



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Bronx Collegiate Academy

High School X227

**240 East 172nd Street
Bronx
NY 10457**

Principal: Darryl White

**Date of review: May 4, 2015
Reviewer: Amanda Lurie**

The School Context

Bronx Collegiate Academy is a high school with 382 students from grade nine through grade twelve. The school population comprises 30% Black, 69% Hispanic, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 30% English language learners and 25% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 80.3%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
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	Additional Findings	Proficient
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	Focus	Developing
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	Additional Findings	Proficient
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Celebration	Well Developed
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school has established effective and targeted outreach around a set of high expectations that involves the support of families. Teacher and teams establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of expectations for all students.

Impact

A successful partnership with families supports student progress towards established expectations. Effective feedback and guidance/advisement supports ensure that students, including high needs subgroups, own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level

Supporting Evidence

- The school has a dedicated College and Career Readiness Team that has looked at data and created structures to promote equity and access for all students in the school. Through this work, the school has implemented an Advanced Placement program, with six dedicated Advanced Placement courses offered each school year, an honors program, and a College Now partnership with Hostos College. The school offers SAT prep courses to all students. The school has made it a priority to have a dedicated full time college counselor, and college trips include visits to in state and city public universities, as well as private, out-of-state four-year colleges. The school has built a strategic partnership with New Settlement, its community based organization, to provide dedicated college services, workshops and outreach, adding an additional layer of support to the college search and application process.
- Communication structures to both parents ensure that families have real time information around student progress, the college process, and attendance. The school uses Pupil Path, an online grading system, and provides training to parents on how to access information on their child's progress. Parents reported that teachers update pupil path daily, and that the school calls home on the same day of an absence or lateness. Parents also reported that in addition to Pupil Path, most teachers are in touch on a regular basis, through emails and phone call, to report on the progress of their child. In addition, parents reported that the school makes every effort to involve them in the college process. Parents are invited to attend college trips with their children, attend financial aid (FAFSA) workshops, and have regular appointments and access to the college counselor in the junior and senior year. As a result, parents are able to work as partners with the school in monitoring student progress, and the college process.
- Students report that they receive constant feedback from their teachers regarding their progress. Students reported that they have daily access to after school tutoring in all subjects, and that there are Saturday classes for tutoring and Regents prep. The school also has a peer-tutoring program, where seniors tutor freshman. As a result, students reported that they are aware of their progress from grade to grade, know what classes they need to be programmed for, in order to graduate, and are partners with their counselors in programming decisions. Students report that they feel empowered to seek help with their studies at an earlier juncture, because they can see their progress in real time.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Inconsistent teacher practice in pushing student thinking and engaging students with high level questioning leads to uneven engagement in appropriately challenging tasks and uneven demonstration of higher-order thinking skills in student discussions and work products, including the work of English language learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- While teachers are working to implement units and lessons with rigorous tasks, student engagement was uneven across classrooms. Teachers often asked level one Depth of Knowledge questions that elicited one word responses or a basic recall of information. For example, in English as a Second Language United States History class, the teacher conducted a front-of-the-room style lecture to students on the North Carolina election of 1898. When the teacher stopped to ask questions of the students, he asked low-level questions such as, “Do you want to government to tell you how to run your business?”, or “What do you call it when the government leaves a business alone?” In addition, the teacher did not take the opportunity to expand upon students answers or extend the discussion. In this class and other observed, there were limited opportunities for students to provide an extended response, demonstrate their thinking, or exchange ideas with one another.
- Across classrooms, the implementation of scaffolds and multiple entry points was uneven. In two English as a Second Language classrooms, there were limited scaffolds to foster independence. In one classroom, the teacher translated the entire text in Spanish for some students, rather than encouraging students to annotate and highlight challenging vocabulary. The teacher also translated her questions in Spanish, rather than providing students with strategies to decode and translate the questions independently. Non-Spanish speaking students did not receive translation supports, which contributed to the uneven levels of student engagement in the task.
- While some teachers worked to provide scaffolds for struggling students, opportunities for extensions and challenge questions for more advanced learners were not consistently seen throughout classrooms. As a result, there were uneven levels of student engagement throughout classrooms.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The school has developed lessons and units that are aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards, promote student engagement, and emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills across grades and subjects and for English language learners and student with disabilities.

Impact

Curricular decisions build instructional coherence and promote college and career readiness for all learner. Curricula and academic tasks consistently plan for rigorous tasks across grades and subjects and for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- In a majority of classrooms, unit plans and embedded tasks were common core aligned and promoted higher order thinking skills. English classes use the reading lists and units from Engage NY, with some modifications. In math, unit plans and lessons reflect an integration of the instructional shifts and common core learning standards that promote deep conceptual understanding and real world application. For example, in a 10th grade Geometry class, the lesson plan called for students to work on a two column proof. Students were expected to do a quick write listing all of the strategies and methods that they could try to complete the proof, followed by a share out with a partner. Students were expected to go back into their notes and defend their strategy to their peers.
- In English classes, all students, including special education students and English language learners, are expected to read high school and college level novels and literature. English teachers plan for scaffolds such as close reading, annotation, highlighting academic vocabulary, and highly structured graphic organizers to ensure that all students have access to the same challenging materials. For example, in a self-contained English class, the lesson plan called for students to read *Black Swan Green*. The teacher created a graphic organizer and expected students to cite evidence from the text, or use their annotation skills to help figure out the meaning of the text. The lesson plan also indicated that the teacher would conference with students who had greater challenges, to ensure that they were able to keep up.
- The school uses a lesson plan template that asks teachers to plan for four questions, “What do I want my students to learn today?”, “What am I asking my students to do, in order to learn today’s content and skills?”, “How have I ensured that the task is accessible to all students?”, “Throughout the class period, how will I know if my students have learned the content and skills?”. Teachers and the principal both report that the template and questions have promoted more coherent instruction, and have made them more purposeful in their planning for students with disabilities and English language learners.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Assessments, including common assessments and ongoing checks for understanding, are used strategically to drive instruction, make curricular adjustments, and push students to think critically.

Impact

Targeted assessment decisions that inform instruction and curricula have positively impacted student outcomes. Across classrooms, teachers' checks for understanding lead to effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school engages in four assessment cycles a year that strategically use data to look at skill gaps and assess student writing. Teachers must then formulate *20 Day Plans* to determine what needs to be retaught, what materials need to be modified, which skills were not mastered, and which students need greater support.
- There is a school-wide grading policy, and the development of department project, writing and speaking rubrics have promoted a continuity of expectations for teachers and students. Teachers report that unit and task alignment and cohesive instruction across grades and subject areas is a result of common rubric language and the use of common assessments.
- Checks for understanding during classroom instruction were seen across a majority of classrooms. Those checks included conferencing, exit tickets, and turn and talks. In many instances, teachers walked around with clipboards or notebooks and took conferencing notes. For example, in a Geometry class, the teacher conferenced with individual students as they were working in groups on triangle proofs. Similarly, in a grade 9 self-contained English class, the teacher was observed taking notes on a clip board regarding how well students were able to annotate text and cite specific evidence from the reading.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share. Distributive leadership is an embedded part of the structure of the school.

Impact

Teacher professional collaborations typically result in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students. Distributed leadership structures ensure that teachers play a role in shared instructional decision-making.

Supporting Evidence

- In the teacher team meeting observed, teachers planned for a lesson study. Teachers conducted a pre-conference before a planned observation of a lesson of a colleague. Using a protocol, the teachers were engaged in a rigorous process of asking questions of the teacher whom they were to observe. Questions posed asked about the choice of materials, modifications for particular students, questioning and context included in the lesson plan, and how the teacher would anticipate particular challenge. The conversations pushed teachers to drill down into the lesson and to look at both pedagogy and the individual needs of students.
- Teachers report that all teacher teams and professional development is teacher driven and teacher led. A teacher leads the professional development committee, and teachers are rotated in throughout various junctures of the year, depending on what is being covered, and what expertise is needed to support the professional development work. Teachers report that almost every teacher in the school leads, or has had an opportunity to lead a teacher team in the past.
- The principal reported that the model of his school is based on shared decision making, and that teachers play an active role and have ownership in the decisions and direction of the school. Teachers affirmed that the administration values their input, and has created many structures and opportunities for teacher voice. For example, teachers determined all topics for their professional development. Inter-visitations are teacher driven, and teachers report that inter-visitations are embedded into the culture of the school.