

# **Quality Review Report 2010-2011**

**Bronx Academy High School**

**High School X560  
1440 Story Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10473**

**Principal: Gary Eisinger**

**Dates of review: February 7-8, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Elena Papaliberios**

## **Part 1: The school context**

### **Information about the school**

Bronx Academy is a transfer high school with 330 students from grade 10 through grade 12. The school population comprises 41% Black, 57% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 8% Special Education Students. Boys account for 44% of the students enrolled and girls account for 56%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 66.0%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning where students want to succeed and are well known by staff members.
  - Students and parents feel that this is a safe haven for students where teachers and staff care for them and are able to stay on top of their academic work. The school has a team of social workers and counselors who meet the social, emotional and developmental needs of all students. In addition, each staff member serves as an advocate for a small group of students, allowing for each student to be well known by at least one adult in the building. A parent shared that due to the commitment of the new administration and staff, his child is now focused on learning after many years of failure in other schools. Another parent said, “They believe my child can do it, and they have now convinced my child that he is capable of doing the work and graduating.” Students are extremely committed to their success, focused on earning credits and passing their Regents exams in order to graduate.
- School leaders make sound organizational decisions which help to support the school’s academic goals and assist students to meet their graduation requirements.
  - Changes implemented are in support of the academic growth of the students. The curriculum development initiative is supported by a newly hired coach who works with struggling teachers to create units of study. A community based organization (CBO) has been contracted to support the school’s goal to improve attendance. Their work along with the entire attendance team has resulted in cleaner student registers causing more accurate attendance record keeping.
  - The curriculum maps developed this year for the trimesters help to focus students on the content in each subject. This has begun to raise the rigor in content area classes and provide students with challenging material. As a result, students are becoming better prepared to graduate and are earning credit at a faster pace, an outcome that is welcomed by parents and students.
- The school has developed internal capacity to support students’ social and emotional needs which has given each student an opportunity to connect with an adult at the school.
  - Every staff member has been trained to be an advocate for a small group of students who they meet with regularly and support their social, emotional and academic needs. As a result, teachers are prepared and responsive to students and parents as they feel that they have someone to turn to at all times.
  - The support of the CBO and the team of counselors complement the school’s work in providing a safe and respectful environment where students feel comfortable and are able to flourish academically. A

student said, “There are no fights in this school, in my other school we had fights all the time. Here people are focused on their work because we are all trying to graduate. The new principal and the teachers really care about us.” The change in administration has produced a very positive impact in the culture of the school that has led to a more respectful and collaborative environment.

- The school gathers and analyses a range of data to assess the school’s areas of strength and weakness, thus providing an opportunity to impact school wide goal setting and programming.
  - The review of multiple data sources around attendance, periodic assessment, and scholarship has led to school wide goal setting and the restructuring of programs. A review of scholarship data clearly identified the need to create accelerated credit opportunities for students, thus the creation of the trimester structure. As a result, the school is able to increase credit accumulation for all students.
  - Inquiry team members are analyzing English language arts Regents data to determine the writing strengths and weaknesses of a target population. The social studies team uses the skills analyses generated from the scanning pilot to determine whole school levels of understanding. This process helps the school to assess the writing levels of their student population.
- The staff communicates high expectations to students and families, thus promoting opportunities for students to re-engage in their academic work and for parents to take an active role in decision making.
  - Students are regularly monitored by their advocates whose expectations are for students to graduate and continue on to college. Parents speak of teachers having high expectations for their students and wanting them to achieve at their highest levels. Parents play a critical role in the creation of the comprehensive education plan and say that for the first time in their child’s high school experience, an award ceremony was held where parents were recognized for their involvement and support.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Create consistent instructional practices that lead to high levels of student engagement through data driven differentiated academic tasks in order to challenge all students appropriately.
  - Instruction was primarily teacher directed and generic with little evidence of differentiated instruction across classrooms including the art and music classes. Although curriculum maps are currently being revised to indicate how lessons will be differentiated, the implementation of differentiation has not transferred into the delivery of instruction. The level of student engagement is minimal where students are mostly on task, but rarely offered high order thinking tasks leaving most students unchallenged.
- Increase the use of inquiry to include all teachers in order for them to adjust their instructional practice and resources to better meet students’ needs and to provide teachers with a wider range of leadership opportunities.

- One team is in the beginning stage of using an inquiry approach. Although all teachers are part of a collaborative team, other teams, such as the attendance team, works on non-instructional supports. Without a continuing practice of inquiry work in place to dig deep into students' needs and determine strategies that would help students achieve at a higher rate, the staff struggles to come up with strategies that meet the needs of students.
- The inquiry team and the CORE team, led by the assistant principal, are new this year. These collaborations do not allow for teacher leadership to be developed and do not promote decision making at the faculty level. Consequently, the staff has little opportunity to influence key decisions that impact student learning at the individual, class, or school wide level.
- Develop a system for teachers to set learning goals for students based on data and aligned to the curriculum in order to improve students' academic skills.
  - A system has not yet been developed for teachers to set short term instructional goals based on data analysis and aimed at improving student skills in every subject. Without the practice of setting academic goals in place for teachers, students are left unable to identify areas that they need to focus on in order to master a specific academic skill.
- Strengthen the process by which teachers use assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses of all students and student subgroups in order to improve learning outcomes.
  - Teachers have recently begun looking at the skills analysis results of the Global History Regents exam as well as other assessments in order to determine students' strengths and weaknesses based on the data. The lateness and inconsistency of this type of review does not give students and teachers enough time to develop strategies for improvement. This assessment review practice has not yet made an impact on curricular or instructional practices.
- Create systems to evaluate and adjust curriculum and instructional decisions across all grade levels in order to increase rigor and improve students' outcomes.
  - The school developed its curriculum this year and has not yet set up a process to evaluate its effectiveness. Without structures in place to evaluate and revise the curricula, the school struggles to identify the impact of the curriculum on student achievement over time.
  - Since teacher leaders have only been identified this year as members of the CORE team, capacity building is in its infancy stage. School administrators and the CORE team have not developed structures that assess and evaluate the impact that these decisions have on teacher development and student achievement.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: Bronx Academy High School</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		<b>X</b>		
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?		<b>X</b>		
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>		
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?		<b>X</b>		
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?		<b>X</b>		

<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?	<b>X</b>						
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>					
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			<b>X</b>				
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?		<b>X</b>					
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?	<b>X</b>						
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?			<b>X</b>				
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?	<b>X</b>						
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		<b>X</b>					
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>