



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2014-2015**

**Bronx Community High School**

**High School 08X377**

**1980 Lafayette Avenue  
Bronx, New York 10473**

**Principal: Flora Greenaway**

**Date of Review: December 12, 2014  
Lead Reviewer: LaShawn Robinson**

## The School Context

Bronx Community High School is a transfer high school with 160 students from grades 9 through 12. The school population comprises 42% Black, 53% Hispanic, 3% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 57.7%.

## School Quality Criteria

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

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

School leaders and staff intentionally ensure curricula alignment to the CCLS and instructional shifts to engage a diversity of learners in critical thinking, argumentative writing and the use of textual evidence to support claims.

### Impact

Curricula and lessons are planned to develop students' higher order skills and promote college and career readiness for all students, including subgroups.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school utilizes EngageNY materials for ELA and Math curriculum; NYSED/New Visions curricula in Social Studies and Science. The curricula selected afford opportunities for scholars to engage in argumentative writing, cite textual evidence, and apply their learning to real world problems, which aligns with the school instructional expectations. In ELA, teachers increased text complexity by introducing rigorous non-fiction text to the curricula; in math, curriculum is focused on modeling; and in social studies, students are engaged in argumentative writing and evaluating multiple perspectives. These approaches align with the expectations of the Common Core, including the instructional shifts, and provide students the opportunity to engage in paired and class discussions, and allow them to develop ideas and opinions grounded in evidence, thus affording students the opportunity to progress towards content mastery.
- Teachers utilize a school-wide lesson plan template, based upon the Workshop Model, which is the foundation for coherence in planning across the school community. The school strategically uses the TRI-State Rubric and Webbs Depth of Knowledge to ensure rigor and alignment to Common Core Standards and to guide curriculum revisions so that curricular materials are accessible and appropriately challenge all learners. In addition, the school utilizes the results of standardized assessments and benchmark assessments to inform curriculum and lesson development. This way, curricula embed differentiated access points for student engagement and give all students appropriate entry to target specific skill development. For example, during teacher team meetings and through the analysis of student work products and assessments, it was noted that students struggled with multi-tier questions and with writing claims and counter claims. As a result, the school shifted its practice to include more argumentative writing in classes. Additionally, as a result of looking at student work products, courses were tiered to support all learners: Tier-1 courses are introductory courses; tier 2 courses are pre-Regents, and tier 3 courses are post Regents/pre-college. These strategies ensure that all students are cognitively engaged and are challenged to think at high levels.
- Content teams meet once a week to create and revise curriculum to meet the needs of all learners. Classroom supports are provided for ELLs and SWD ranging from modified reading materials, dictionaries, and student grouping to provide opportunities for all learners to demonstrate their thinking and articulate their understanding.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

The school utilizes varied assessment practices to determine students' learning needs. However, these practices are not yet fully aligned to summative assessments.

### Impact

Although the school has effective practices in collecting and analyzing data from students, the lack of alignment between baseline assessments, benchmark assessments and Mock Regents exams result in missed opportunities for more effective instructional adjustments and hinders student growth on summative assessments.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers track progress and data outcomes to inform instructional choices and support curriculum development. The principal emphasized that teachers begin the course with a baseline assessment. Benchmark assessments and mock regents are administered throughout the term to determine student progress and assess needs in preparation for Regents exams. During the teacher meeting, teachers described that they track progress in different ways. For example, the math teacher explained that they use the baseline and then compare student growth over time. In addition, teachers use the results of baseline assessments to group students and to create learning targets. Teachers explained that they are developing new practices to move their work and improve student outcomes on summative assessment. For example, they are working to make sure that grading and rubrics clearly depict student mastery towards core standards which will provide them with an opportunity to make predictions for end of the year outcomes.
- Teachers consistently use formative assessments throughout lessons to gauge student learning. Across classrooms, there are checks for understanding, conferencing with students, and rubrics are utilized to assess student work. Students engage in "turn and talks," pair/share activities, and provide exit tickets to demonstrate their learning. For instance, in social studies, students were discussing industrialization, for their exit ticket, students were given the task: "Was Ida Tarbell's assessment of Rockefeller justified or was she just holding a grudge?" Students were required to draw evidence from a graphic organizer completed in class to support their view point and were expected to be ready to share out. Additionally, during two classroom observations, teachers were taking notes during student discussions while conferencing with students as a way of tracking their understanding. Teachers articulated that their exit slips and ongoing checks for understanding provide data that is used to develop class groupings and allow them to make appropriate instructional adjustments so that all learners can have appropriate entry points into their lessons.
- Teachers use rubrics across content areas that contain a common language so students are aware of expectations. For instance, many teachers use the Thesis Evidence Analysis Rubric (TEA). Additionally, the school completes bimonthly benchmarks so student work folders contain a module/benchmark requirement checklist, which includes their attendance, points earned for classwork, personal growth/behavior, performance tasks, homework, test and quizzes. While these practices are used across classrooms, they do not result in sustained improvements in student achievement on summative assessments due to the lack of alignment.

## Additional Findings

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

The school's instructional practices reflect the school's beliefs that students learn best when provided with multiple entry points, given opportunities to engage with text, and expected to support their written and oral arguments with text-based evidence.

