

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Antonia Pantoja Preparatory Academy

A College Board School

Middle-High School 376

**1980 Lafayette Avenue
Bronx, NY 10473**

Principal: Nancy Diaz

Dates of review: December 10 - 11, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Umit Serin

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Antonia Pantoja Preparatory Academy: A College Board School is a middle-high school with 432 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 28% Black, 66% Hispanic, 1% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 24% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 83.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is working to align resources to support school-wide goals and achieve action plans. (1.3)
 - In response to identified needs for a school-designed curriculum, the principal hired an experienced English language arts (ELA) coach to develop a Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) aligned ELA curriculum and to provide support to teachers. Furthermore, the school is developing multiple partnerships. The American Reading Company is providing assistance regarding the identification of student reading levels, creating leveled libraries, and facilitating the 'One Hundred Book Campaign'. America's Choice is providing support on improving the implementation of the workshop model, and *Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)* offers homework help to students that are struggling. Additionally, the school is in contact with Pearson Associates to collaborate around professional development, and instruction and coaching for leadership and teacher teams. As a result of these initiatives, some progress in student work around using evidence from the text to support arguments is evident in some classrooms.
 - The principal schedules common planning time allowing both an ELA and a math teacher team to meet vertically and horizontally once per week to analyze student work in order to inform curricular and instructional decisions. Math team members are in the beginning stages of creating a structure using a protocol to look at student work to analyze trends and devise strategies to improve student deficiencies in targeted areas. Additionally, in response to declining high school progress in math and ELA, the principal has re-arranged staff assignments and re-structured student time by creating double session schedule to allow for extra credit accumulation and additional support to meet student-learning needs. Two of the most effective middle school math teachers and the lead middle school ELA teacher were reassigned to teach high school grade levels to address the low Regents' passing rate in English and math. The evolving teamwork and re-programming are starting to lead to improved instruction in some classrooms.
- The school is working toward aligning its teacher evaluation system to a research-based, common teaching framework to support teacher development with effective feedback to improve pedagogy. (4.1)
 - The school's observation tool is a checklist with added components that utilize vocabulary and phrases from Danielson's Framework to communicate informal observation feedback to teachers. Similarly, a formal observation template, which is an extension of the informal observation tool, is utilized to capture strengths and offer next steps to teachers. Additionally, a component of the template elicits teacher self-reflection of the observed lesson. As a result, school leadership utilize these observation templates to set clear expectations for all teachers, including those new to the profession, and are providing information

including next steps around effective teaching practices to improve student learning.

- The school is developing structures to maintain a safe and respectful environment that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults. (1.4)
 - Homeroom teachers assist their students with guidance around social, emotional, and instructional needs. An active student council and a student school leadership team (SSLT) enables student voice to be heard and valued on some school-wide issues. The school leadership asked the student team for their input when considering a truncation of the high school grade levels. These supportive efforts are contributing to students feeling “safe” and valued by the school leadership.
 - The school’s School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program is aimed at “recognizing and rewarding appropriate behavior with a focus on character development/traits.” Staff reward students with PBIS store dollars for exhibited good behaviors. In turn, students are anxious to accumulate ‘dollars’ to purchase school items in the store. Thus, the school rewards good student behavior through its PBIS Store. Consequently, the implementation of the PBIS program at the school has been yielding positive results as evidenced by declining occurrences and improved attendance rates, especially in the middle school, where attendance has increased from 89.2% last year to 92.7% this year.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve the rigor of curriculum and academic tasks for all students including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs) leading to higher cognitive engagement. (1.1)
 - In response to citywide instructional expectations, the school is in the process of creating units of study in English, science, and social studies, aligned to the CCLS. This work includes a focus on improving academic rigor and engagement by integrating higher level Webb’s Depth of Knowledge questions into the units and lessons as well as increasing content vocabulary development. To this end, the principal hired an ELA coach who revised and aligned the English curriculum to include essential questions and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies to emphasize key concepts and learning based on CCLS. However, teacher teams have not fully established a process to design cognitively engaging curriculum and academic tasks to the CCLS. Consequently, the lack of rigor in academic tasks hinders the development of higher critical thinking skills to accelerate student learning.
 - Most units of study do not effectively provide scaffolds for ELLs and SWDs. While an English teacher incorporated some higher order questions to “dig deeper into the character” in the story, other teachers failed to engage their students and mainly asked recall questions, resulting in academic tasks that are not consistently rigorous. Additionally, teachers and teams across content areas are not consistently creating, revising, and refining units of study and tasks to

maximize the academic challenge for higher achieving students as well as students with skill deficits. As a result, not all students are challenged and pushed to the next level.

- Increase teacher capacity enabling the delivery of rigorous and engaging academic tasks that meet the needs of all learners, so that they actively participate and produce high quality work products. (1.2)
 - Although leadership emphasizes the use of the workshop model, rigorous tasks, engaging activities, and vocabulary development, as essential elements necessary for students to advance in their learning, these strategies are evident in only some classrooms. Components of the workshop model, that include, teaching strategies, questioning, and assignments, are not consistently implemented school wide and usually are very basic. In an English integrated co-teaching (ICT) class, teachers assigned students to groups and asked them to justify their answers by citing evidence from a common text. However, a beginner ELL student was asked to complete a worksheet that had nothing to do with the lesson. Furthermore, throughout the lesson, neither of the teachers checked on this student to assess his learning and provide support. In a Living Environment class early beginner ELL students were given the instructional-leveled textbook and asked to complete the same activity as the other students without additional support from the teacher. In a Global History class, students mainly copied what was on the board, answering isolated questions that only required recall of information from the text. Consequently, students are not being presented with rigorous tasks, impacting uneven student growth.
- Develop school-wide assessment systems that enable teachers to effectively track student progress and identify trends that can inform instructional strategies supporting improved student outcomes. (2.2)
 - The administration recently purchased Skedula a database system to organize student data and teachers are required to use it to monitor student progress and post student work and grades. However, the school is in the planning stages of putting a structure in place for the school leaders, teachers, and teacher teams, to purposefully use this information and examine relevant summative and formative data to identify trends to modify and align curriculum to drive instruction. Furthermore, although the school uses Acuity as a baseline and benchmark assessment tool, data from these assessments is utilized inconsistently to measure student progress toward goals across grades and subjects, hindering the school's ability to make timely adjustments to the curriculum and tasks to ensure that student-learning needs are met.
 - The school has a unified grading policy in place and teachers are strictly following it. However, because homework assignments and classroom participation comprise 50% of the total grade, the majority of students pass their subjects while they fail to score Level 3 or 4 on the State and Regents' tests. As a result, administration and students do not always have reliable feedback from scholarship reports regarding student achievement. Thus, the school is hindered in incorporating all needed adjustments into the curriculum to address students' learning needs.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Antonia Pantoja College Preparatory Academy, A College Board 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