



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Bronx Collaborative High School

10X351

**100 Mosholu Parkway
Bronx
NY 10468**

Principal: Brett Schneider

**Date of review: November 24, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Elaine Lindsey**

The School Context

Bronx Collaborative is a high school with 220 students in grades 9-10. The school population comprises 30% Black, 62% Hispanic, 5% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 1% special education students. Boys account for 58% of the students enrolled and girls account for 42%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 85.5%.

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	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	Proficient
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

High expectations are consistently messaged to students and parents through student scheduling and course offerings with support from school leadership to achieve those expectations and ensure all learners progress towards goals.

Impact

Structures that support the school's high expectations provide staff, parents and students with a clear path towards college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's steering committee has developed formal relationships with Lehman College's College Now and College Preview programs to allow 10th graders to begin on-site visits and to participate in college visits that include college classroom experiences.
- The school's faculty programming team intentionally developed ninety minute A-B schedules to mimic collegiate Monday/Wednesday and Tuesday/Thursday schedules to prepare students for lengthy classes that meet on alternate days. Students are able to register for electives from a menu of course offerings that are approved by their advisor.
- Parents participate in workshops on talking to teens about their grades, quarterly community family learning and special event sessions that include support groups for single parents and parents of children with special needs and one-on-one training to support them in tracking student progress using Skedula/Pupil Path. Additionally, Parental involvement has increased to 40%.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Pedagogical practices inconsistently provide multiple entry points and effective instructional supports and questioning and discussion techniques to engage all learners in rigorous tasks and high-level discussions that foster high levels of thinking and participation.

Impact

Across classrooms, teaching strategies do not consistently provide multiple entry points into curriculum, limiting opportunities for all learners to be engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and higher order discussions that reflect high levels of thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- During a chemistry lesson students were directed to work in groups to discuss a task that required students to fill in the chart. However, lacking built-in supports and guidelines, students completed the chart without engaging in discussion.
- In a geometry class students were given a problem to solve in their group. Although some students discussed the problems in their groups during the presentations, only five students out of 14 participated. Questions and discussions at this point were teacher-directed with little opportunity for students to engage in student to student dialogue or otherwise participate.
- Across classrooms visited, the lessons were generally teacher-centered, with dialogue typically being teacher-student-teacher. Students did not consistently engage in rich discussion and students were not consistently observed generating their own questions or responding directly to their peers. For example, in a food chemistry class students worked in groups and actively discussed observations of bacteria samples taken from various objects and rooms around the school. However, in a Socratic seminar class observed, students watched a video to observe circle practices. During moments when the video was stopped and students were instructed to write the roles they noticed and then turn and talk with their partner, students merely swapped papers and did not engage in discussion.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

All curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and instructional shifts and refined according to student data to ensure engaging and rigorous tasks are accessible for all learners across grades and disciplines.

Impact

The school's curricula decisions ensure coherence across disciplines and grade levels, and consistently provide access to rigorous tasks that push student thinking and promote college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricula have been refined to include more rigorous half-year versions that now serve as 9th grade introduction courses. These courses utilize 3rd and 4th level depth of knowledge activities that incorporate inference and synthesis of original materials as evident in the 9th grade English curriculum around fairy tale fracturing using critical analytic comparative literature lenses.
- As a Consortium school, curricula have been developed to support a comprehensive four-year approach to developing college and career readiness. A review of a science lesson plan revealed tasks that involved students making predictions, conducting action research and using textual evidence to support.
- Teacher unit plans and curriculum maps provide evidence of the school's development of rigorous academic tasks through adaptation of instructional materials from New York Performance Standards Consortium and alignment to Performance Base Assessment Tests (PBATs). For example, science teachers worked together to refine units to include clearer problem statements and tasks that challenge students to write and make predictions concerning scientific experiments using varied pieces of scientific literature to support interpretations. Additional supports for English language learners and students with disabilities included graphic organizers and step by step scaffolds.

Findings

The school's use of common rubrics and classroom checks for understanding to track student progress and make adjustments to meet students learning needs is not yet consistent across grades and content areas.

Impact

The school's systems to monitor progress and provide feedback through data analysis as well as during instruction are not yet consistently used to guide adjustments in units and lessons to meet the learning needs of all students, limiting improved student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- The school utilizes common rubrics to determine progress towards goals across grades and subjects. However, feedback to students does not offer a clear portrait of student mastery. A review of feedback on student work merely highlights the specific grade without next steps. For example, feedback on one essay stated that the student needed to further develop the thesis statement, without giving more guidelines or next steps. Additionally, during a meeting with students, students stated that the feedback they receive is general and that if they want further assistance they ask the teacher.
- A review of teacher lesson plans indicates inconsistent use of formative assessments that lead to adjustments such as re-teaching topics. Some plans include exit slips or reflections to ascertain student understanding while others do not clearly outline how students understanding will be assessed throughout the lesson.
- Across classrooms teachers' checks for understanding and assessments varied. For example, in an English language arts class the teacher asked the class a challenge question in order to check for understanding, however did not allow for responses from multiple students, limiting an accurate picture of student understanding. In remaining classes observed, teachers conducted whole class or on the spot checks without follow-up questions to check for understanding or adjustments to meet the needs of all learners.

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

Teachers consistently engage in structured inquiry based collaborations to examine student data and work products. Leadership structures provide means for teachers to have input in key decisions about curricula and teaching practices.

Impact

The work of teacher teams is strengthening teachers' instructional capacity, and distributed leadership structures build capacity leading to improved student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers participate in weekly structured professional collaborations. Vertical and horizontal teams meet to review curricula, student data and work products to strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers and align teacher practice to the school's goals and instructional shifts. During an observation of a teacher team meeting teachers brought in sample work of students' first cycle projects. Protocols were used to analyze strengths and obstacles in addition to recommending instructional strategies to support student achievement. Strategies are shared across disciplines. Strategies suggested during the team meeting included developing a more comprehensive worksheet, pairing, and utilizing post-its to support students with responding to questions. Also, a review of student data led to implementing prerequisite courses. As a result, lessons across grades and disciplines now include an opening to engage students and summative piece that allows student to regroup.
- Teacher teams review student work to make instructional decisions and share ideas to adjust teaching practice. For example, a review of student work and data from an English assignment showed ineffective and unclear use of checks for understanding and scaffolding. As a result adjustments were made to include effective scaffolding documents, prompts and supports for students to ensure all learners are engaged in collaborative thinking.
- Department coordinators and Steering Teachers teams meet weekly with administration and instructional cabinet to discuss curriculum, teacher practice and professional development allowing high levels of consensus on aspects of school curriculum and operations. As a new school teachers felt that it was important to create a team that would help teachers uphold the school's vision of high expectations. Hence, teachers were instrumental in creating the two structures for teacher support. Department coordinators are intentionally comprised of veteran teachers to work with new teachers and the Administrative Steering Team allows teachers to have higher levels of consensus. As a result of teacher teams, adjustments were made in course offerings and student schedules were restructured to include 90 minute block courses.