

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**Bronx Engineering and Technology Academy**

**10X213**

**99 Terrace View Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10463**

**Principal: Karalyne Sperling**

**Dates of review: April 29-30, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Elena Rovalino**

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

### **Information about the school**

Bronx Engineering and Technology is a high school with 420 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 31% Black, 63% Hispanic, .5% White, and 5.5% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 82% of the students enrolled and girls account for 18%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 81.4%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal uses resources effectively to strengthen instructional programs and allocates time for teachers to participate in team meetings to support learning and provide students with access to college and career readiness. (1.3)
  - The principal has allocated funds successfully to support the technology and engineering program at the school, which have led to the New York State Education Department Career and Technical Education endorsement and help to achieve their goal to have students meet the English and social studies standards. The school has provided budgetary supports through the purchase of SMART Boards, computer monitors, software, iPads, and laptop carts, to complement its instructional programs including the Digital Electronics, and Architecture/Civil Engineering classes that are part of the technology theme. The school is working toward their goal of making the Technology and Engineering program one that is aligned to college level courses which will be part of the Career and Technical Education sequence. The principal has purchased an online program for teachers to record data on students' grades, homework, and attendance, which parents and students can access at any time. The school hires coaches to support teachers in Science and English language arts and a consultant was recently contracted in cooperation with another school to provide professional development on curriculum alignment to the Common Core. Two additional special education teachers were hired to provide services to special education students. College level courses are offered through College Now where students take courses such as Pre-Calculus. Advanced Placement courses are part of the curriculum, including, Advanced Placement European History and Advanced Placement US History. In addition, a collaboration with College Summit has led to the addition of an instructor to offer weekly sessions; as a result, students are introduced to college readiness skills starting in the ninth grade and the student work reviewed in classes such as the Advanced Placement European History demonstrate college readiness practices.
- School leaders have developed a professional development plan for staff and college and career learning opportunities for students, fostering a culture of high expectations for all members of the school community. (3.4)
  - Leaders communicate high expectations to teachers using the Danielson Teaching Framework. Teachers are provided training on each domain of the Teaching Framework through the effectiveness committee. A team of teachers meets regularly to design professional development that supports the entire staff. Teachers have also attended professional development sessions on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) writing, Advancing the Affirmative Development of Boys and Young Men of Color (COSEBOC), and Common Core Learning Standards. As a result, these learning opportunities and teachers' expectations to turnkey information to the rest of the staff have helped to create a culture of high expectations that is conducive to learning and holds everyone accountable through peer and administrators observations.

- Students and parents interviewed feel that the school is preparing students for college. Weekly sessions through College Summit support the development of a culture that is focused on college and careers. Through courses in Architecture and Engineering, students are exposed to areas of interest that will lead to a Career and Technical Education Certification. Parents are regularly informed of their child's progress using an online system where they can see students' grades, homework completion, and attendance. Consequently, parents and students feel that the school community has high expectations for all students.
- The principal ensures that teachers engage in professional collaborations aligned to the school's instructional goals, promoting distributive leadership and improved teacher practice, which lead to increased student outcomes. (4.2)
  - Structures are in place for teams of teachers to meet regularly as part of weekly grade level teams, Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) team, National Academy Foundation (NAF) team, Response to Intervention (RTI) team, and the mathematics team. At a grade team meeting observed, members of the team had conducted inter-visitations taking low inference notes in order to support teacher growth, and provide each other feedback on the instructional area that was selected. This practice directly connects to the school's goal to ensure that "teachers will move toward a common language and understanding of what quality instruction looks like using the Charlotte Danielson framework for teaching". The focus of the mathematics team has been on developing the Algebra content. As a result, the Algebra Regents scores have increased from 20% passing to 55% passing.
  - Teacher team leaders have been selected to facilitate the meetings and gather suggestions for agenda items. Leaders have an opportunity to provide professional development to other members of the team and therefore have a voice in the overall decisions of the school. Teachers also have autonomy to choose the type of professional development that is offered during team meetings. For example, teachers received training on taking low inference notes during peer observations, and training on the Universal Design for Learning. The team leader observed has provided training on the different domains of the Danielson Framework for teaching; these structures have enable teachers in impacting student learning and teacher development across the school.

