



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Bronx Academy of Health Careers

High School X290

**800 East Gun Hill Road
Bronx
NY 10462**

Principal: Dawn Santiago

**Date of review: April 29, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince**

The School Context

Bronx Academy of Health Careers is a High School with 465 students from grades nine through grade twelve. The school population comprises 51% Black, 45% Hispanic, 1% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 23% special education students. Boys account for 33% of the students enrolled and girls account for 67%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 88.0%.

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	Well Developed
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	Proficient
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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff and provide training resulting in a culture of mutual accountability for those expectations. The school partners with families to support student progress towards high expectations for college and career readiness.

Impact

All members of the school community clearly articulate the school's high expectations, and teachers and students are supported by a culture of mutual accountability for teaching and learning. The school offers ongoing and detailed feedback and guidance supports that prepare students for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- There is a belief within all constituencies that all students will achieve high levels of success in career and college readiness, and this creates an environment where high expectations are the norm. Teachers are guided and supervised by school leaders with extensive professional development opportunities for pedagogical and professional practice. Teachers receive actionable feedback on their use of Danielson Framework in the classes as well as giving students more responsibilities for their own learning. When asked, teachers described the high expectations and the support they and the students receive to achieve their high level goals as taking steps to share thinking and inquiry with their students and among their peers.
- Guidance support is provided for physical, social and emotional development as well as academics. On-going workshops for students and families on health careers and college options are conducted on a regular basis. Students, when asked about the diversity at the school, replied that they “all learn from each other, are respectful of each other, and appreciate and help each other.”
- Teachers establish a culture for learning that communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students and provide clear, focused and effective academic feedback, and guidance advisement supports. The students visit colleges, and seniors have the opportunity to attend SUNY Herkimer College for four days over the summer. College acceptances are celebrated by being posted outside the Guidance Office.
- Parents interviewed were enthusiastic about the time in the school and the consistent communication and nurturing environment that the teachers, guidance and, specifically, the principal, provide to the entire school community.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Teaching practices reflect a coherent set of beliefs informed by Danielson Framework and the instructional shifts. There is consistent use of multiple entry points and challenging tasks for all students in all grades.

Impact

Students are engaged in activities that require higher order thinking skills and discussion that reflect participation of all learners including English language learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal has focused on sharing a high standard for effective actions across classrooms, which gives all students the equipment, mentors, academics and work internships to succeed. The staff through extensive professional learning, multi-year planning and teacher team meetings using data to understand each student's next learning, has worked on crafting clear lesson objectives as well as on honing strategies to check on student understanding in relation to the lesson's learning targets. Most lesson templates reflect moving students into the center of their learning experience as opposed to a teacher-centered classroom. Rigor in the classroom has increased through the use of Danielson and Webb's DOK questioning and through training on using multiple entry-points. In the 11th grade US History class students were discussing, "Are politicians corrupted by outside influences?" Groups were given different sets of reading (articles) assignments, and all tasks related to their reading on the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era. Academic vocabulary sheets were distributed, and think/pair/share within the groups was encouraged, along with peer/self-assessment reflection sheets as check-in points. An exit ticket on summarizing the work and what was understood and what needed to be gone over was handed in at the end of the lesson. Rubrics were used on oral presentations.
- Teachers stated at the Team meetings that instruction has shifted from being predominately teacher-centered to increased collaborative learning opportunities for students. The student centered environment, and focus on the CCLS and Danielson have teachers developing lessons and units where students work in pairs or groups and are engaged in meaningful and thoughtful discussions as evidenced by many teacher lesson templates and class visits.
- There is the use of scaffolding to meet the learning needs of all students including subgroups. The consistent use of multiple entry points so that academic tasks challenge all learners was observed in many classrooms. There were extensions to push thinking and broaden the learning experience, and questioning and routines were in place in all classes visited. In the ninth grade Living Environment class, working on producing varied offspring from different categories, students were answering the question, "What is gene splicing and what role has genetic engineering played in science and medical technology?" Students were working in pairs and discussing selective breeding. There were multiple entry points in the way of different workbooks, graphic organizers, textbooks on desks and activity sheets. Teachers were pushing connections to the real world and connecting responses to every day experiences to encourage further inquiry.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and faculty engage in a rigorous process of curriculum development aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and revised to ensure access to curricula and cognitive engagement for all students.