### Impact

Coherent instructional practices at the school result in high levels of student engagement and provide an opportunity for all learners to engage in the instructional tasks, thus supporting college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- A strong collaboration between teachers results in instructional coherence across the school that is evident through consistency in instructional practices across content areas. An instructional focus that addresses literacy across the content area permeates throughout classrooms. The workshop model was evident in all of the classrooms visited, thus providing opportunities for teacher modeling before students were expected to work collaboratively or engage independently in cognitively demanding tasks. Most teachers prepare lessons that target student needs and strengths and employ differentiated strategies that address a wide range of student performance levels and ability. Targeted scaffolds, including multiple entry points as well as extensions to promote meaningful discourse were observed during classroom visits. In addition, across all classrooms, teachers arrange materials and resources to support the over-age, under-credited student, which address the specific needs of the student population.
- The principal shared that in order to develop coherent practices that support rigorous tasks and student engagement, the school emphasizes that all teachers plan using the workshop model, engage students in focused discussions, and develop essential questions that spark student curiosity and interest. Additionally, teachers are expected to refine their questions using Webb's Depth of Knowledge. Instructional practices that support the school's inherent philosophy about student learning were observed across classroom visited. Evidence based writing and discussion, as well as annotation, were evident in 6 out of 7 classrooms. In addition, level 3 and 4 questions of Webb's Depth of Knowledge can be heard throughout classrooms or included as part of posted essential questions. For example, the essential question for the history unit is "Was industrialization in the early 1900's worth the social price? Essential questions and other questions posted by the teachers were used to engage students in the learning and to promote higher order thinking.
- Students communicate that teachers are constantly pushing them. A student explained, "You have to do a lot of annotation and complete research papers. This school is really serious with argumentative essay, you have to do a minimum of three argumentative essays." During class visits, scholars were observed preparing for argumentative essays. Additionally, students described, "You have multiple benchmarks so it is easy for us to see how we are doing. We have a benchmark every two weeks and five benchmarks in each cycle."

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

The school leader communicates high expectation for teachers, students, and families through frequent observations and by providing targeted support for teachers and students, as well as, family outreach.

### Impact

The school leader's expectations support a positive school culture and contribute to strong partnerships between teachers and families in order to prepare students for college and career.

### Supporting Evidence

- Expectations of a college-going culture are communicated to students by teachers and reinforced through the College for Every Student (CFES) components. This program engages students in three core practices. Mentoring is provided for all students with an experienced individual that serve as a role model. Pathways to College Partners provide opportunities for students to visit college campuses and gain exposure to the admission process. CFES offers a leadership component for students to enhance their leadership abilities. In addition, the school developed a College Now partnership with Hostos Community College and CUNY Service Corps. While meeting with parents, they express that the school is going above and beyond to support students with improving academically and making college a viable option for all students.
- The principal uses professional development sessions and the team structure to communicate expectations. This allows the school leader to model for teachers and present what she expects to see across classrooms. In addition, teacher leaders across departments and the House structure, mostly senior teachers, work closely with other staff members to ensure that the instructional expectations are implemented across the school community. Teacher leaders are currently developing a school wide schedule of inter-visitation so they can assess the coherence of instructional strategies across the school. The principal described that expectations for teaching and learning are also coupled with supports. The principal aligns the observation cycles to cycles of coaching so teachers receive targeted support to meet expectations. When the school leaders observe teaching patterns that require additional support and/or interventions, coaches are assigned to work with teachers, and progress is carefully tracked and monitored. During the teacher team meeting, teachers clearly articulated what the principal expects to observe in classrooms during a visit: Student-to-student discussion, student work time, the workshop model, higher order questions, multiple entry points (5 access points), and opportunities for peer feedback.
- Teachers develop student learning plans to support student growth and target areas for improvement. Student achievement plans clearly outline students' progress towards graduation. This way, students and families become knowledgeable of the steps they need to take to meet graduation expectations and prepare for post-secondary success. Students stated that teachers motivate them. A student explained, "The work is hard, but teachers make it easier."

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

Teachers work collaboratively to analyze student work, align instructional practices, develop coherence across content areas, share best practices, and support the school’s priorities.

**Impact**

The work of the teacher team is helping to increase instructional capacity. In addition, teacher teams are targeting the improvement of student achievement.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The principal prioritizes professional collaborations and teachers are provided the opportunity to meet twice a week to look at student work, discuss data, and develop and revise curriculum based on common expectations. The school has a variety of teacher teams that were created to support the school’s goals and priorities. Each team has a specific focus that is connected to the school goals, such as improving attendance, identifying instructional gaps, increasing the number of students graduating college and career ready, and helping to foster a safe and respectful school environment. The House team is focused on providing students with an opportunity to succeed by giving them a safe space for academic intervention, social development, and by tracking student academic progress and attendance. The department teams are focused on collaborative planning sessions and curriculum refinement so that instructional tasks are aligned to CCLS and meet student needs. The “looking at student work” team is focused on developing student proficiency in core academic areas and monitoring student readiness level for college and career.
- Teachers described that there are multiple opportunities for them to work together in subject teams and across disciplines and that this allows them an opportunity to learn from each other and identify strategies that support student learning and performance. Each school team has a designated teacher leader that assists with setting clear agendas and help to keep the team focused. The principal described that the work of teacher teams is improving instructional practices and helping to develop instructional coherence in the school as evidenced by the literacy focus and multiple entry points observed during classroom visits.
- The teacher team leaders also conduct visitations with other schools to make sure team progress is shared with school leadership and other teachers. Teacher leaders learn about the practice of other teams and bring back the information to their own team. The work of teacher teams has resulted in improved teacher practice as indicated on teacher observation reports.