



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

**Quality Review  
Office of School Quality  
Division of Academics, Performance, and Support  
2013-2014**

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**Bronx Collegiate Academy**

**9X227**

**240 East 172<sup>nd</sup> Street**

**Bronx**

**NY 10457**

**Principal: Darryl White**

**Dates of review: January 8-9, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Elena Rovalino**

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

### **Information about the school**

Bronx Collegiate Academy is a high school with 323 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 27% Black, 72% Hispanic, 0% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 33% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 82%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Staff consistently communicates high expectations aligned to college readiness that comprise of substantial college level offerings and supports resulting in student preparation and a culture conducive to student learning. (3.4)
  - School leaders, staff and families consistently and effectively communicate high expectations to all students that are focused on college and career readiness. Students interviewed are very clear about what courses will better prepare them to succeed in college, and have ownership of the courses they have selected to take. For example, a student said that he chose to take two advanced placement classes because it will help him to earn six college credits and will prepare him to handle the level of instruction he will face in college. Additionally, teachers are pivotal in furthering the culture of setting high expectations for students. This was evident throughout the review process; one student said, “My teacher knows that I could do well and he does not let me slack off, he is always giving me work and homework that challenges me and makes me work harder.” A parent said, “I know that my child is aiming to go to Harvard or Yale, there has never been a question about college, there is no other option; my child will go to college. The teachers and counselors are always here to help”. The entire school community has a unified focus on college readiness for all students. Another parent said, “We are true to our name, “Collegiate”, everyone focuses on college preparation; if they want to go to college, kids will be ready”. These parent statements are indicative of the intentional partnering with families through effective communication, guidance and support that takes place in the school connected to college and career readiness. In addition to establishing this culture, the school now offers Advanced Placement (AP) courses, such as AP European History, AP English, AP United States History, and AP Spanish, which all lend themselves to offering a more challenging content. Furthermore, the principal collaborated with other high schools in the campus to provide some of these courses as a means of supporting the college readiness initiatives. Consequently, these systems have resulted in students taking ownership of their educational experience and college readiness rates have increased this year by 24.4%.
- The principal uses resources effectively to strengthen instructional programs and allocates time for teachers to participate in team meetings to support learning and improve instruction across content areas. (1.3)
  - The principal has effectively used resources to supply classrooms with SmartBoard technology, hired consultants to support teachers, and developed partnerships with universities such as Fordham to have student-teachers in the classrooms. Students are further supported through the Saturday Academy and after-school programs where the lab is used to provide homework help. Community Based organizations such as Good Sheppard Services and New Settlement are an integral part of the school and provide services to increase attendance and to support students with the college process and Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT)

preparation. As a result of these initiatives the school's college readiness and curriculum alignment goals are supported.

- The principal has allocated time for teacher teams to meet daily in content area teams and once a week in grade level teams. Agendas reflect a focus on instructional work aligned with school goals, and lead- teachers have been identified who provide organization and support to all team members. Teams have established a three-day rotation where, day one, a teacher presents a lesson plan for review, day two teachers observe the teacher's class and day three teachers provide feedback. This work has resulted in strengthening teachers' ability to refine lessons based on peer feedback in order to improve instruction across content areas and promote student engagement.
- Across classrooms, teachers use a grading policy, common assessments, class exams, and rubrics that are aligned to the curriculum and result in adjustments to instruction. (2.2)
  - The staff has agreed on a school wide grading policy that incorporates seventy –five percent of the grade in academics. Teachers use curriculum aligned rubrics to assess students' work and develop in-class assessments to determine student progress. Feedback to students is clear and focused on next steps to improve their work. For example, a teacher wrote, "explain further why Capitalism is good? To push yourself, make your thesis controversial and make it specific". This culture of providing clear guidance and feedback is evident across the school resulting in student clarity on action needed to produce better outcomes.
  - The school provides students with interim assessments that are common across grades or content areas. For instance, the earth science interim assessment measures degree of mastery in the New York State standards, therefore teachers analyze these results and determine areas of weakness across the content area. Teachers then provide their reflection as to what steps they have taken based on the data to adjust curriculum. For example, an analysis of the science interim assessment showed that only 40% of students mastered landforms and 34.9% mastered topography maps. A teacher's reflection, as a result of this analysis, read, "I re-taught the topics of landforms and topography maps and density. I also changed my approach to teaching students as most of them had trouble comprehending the questions on the test". This reflective analysis of student data helps teachers to adjust curricula and instruction to better meet the needs of students.

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

- Strengthen teachers' pedagogical skills and practices in order to build a student-centered environment across all subjects that are aimed at increasing student engagement. (1.2)
  - The school community believes that "students learn best by doing". The school uses the Danielson teaching framework and selected the area of student engagement to focus on and guide teacher practice. However, this focus was inconsistent across classrooms. Most of the classrooms

visited were teacher-centered leading to limited student engagement. For example, in a class visited although the teacher said, “we are going to do pair practice,” the only voices heard throughout the visit were those of the teacher and the co-teacher. The lesson was teacher-centered and there was no evidence of students involved in pair practice or discussion. In another class with 14 students present, the teacher asked a student to read the learning target and then directed students to solve a problem. These practices leave students unable to engage in meaningful academic discussions with their peers.

- Across classrooms instructional strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points and adequate instructional modifications to meet the needs of all learners. For example: in a class where students were working on parabolas, English language learners were struggling with the work. There were no adjustments made to the lesson to address the needs of those students who did not understand how to solve the problems, and the paraprofessional in the room was ineffective in helping the students with the content. The observed lack of scaffolds and multiple entry points for students to engage in the work hinders their ability to learn and produce meaningful work. These practices were observed in some classrooms resulting in uneven levels of engagement for student sub-groups.
- Build consistency in the development of curriculum which incorporates tasks that lead to higher order thinking skills in order to meet the needs of all students across content areas and enhance college readiness. (1.1)
  - Teachers have aligned their curriculum to the Common Core Learning Standards and to the State Standards. However, there is inconsistency in the development of tasks that lead to high order thinking skills and student engagement in academic discourse. While the Advanced Placement curriculum incorporates tasks that challenge students cognitively, some of the general education curriculum does not provide all students with opportunities to participate in tasks that allow them to think critically and engage in academic discussion amongst peers. As a result, the planning for rigorous tasks at the school is inconsistent across the faculty, hindering the school’s capacity to close the achievement gap and cognitively engage all students.
- Strengthen the observation process to include effective goal oriented actionable feedback to teachers geared at supporting teacher professional growth resulting in stronger school-wide instructional practices (4.1)
  - School leaders have been using the Danielson Framework for Teaching for observations and were a part of the pilot program with the Department of Education. A review of observation reports indicates feedback to teachers highlighting areas of strength and areas for improvement; however, school leader feedback lacks clear actionable next steps for teachers to take, in order to improve teacher practice. For instance, for a teacher who needs improvement in managing student behavior, noted are the low inference notes indicating the lack of discipline, but the teacher is not provided with any support for professional development or guidance on what steps to take to improve behavior. Lack of actionable steps and

clear direction leaves teachers unable to implement suggestions or directives to help them improve their pedagogical skills.

- Teacher leaders have been identified to lead content and grade level teams, however, there is no process in place to provide them with professional development that will enhance their leadership skills as part of a succession plan for the school. School leaders observe classes regularly, yet observation data is not effectively used to create individual goals for teachers and to design professional development that meets the individual needs of all teachers. Consequently, the lack of observation data analysis prevents the school from setting data driven goals for teachers, and hinders the design of a professional development plan that is grounded in data and promotes professional growth.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Bronx Collegiate Academy	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		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>							
<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>