Impact

Career and college readiness is promoted for all students and English language learners, and students with disabilities have access to curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- As evidenced in documents and in discussion with the principal, all unit plans, in all subject areas, across all classrooms are aligned to CCLS and include tasks focused on skills aligned to the school's instructional focus of evidence in argument, student to student discussion, and collaborative learning. All content area curricula documents highlight the strategic integration of the instructional shifts, academic language and knowledge in the discipline. English and social studies units evidenced a focus on text based conversations and writing from sources. In a grade eleven English Language Arts class students were asked the essential question: "How do you cite evidence to support your thesis in writing?"
- Teachers at both meetings stated that "sharing the school's instructional goals, constantly revising and adjusting the curriculum for more rigor has increased their depth of learning for what students need." Professional learning experiences include two New Visions Instructional Specialists working with departments on CCLS alignment and instructional shifts. The focus is to ensure across all grades, rigorous tasks and multiple access points for all students.
- There is a wide range of electives reflecting the school's emphasis on health careers that supply links with outside entities to enrich the curriculum such as CUNY At Home College courses and a connection to Montefiore School Health Clinic. In addition, there is a peer mediation program where students are trained and certified by the NYC Commission of Human Rights to resolve conflicts.
- The school is using Google classroom and other software and online resources to make content accessible to all students. ELL students are involved in 'Inside Broadway' to increase their listening and language skills. The Science Club students are exposed to meeting science professionals along with gardening within the school. Students in health classes participate in programs with the FDNY and Fordham University's Adolescent Sleep Study Program, which expose them to different areas of careers, college growth and potential resources. Internship opportunities are offered through Upward Bound, Green Jobs for Youth, Summer Youth, NYC and Albert Einstein School of Medicine Enrichment Program.
- A review of professional development agendas showed that each department team participated in a half-day retreat to refine protocols for assessing curriculum units and alignment to intended instructional outcomes. Teachers gave one another feedback to improve using the curriculum in planning engagement for all students in lesson planning.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Assessments, including common assessments and ongoing checks for understanding are aligned to the school's curricula and used strategically to drive instruction, make adjustment and push students to think critically.

Impact

Teachers assess student learning effectively leading to targeted interventions, varied scaffolds and shared instructional planning to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers use common ELA and math assessments from the core curriculum. Working in teams, teachers are improving assessments and aligning them to the CCLS as reflected in the curriculum units. Staff and administration meet to analyze data and develop a good understanding of the performance and progress of students. Teachers use formative and summative assessment to gather information concerning students' learning needs to inform practices. Teachers are using content specific baselines, pre-course/unit baseline assessments and mock Regents exams to tailor their instruction to the needs of students.
- A key assessment that informed the instructional practices in the school was the MoSL ELA Performance Task. Upon analysis of student work products with the department team, it was determined that students needed support in citing evidence with detail. This information was shared with the entire staff during a professional development meeting and became a school-wide focus.
- All curriculum aligned assessment practices and grading policies provide actionable feedback to students and parents. In addition, all teachers receive immediate feedback after observations and informal walkthroughs.
- Every lesson has embedded checks for understanding as shown in lesson plans. Professional development has supported teachers in using data to plan integrated approaches to the curriculum which engage students in their learning. On-going checks during lessons in several classrooms visited included DOK levels of questioning, rubrics, exit-slips and check lists. Students engage in self- and peer-assessment through the use of rubrics for both group and independent tasks. As seen on student work and in portfolios, rubrics are attached to all work with actionable feedback, and students are aware of how they need to improve.
- Student tasks are available on Skedula, an online grading system where students and their parents have access to monitor progress.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Distributive leadership structures are embedded so that there is effective teacher leadership. A shared vision has led to teacher teamwork which is data driven, inquiry based and targeted to improvement of teacher practice and student mastery of goals.

Impact

Teacher pedagogy and student outcomes are strengthened through effective teacher leadership, and teachers have a key role in the decision-making process resulting in a collaborative professional learning community.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's professional development learning plan has been tailored to support team level work and to provide space and time for teachers to work on a deeper level with the support of an administrator. Teachers share unit plans in department team meetings and give feedback to one another on lessons using the structured Tuning Protocol allowing for reflection about a project, a text, a performance or any work in progress. All decisions on unit revision and lesson planning are based on examination of data by teams. This includes the discussion of placement of students in classes, of teacher assignments, and of the design of after school and/or Saturday Academy sessions.
- The teacher teams observed and questioned were focused on the monitoring of students' progress and evaluating student work. Teachers participate in grade level teams and department teams to review and give feedback on student work, to share ways to give feedback to students on their work, and to share steps needed to be successful in the classroom engaging all learners. The New Visions Student Sorter is used as a tool to regularly monitor student progress, examine data to inform further programming modifications and plan towards graduation.
- There is shared leadership that focuses on improved student outcomes. Teachers are expected to facilitate weekly meetings, maintain agendas and minutes, and follow up on next steps. Team leaders regularly meet with administrators to discuss progress towards school goals and for supports and resources needed. There is a schedule of inter-visitations set up by the teachers, with feedback sessions. Off-site PD is available with the responsibility of turn-keying to the entire staff. The work of the teacher teams is communicated to all staff via meetings, emails, memos and the school newsletter.