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

- Ensure that curricula and tasks consistently emphasize higher order-order skills, are planned to provide access, engage and challenge all learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities (1.1)
  - Teachers have started to work with a consultant to revise their curriculum units to align them to the Common Core Learning Standards. However, current curricula units have not been adjusted to meet the needs of the student population. For example, the American History units of study have been shared from a district outside of New York City, but no

adjustments have been made to reflect differentiation to meet the needs of English Language Learners, who comprise 14% of the population or the needs of special education students who comprise 21% of the population. Student specific data and student work are not affecting curriculum change in some areas. For example, teachers have not used common assessments such as the Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test to impact curriculum changes. The inconsistency across the school in the level of planning that allows all students including English language learners and special education students' access to a curriculum that provides scaffolds and rigor leads students unable to engage cognitively in order to reach the next level.

- Strengthen teacher pedagogy in providing effective instructional supports, extensions and in the use of questioning and discussion techniques so that all learners are engaged in rigorous tasks and high-level discussions. (1.2)
  - Teachers' lesson plans follow a uniform format and include boxes to check off the CCLS standard and the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategy. However, the indicators checked in many cases did not match the practice in the classroom. For example, in an English class where students were reading a modern version of Romeo and Juliet, all students were asked to work in groups and re-write in their own words, Act III, Scene I. Although "Vary the methods for response and navigation", and "Guide information processing, visualization and manipulation" were checked as Universal Design for Learning strategies to be used, there was no varied methods of response offered to students. In fact, one English language learner student in one of the groups was confused and did not understand what he or the group needed to do. The task was to "in your own words re-write Mercutio's scene in Act III, scene I", however, there was no differentiation provided for this student to attempt a similar assignment that would have allowed him to demonstrate his comprehension. The student called the teacher over for help, but the teacher turned him back to the group he was working with and was not able to guide the student to process the information he had in front of him nor did the teacher provide a different method for the student complete the task. In addition, teaching strategies designed to meet the needs of English language learners and students with disabilities were inconsistent across classes. Services for English language learners are provided through a push-in model only, and no stand-alone ESL classes are offered. For example, in a class observed, students who are English language learners were not provided with effective scaffolds to support their learning, when the teacher was asked "how do you meet the needs of English language learners in this class?", he said, "I pair them". However, he was not able to identify who were the English language learners and who were the students with disabilities in order to have effective pairing groups. In another class, 26 UDL strategies were selected for one lesson; many of them were not achieved. Most classrooms visited were teacher directed, and provided few opportunities for students to engage in the lesson, for example in a mathematics class, there were no opportunities for students to go up to the board to demonstrate the work. Furthermore, across classrooms there was inconsistency in providing different entry points for students at all levels. Consequently, students were left unable to engage in challenging academic discussion.

- Deepen teacher skills in the use of assessment data to measure student progress, adjust instruction, and ensure that students are aware of next learning steps and progress towards mastery of learning objectives. (2.2)
  - Teachers make use of the tracker system provided by the network and look at assessment data such as Regents scores and eighth grade scores. The school uses a uniform grading policy that includes classwork 50%, exams/quizzes 40%, and homework 10%. However, the use of rubrics is inconsistent and feedback to students is limited. For example, in most of the student work posted in classrooms, teachers' feedback included, "great", "awesome" "good job". In reviewing students work, there is inconsistency in the way teachers provide feedback, and in most cases students do not receive actionable next steps leaving them unable to make adjustments to improve their work. This limits the schools' ability to customize supports based on each student's individual needs in order to improve student outcomes.
  - In many of the classes visited, lesson plans include exit slips to assess learning. However, in most classrooms, opportunities to use ongoing checks for understanding are not maximized. For example, in a mathematics class where students were learning "how to determine whether lines are parallel, perpendicular or neither", a student did not understand how to solve the equation to find the slope. The teacher did not stop to make sure that all students were able to solve the problems before she continued with the lesson. In another mathematics class, students had questions regarding the work they were about to do, and the teacher told them to "ask the students in the group for help." No one in the group was able to help the student. The teacher did not use this information to re-teach or review the material so that all students would be able to reach the learning target for that lesson. Consequently, without adjustments to lessons teachers are not able to meet the needs of all their students.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Bronx Engineering and Technology Academy	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score		X					
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?		X					
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the 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					
<b>School Culture</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports 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 those expectations?			X				
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<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 student 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 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?		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					
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed