



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Bronx Health Sciences High School

High School X249

**750 Baychester Avenue
Bronx
NY 10475**

Principal: Miriam Rivas

**Date of review: March 19, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Jeremy Kabinoff, Ed.D.**

The School Context

Bronx Health Sciences is a High School with 363 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 53% Black, 34% Hispanic, 2% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 3% special education students. Boys account for 41% of the students enrolled and girls account for 59%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92%.

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	Additional Findings	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	Focus	Developing
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:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for instruction and create opportunities for professional learning and support. The school partners with families to support student progress towards college and career readiness.

Impact

The school's supportive structures to achieve high expectations result in a culture of mutual accountability for student progress and improved teacher practices.

Supporting Evidence

- The staff and parent handbook provides clear expectations for all. The handbooks highlight the school's code of conduct for students as well as inform students of what is required of them. The school's policy code of conduct provides clear guidelines for student responsibility for the academic year including grading policy, rules and procedures, assignments, curricula expectations and the college and career readiness process.
- Parents indicated that the school makes them feel like a family and staff always makes time to communicate with parents regarding student expectations and progress becoming college and career ready. Parents articulated that teachers know the developmental, academic and social-emotional aspects of the students they serve as well as the unique characteristics of each student. One parent voiced that the school has positively impacted her child and tailored the college search around her child's abilities.
- The school provides ongoing communication and feedback to parents using online tools such as the "EndGrade" online gradebook to enable parents and students access to essential academic and behavioral information. Parents shared that goals are established for their children and next steps for College Readiness are provided as well as invitation to school events such as College Night workshops keep them informed on a daily basis.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments and rubrics that are becoming aligned to the schools curricula and assessment policy. Teacher's classroom assessment practices reflect an inconsistent use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Assessments and rubrics provide limited feedback to students regarding achievement and next learning steps. The limited use of checks for understanding during instruction results in inconsistent adjustments to meet student-learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Bulletin boards, inside the classrooms, with student work rarely indicated the use or presence of a rubric to offer actionable feedback to students about their work across the majority of classrooms.
- Rubrics are used across subject areas including Spanish, Economics and Physics. Student work posted in classrooms and hallways demonstrated inconsistent levels in the amount of actionable feedback. For example, in the Economics classroom there were attached rubrics along with the task description but highlighted limited actionable feedback to students.
- While interviews with teachers and students indicated that the school uses on-going assessment strategies, teachers do not fully utilize checks for understanding to make immediate adjustments in daily lessons. For example, during classroom observations, there was little evidence to support teachers were making adjustments during the lesson rather than collecting student responses.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits across grades and subjects for all students.

Impact

The school's curricular purposeful decisions build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students. Academic tasks challenge student thinking and are accessible for a variety of learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The school further promotes college and career readiness by embedding the writing process and written problem solving explanations across all grades (9 through 12) and subject areas such as Health, English, Spanish, Global History, Chemistry and Physics.
- A review of written lesson plans across all content areas revealed that in-class summative tasks consistently emphasize higher order thinking skills such as evaluating a higher order thinking question and their use of evidence to defend their ideas, developing logical arguments, analyzing information from multiple sources, and applying concepts in real world situations. For example, in an Economics classroom, students were asked to respond to whether or not a consumer should be selfish and explain their answer based on evidence from previous research.
- All lesson plans reflected multiple entry points, such as tiered questions, purposeful grouping and higher order thinking while using the Understanding by Design Unit Template. For example, all lesson plans reflect the Universal by Design Unit Template in subject areas such as Health, English, Spanish, Global History, Chemistry and Physics.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The use of multiple entry points, scaffolds and questioning techniques and discussion across classrooms are emerging. Across classrooms, student work products demonstrate uneven levels of thinking and participation.

Impact

Across classrooms the use of questions and multiple entry points to afford all learners opportunities to show their thinking is uneven. Student work products were evident but demonstrated uneven levels of higher order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- Although some teachers use questioning techniques that engage students in higher level discussions resulting in meaningful student participation. The majority of teachers used the traditional method of teacher-directed lessons giving students minimal opportunity to engage in high level discussions based on the assigned tasks.
- While performance tasks and problem solving activities that require students to show evidence of their learning in their work products are included in teacher lesson plans, there is an uneven implementation of challenging instructional practices which leads to missed opportunities for students participating in cognitively engaging activities and discussions.
- Across classrooms student work products inconsistently reflected high levels of thinking. Some teachers afforded students opportunities to engage in conversations as evidenced by the economics class debating the concept of consumers being selfish and the English language arts class discussing irony from a Frederick Douglass excerpt.

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

Teachers are engaged in structured based professional teacher teams promoting teacher enhancements and best practices around the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teacher leadership roles are embedded into the teacher team inquiry process providing teachers and staff opportunities to turn key information from professional learning sessions.

Impact

Teachers participate in weekly inter-visitations sessions and analyze lesson plans resulting in improved teacher practice based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers participate in structured inquiry sessions built within the regular school day to look at student work and teacher pedagogy. For example, one inquiry team focused on exploring writing strategies of teachers across the curriculum to better enable their students in the college essay process. Teacher team reviewed student data from all subgroups and indicated that more professional development around teaching of writing was needed.
- A protocol is used during meetings following an order that begins with the topic for the action plan, tailoring the instruction, teaching strategies and next steps, modeling, and differentiation. The team begins with the positives in the teacher lesson, the area of need and then the action plan. The team consistently analyzes lessons and lesson plans and provides actionable next steps. For example, the teacher team was analyzing a lesson and lesson plan they had observed during an inter-visitation and stated that the incorporation of rubrics would have been essential to the lesson.
- Meetings with teacher teams revealed that they regularly meet during and after-school to build teacher pedagogy, schedule peer visits and make decisions about professional development and instruction. Teachers lead a school-wide instructional initiative to build coherence amongst elements from the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the Depth of Knowledge Wheel.