

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Mott Hall Bronx High School

High school 09X252

**1595 BATHGATE AVENUE
BRONX
NY,10457**

Principal: Kathryn Malloy

Dates of review: Nov 29, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Carron Staple

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Mott Hall Bronx High School is a/an High school with 354 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 24% Black, 74% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 9.0% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 46.0% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 85.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is Proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders plan and refine academic tasks, using student work and data that informs purposeful decisions to close the achievement gap and promoting college and career readiness. (1.1)
 - The school aligns curriculum maps to the International Baccalaureate (IB) program standards and is purposefully makes decisions around school-wide planning that clearly focus on the key standard of embedding informational text, resulting in promoting communication skills via students explicit inclusion of this component in their reading and writing tasks. The IB combines rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards and high quality assessments within the unique curriculum, and complements and supports the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to create globally-minded students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, who are well-prepared for college and careers.
- School leaders strategically use resources to provide students with college-level experiences that support students in attaining their academic goals. (1.3)
 - The principal has aligned curriculum and academic tasks to the International Baccalaureate (IB) program and has made a huge investment by using resources to pay for the fees associated with this program and the Middle Years Program (MYP), the prerequisite program to the IB program. This program, which is closely aligned to the Common Core, engages students consistently in critical thinking and problem solving, compels them to take initiative and work collaboratively with others, be effective communicators, both orally and in writing, and use their creativity and imagination as they access and analyze various types of information from multiple sources. Teachers receive training in their content areas which supports their curriculum writing. The principal also incorporates common planning time into the school schedule where teams of teachers meet daily to design rubrics, analyze student work and track progress to support the varying needs of their students. An assistant principal was hired to support the growing number of informal and formal observations required, as well as additional special education teachers, to bolster improvements in the academic growth of students with disabilities. As a result, the vast majority of students are able to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, and conduct original research to answer questions, solve problems, and complete tasks that lead them to attaining their academic goals.
- The school is a safe, nurturing community where students feel respected and supported with their social-emotional and academic needs, resulting in every student feeling prepared for college and careers. (1.4)
 - The school's theory of action on maintaining a safe environment is based on the "Sanctuary of Schools" model. Teachers receive training on how to protect individuals and community members at-large, and learn how to support students as they resolve conflicts and make amends for any damage done. A discipline committee meets daily to review all incidents and to discuss consequences. Students and parents are encouraged to

attend these meetings, ensuring they reflect on the behavior as well as self-advocate. This model, paired with an advisory curriculum, ensures students' voice in expressing themselves, and provides a venue that validates students as they discuss academics and/or social-emotional concerns as they take ownership of the decisions they make. For example, the students spoke about each grade level being represented on student council and how each of them make recommendations about various aspects of the school ranging from the mediation process to types of clubs and activities they want to engage in. Having numerous adults to speak with and receive help from, including Blue Engine Teaching Assistants (BETA's), students state feeling very supported. These teaching assistants referred to as BETA's conduct rigorous small group instruction for high school students in English language arts, algebra, and/or geometry, assist teachers in classroom instruction and curricular planning, evaluate and monitor student progress, and lead students on carefully planned college visits throughout the New York City metropolitan area. As a result, last year's cohort of students had an 82% graduation rate, articulating to post-secondary institutions of higher learning. In addition, the close knit relationships with school staff, administrators, and community members, confirms the supportive atmosphere, resulting in a culture of high expectations and a nurturing community dedicated to continuously meeting the needs of students, regardless of the time needed to graduate, as evidenced by the 6-year graduation rate of 89%. The high rate of graduation after the 4-year mark demonstrates the school's persistence in ensuring that the vast majority of students graduate and move on to college and careers.

- The school uses interim and summative assessment data to analyze student performance, and makes instructional adjustments which result in improved student outcomes. (2.2)
 - A variety of assessment including tests, projects, reports, checks for understanding, Quizdom clickers, that immediately gauge a student's response to a question, thumbs up/thumbs down, exit quizzes, and self-assessment by students. Student self-assess by using task-specific rubrics, and understand their current level of performance and where they need improvement. Teachers evaluate these data points to determine needed revisions to their units of study, uncover professional development needs and team meeting discussions, and track the progress of their students. A "Looking at Student Work" protocol is used during team meetings which results in teachers and Blue Engine Teaching Assistants, identifying trends, strengths and the challenges students face in improving learning outcomes, while developing strategies to meet the needs of all learners, including students with disabilities and English language learners. As a result of this analysis, students receive individualized and actionable feedback that is aligned to units of study, and teachers are able to make necessary adjustments to target individual and groups of students' instructional needs. This directed intervention has resulted in increased credit accumulation and students attaining mastery in more classes, thus acquiring 10 or more credits per year, as evidenced on the school's most recent Progress Report.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to improve teacher practice related to questioning strategies to support increased higher order thinking and rigorous cognitive engagement. (1.2)
 - Instructional expectations are connected to the school's chosen research-based framework. During classroom visits, some instruction was highly teacher-directed with low-level questioning where inconsistent alignment of instruction to the framework, limited high levels of cognitive engagement, contrary to the school's beliefs related to student learning. Although this was not a prevalent practice, the school's continued professional development remains focused on questioning and engagement strategies, but these practices are not yet demonstrated consistently in teacher practice in support of the goal of meeting the learning needs of all students from multiple entry points. This prevents all students, including those with disabilities and English language learners from receiving instruction at their identified levels, meeting instructional challenges from multiple entry points or producing work products that consistently demonstrate higher order thinking.
- Continue to leverage actionable feedback and professional development opportunities for teachers to ensure that their practice is elevated and increases rigor in instruction. (4.1)
 - Teachers receive ongoing professional development related to identified key areas of practice and are expected to deeply engage with their students by making the content relevant and aligned to the standards. Teachers have worked with Giselle Martin-Kniepp, an outside consultant, around three major aspects: engagement, meaningfulness and relevance, coupled with Charlotte Danielson's component 3b, using questioning and discussion techniques. This support clarifies expectations for teachers and results in improvements in pedagogy as evidenced in some post-observation reports. In addition, formal observations and frequent informal observations are conducted that identify strengths and areas for improvement, with feedback and next steps that is documented on a spreadsheet for administrators to track teacher effectiveness and progress. Teachers receive regular support from school leaders on how to improve their professional practice through oral and written feedback, and peer inter-visitations. However, it was not clear how administrators use this information or what system is in place to ensure recommendations are implemented, as classroom visits identified that the feedback provided was not consistently acted upon by teachers. In addition, documentation of repeated visits identified the same pedagogical concerns as noted in prior short observations. For example, in one particular classroom, the teacher continued to engage in a back and forth response with one or two students, an area identified as needing improvement, preventing other students from engaging with her or each other, or being able to pose questions back to the teacher or the group to deepen their understanding. This perpetuated a learning environment where questioning did not result in high levels of thinking or engagement, as well as missed opportunities for students to provide their thoughts, thus limiting the elevation of school-wide pedagogical practices related to teacher questioning and engagement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Mott Hall Bronx High School	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?		X					
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?			X				
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?			X				
Systems for Improvement							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			X				
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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				
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed