan to address the low Regents scores and to increase credit accumulation. These goals are aligned with the comprehensive education plan and the principal's performance review and are focused on improving credit accumulation, student attendance, and Regents passing rates. Included in this process is a team that supports the social and emotional growth of students with a focus on the freshman class.
- Consistent and effective use of the observation process offers feedback from the administrative team and leads to informed tenure decisions.
 - The administrative team effectively uses the observation process to provide timely and comprehensive feedback to teachers. Emails are generated regularly from informal visits with actionable feedback. Scholarship data is regularly reviewed with teachers and the review of student work is evident at teacher meetings. As a result, administrators provide supports for teachers through training and additional consultants, and make informed, sound tenure decisions.
 - A consultant was hired to support new teachers in the planning process and coaches them in the delivery of instruction. Therefore, new teachers are improving their pedagogical skills, thus positively impacting on students' learning. A range of supports provided through the professional learning sessions are aligned with the school's goals and provide support for the development of all teachers.
- The administration makes sound organizational decisions that help to support the school's academic goals to increase student achievement.
 - The school is organized around a 75 minute block for mathematics and has adopted a new math program. In a math class, a higher level of engagement and higher order thinking were evident, and the teacher was meeting all the students' academic needs. Math teachers plan together to develop lessons that meet the different levels of students. As a result, math Regents' scores improved across the grades, showing the highest gain in the Progress Report.
 - Resources have been purchased to support the school's academic program, including SMART Boards for classroom use as well as Netbook computers for every teacher. A wide range of course offerings are in place, from advanced placement to effective writing and Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) courses. As a result, more students earn credits leading to increase credit accumulation across the school.

- Parents are involved in the decision making at the school level and the staff communicates high expectations to students and families, thus, providing them with supports to strive to achieve at their highest levels.
 - Parents speak highly of the administrative team and the staff. Teachers share with them, at parent meetings and individual sessions, their high expectations for students' success in all academic areas. Students are pushed to work at their fullest capacity so that they are prepared for college. As a result, students feel teachers care and want them to succeed.
 - Parents are actively engaged in the decision making process and active participants of the School Leadership Team and Parents Association. They take an active role in the C-30 process and make decisions on the selection of resources and school activities. As a result, parents are stronger school supporters and better able to support their children to achieve.
- The school developed internal and external capacities that help to support student's academic, social, and emotional needs to help students focus on their academic success.
 - A full team of counselors supports the social and emotional needs of students and two social workers from a community based organization work closely with the school to provide on-going training to all staff. Teachers are trained in how to deal with bullying and build relationships with students. Students regularly meet with teachers and counselors and family contact is more constant throughout the year. As a result, teachers and counselors are better prepared to meet students' social and emotional needs.
 - Based on Regents results and a review of student data, academic supports are provided by Bronx Community College in two areas of great need, US History and Global Studies, where students are achieving at the lowest levels. In addition, youth development opportunities are provided through after school activities as well as community service and internship opportunities, which teach students the value of serving their community, and connect them to the world of work. The Junior ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) program and the Junior Police provide additional resources to students involved in the programs. These partnerships have a positive impact on students' social studies achievement as the scores have improved and they have raised student attendance and participation.

What the school needs to improve

- Create structures for teachers to set data driven, differentiated, measurable instructional goals for all students in order to increase student progress.
 - It is not yet a common practice for teachers to set short term instructional goals, based on data analysis, aimed at improving student skills. The lack of a goal setting process leaves students unclear to what specific skills they need to improve and what they need to aim at to achieve better outcomes.

- Create rigorous academic tasks that aligned to the curriculum and target data informed needs in order to engage the higher order thinking skills of all students.
 - Rigor was inconsistently evident across classrooms. Students were provided work that was appropriate for an elementary or middle school level, including coloring and low level literacy skills, leaving students unchallenged and unengaged. Without a rigorous curriculum with academic tasks that foster higher order thinking and mastery of the content area, students are unable to compete for the best college seats with students in other districts.
 - Some lessons observed were generic, with little evidence of planning that was targeted to address students' needs at different academic levels. Lesson plans did not reflect opportunities for students to engage in higher order thinking, consequently, lessons failed to engage students at their highest learning levels leaving students unable to think critically and to improve their skills.
- Deliver teaching strategies that consistently offer engaging learning opportunities for students so that lessons reflect differentiation in content, process, or product.
 - A math class provided differentiated support to individual and groups of students based on their skill level. However, in most classes, teachers provided lessons that were general, teacher centered, and with no opportunities to differentiate the content or process. The lack of differentiated instruction prevents students from owning their work, leaving them unchallenged and teachers unable to meet the varied needs of students.
- Enhance assessment data gathering and supplement summative data to include analysis of subgroups in order to improve student outcomes.
 - Most teachers and administrators review student assessment data; however, there is little evidence of the analysis of English language learners and special education data. Mock Regents are used for baseline assessments, but the data is not always disaggregated to identify individual student's needs to provide differentiated instructional strategies and supports to special populations. As a result, the most at risk population does not receive instruction that meets their individual needs to increase credit accumulation and Regents passing rates.
- Strengthen systems to evaluate the quality of curriculum and adjust instructional decisions to increase rigor and prepare students for college level work.
 - Although curriculum plans are in place for most subjects, school leaders are developing structures to better evaluate and align the curriculum to instructional practices based on student needs. School administrators have started to review and evaluate the curriculum, which is in place; however, there is still a lack of alignment between the curriculum and the lessons that are being developed and taught in each classroom. As a result, the quality of the curriculum maps does not carry the rigor that is needed to prepare students for college work.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Bronx High School for Law and Community Service	UD	D	P	WD
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, 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	

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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		

Quality Review Scoring Key

UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed
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