

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Bronx Leadership Academy II High School

X527

**730 Concourse Village West
Bronx
NY 10451**

Principal: Katherine Callaghan

Dates of review: February 11-12, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Elena Rovalino

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bronx Leadership II is a high school with 515 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 35% Black, 60% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 23% special education students. Boys account for 58% of the students enrolled and girls account for 42%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 84.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Leaders have a very effective structure in place to support the development of teachers with actionable feedback and next steps using the Danielson framework in order to improve pedagogical skills across the school. (4.1)
 - Teacher effectiveness is regularly reviewed and analyzed in order to make evaluative decisions using the Advance system and reviewing each teacher's "Measures of Teacher Practice Score Tracker" report in order to determine next levels of support. Administrators provide actionable feedback to teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching effectively capturing strengths and areas of improvement. The principal conducts a midyear review process, which helps to set professional goals for individual teachers which are aligned to the observation reports and supervisor's feedback. The review process focuses on joint reflection (teachers are asked to bring a written reflection on their work); looking at student data to identify key leverage points; plan next steps for teacher's professional growth; and for probationary teachers, a check-in on tenure process. Administrators strategically focus on teachers new to the profession, teachers new to the school, and struggling teachers for their first round of observations. A review of observation reports and goal setting documents revealed that a teacher scored "developing" in creating an environment of respect (2A), and establishing a culture for learning (2B). Based on the observations, the principal and teacher goals were set to improve one level in both of those areas. The teachers' professional development is aligned to her goals, for example, this teacher was directed to attend the New York City Academic Behaviors Pilot on Growth Mindset. As a result, at her last observation she scored "effective" in both of those areas. Teachers use team meetings to support the development of their peers through lesson analysis, feedback, and mentoring. School leaders further support teacher development through one-on-one weekly meetings, focused on a specific component of the Danielson Framework, which the teacher and principal have agreed to be an area of growth, and are aligned to the observations reports. This process offers clear expectations for teacher practice, and a review of observation reports demonstrate the impact on improved ratings for untenured teachers who originally scored "developing" in domain two of the Danielson Framework and are now "effective" in the same domain.
- The school fosters a supportive culture where students are known well by adults who help coordinate the development of a safe and nurturing environment in order to improve academic and personal achievement.(1.4)
 - The school has a strong pupil support team led by two assistant principals who coordinate the social and emotional development of students at the school. Deans, counselors, social workers, support staff, and assistant principals are part of this team and they attend grade level teams where counselors and deans participate in student discussions, Kid Talk, regarding student behaviors and academic progress. There is a dean assigned to each grade level, and conflict mediation is the vehicle used across the school as a preventive measure to reduce future incidents. Each student is programmed for a College Seminar class where they are

provided with college and career readiness workshops and juniors and seniors are supported through the college application process. The college counselor leads these seminars for grades ten through twelve, and ninth graders have the Principal who co-teaches this class as their instructor. Parents and students indicate that because of all the programs and structures in place at this school, each child is well known by staff members, "including the principal who knows every child by name". A collaboration with New York University provided teacher training on cultural education and teachers participated in Growth Mind Set training in order to address the appropriate development of their students. Consequently, the effective coordination of student services in addressing the social and emotional development of students has resulted in lower number of suspensions, from 93 per year to 58 last year and 37 currently; as well as increased attendance, from 81.4% to 87.7 so far this year.

- The principal uses resources efficiently to strengthen instructional programs and makes effective hiring decisions to support learning and improve instruction across content areas. (1.3)
 - Budget allocations are effectively made to provide classrooms with Smart-Boards, graphing calculators, and lab equipment. In addition, the principal hired instructional coaches and Blue Engine, which provides teacher assistants known as Blue Engine Teacher Assistants (BETA's to every mathematics and English class in ninth and tenth grade. There are between four and five BETAs assigned to every math class in grades ninth and tenth reducing the adult to student ratio to five students to one adult. Students interviewed rave about the BETA's in their classes and credit them for their accomplishments in math. A student said, "I love this school because they have BETAs in my classrooms who work with me one-on-one so that I can understand the math. I used to fail math before, now I get 90's that is because my BETA is able to explain math in a way I can understand". As a result, a review of mathematics Regents scores show a drastic improvement in Algebra Regents passing rates from 47% to 72% and Geometry Regents passing rates from 35% to 70%.
 - School leaders have aligned resources to support the school's academic program with teachers receiving extensive support through a social studies coach in addition to the administrators and support staff from the network. A college counselor was hired to support the college and career readiness for all students. Through collaboration with SUNY Oneonta, additional college level courses, such as astronomy, are offered in order to challenge students and offer them the opportunity to earn college credits. Pre –calculus and Honors English are precursors to more college level courses. Hiring committee which includes students and teachers assess and rate candidates that fit the educational needs of students. The student – teacher ratio in ninth and tenth grade classes support the learning opportunities of all students, including special education students. Two English as Second Language teachers support the needs of English language learners and track their progress through New York State English as a second language (NYSESLAT) assessments and in-class supports. As a result, the school is able to close the achievement gap and increase the college readiness rate from 8.9 % to 35.5% in the Progress Report.

- Teachers analyze multiple sources of data across content area classrooms and results are used to set students goals in order to improve student outcomes and meet the needs of all students. (2.2)
 - Teachers regularly analyze student data from a variety of sources, for example, teachers look at NYSESLAT data and chart out students in all grades who perform at beginning, intermediate and advance levels. Each student's goal is to move up one level within a semester, and scaffolds are provided with the support of two English as second language teachers who share this data at grade team meetings. Teachers, administrators, and network staff review and analyze curriculum aligned common assessments, such as Regents, mid-terms, and interim assessments in each subject in an effort to raise students' outcomes. For example, after reviewing skills analysis data in English, teachers adjust curriculum in order to re-teach missed concepts. English teachers use rubrics to assess writing and analyze results to set writing goals for students. For example, students' goals are specifically to improve topic sentences, connections, verb-tense agreement, and teachers track weekly progress of their students, which are shared at content level meetings. Interim assessments are analyzed and based on findings, students are provided with additional intensive reading classes or are scheduled to take the Wilson reading program to build their skills. As a result, teachers are able provide students with actionable feedback and set goals to meet the needs of all students including English language learners and students with disabilities.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen teachers' pedagogical skills and practices in order to increase student engagement and foster a student-centered environment across all subjects and grade levels. (1.2)
 - The school uses the Danielson Teaching Framework to assess and support teacher practice. The school believes that students learn best through engagement, rigor, and meta-cognition. Based on these beliefs, the school selected to focus on Danielson Framework for Teaching Components 2B, 3B, 3C, 3D, 1E and 1F of the Danielson's Framework, with a major focus on component 3B, student engagement and discussion. Although the administration has provided support on techniques such as turn-and-talk, think-pair-shares-, wait time, and discussion sentence starters, these practices were inconsistently used across classes observed. Many classrooms visited were teacher-centered leading to limited student engagement. For example, in an English-as-a-second-language class, students were writing a response to the do now question, "How do you know something is true?" Students were not given an opportunity to share their responses or engage in the lesson by entering into a discussion. There was a missed opportunity for students to practice speaking the language and trying out vocabulary words that would have enriched their skills. In one class where the guiding question was "Is it possible to create a rule or law that is beneficial to all people?" Students were eager to engage in discussion; however, the teacher's voice dominated the lesson, without an opportunity to open the classroom for discussion. Consequently,

students are left unchallenged and unengaged limiting their ability to reach higher academic levels.

- Build consistency in the development of curricula that engages students and supports the use of higher order thinking skills in order to challenge all students at all levels. (1.1)
 - Teachers meet during the summer to analyze the previous year's curriculum and revise units to ensure alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards. However, during the school year teachers infrequently review units of study in order to give feedback that could lead to more engaging and challenging lessons. A review of units of study revealed limited evidence of differentiation or extensions provided for the higher-level students. The development of rigorous tasks to strengthen critical thinking skills across all content areas is still at an emergent stage as administrators continue to provide weekly support to deepen understanding of the instructional shifts. The lack of curriculum refinement leads to students' limited access to curricula and tasks that are engaging and build higher order thinking skills, which are needed for college success.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Bronx Leadership Academy II 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 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				
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 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				
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 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					
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed