



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Bronx Haven

High School X381

**333 E 151St Street
Bronx
NY 10451**

Principal: Lucinda Mendez

**Date of review: March 30, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Elena Rovalino**

The School Context

Bronx Haven is a high school with 173 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 30% Black, 65% Hispanic, 1% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 63.0%.

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	Developing
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	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

The school community consistently communicates high expectations to students and a culture for learning has been established to support student progress.

Impact

Struggling students and their families understand their progress toward graduation and intentional supports prepare students for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- Each student at this Transfer high school is assigned an advisor from the school's community based organization partner, East Side House Settlement, at intake. The advisor remains with that student until graduation and engages students in one-on-one goal setting and graduation planning, as well as attendance outreach that includes wake up calls and home visits. Students indicate that the advisors as well as the teachers have high expectations for them, have raised their self-esteem, and have helped them academically and emotionally to get ready to attend college. For example, students shared that having failed constantly at their previous schools they lacked confidence but that advisors and counselors have helped them to feel better about themselves so they know that they can succeed in college and are also able to do better academically because of it. The staff has established a culture for learning. Within this culture of support, students are re-connecting to their academic development as evidenced in the increased graduation rate from 7.9% in 2013 to 20.4% in 2014.
- Parents shared that advisors and teachers communicate with them regularly regarding their child's progress towards set expectations. Although there is no functioning School Leadership Team or Parent Association in place, parents receive information through report cards, letters home, and phone calls. They receive phone calls not only when students are struggling but also when they are doing well. In addition, teachers provide parents with ongoing feedback sharing the results of the benchmark assessments that are given every three weeks. A parent said that the staff at this school have encouraged her daughter to go to college and have spoken to her about majors she can take, which had not happened at other schools her child attended. She also indicated that the school has supported her child with college applications, seeking financial aid, and arranging college visits. Another parent said, "They expect my child to go to college here, before coming to this school she was not interested in going to college, now she has applied to five colleges."
- A full time college counselor supports students with the college application process, helps parents with the financial aid process, and teaches students organizational skills and time management skills in order for students to meet deadlines. Students are prepared for careers through the Learning to Work (LTW) Internship Program. On monthly basis students participate in an academic and career exploration curriculum day and LTW seminars, which include career events, trips, guest speakers, and learning interview techniques and resume writing. The college and career advisor supports students with resume writing, personal statements, the admission process, and financial aid applications.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide opportunities for student engagement and demonstration of higher order thinking skills.

Impact

Lack of consistent entry points to provide students access to curricula across classrooms leads to students' uneven engagement in meaningful discussions reflecting higher order thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- In a living environment class, the lesson plan indicated that the unit was on ecology and the objective for the day read: "Students will be able to describe how organisms interact in an ecosystem in order to explain how energy flows throughout the ecosystem." The teacher read aloud the article, *Is Sperm like any other Commodity?*, regarding sperm banks and product liability. This reading had no connection to the objective of the lesson or to the topic of ecology. Students were then directed to write two important events and two details not important on a sticky note. Students were asked to work individually, however, most of the students did not write anything down. Students were then asked to pair and share, but most of them had nothing to share. The teacher did not question students to further assist them nor were they given any additional guidance for them to have an entry point into the lesson. The teacher did not summarize the lesson and students did not have an opportunity to share out.
- In a global history class, the lesson plan indicated the lesson objective: "Students will be able to identify and define the following terms: Eastern Roman Empire, Orthodox Christianity, Byzantine influence on Russia. The enduring understandings listed: the fall of an empire leads to a struggle for power and arable land; the clash of religions affects empires; religion plays a role in conflict, crisis and cooperation; and innovations in law, art, government and architecture lay the foundations for the modern world. Students were given two articles, primary and secondary sources on Justinian and Theodora, and given the task to list five facts and personality traits of the two ancient leaders. The task did not align with the lesson objective nor were students able to demonstrate any of the enduring understandings planned for this lesson. There was a lack of scaffolding and questioning to engage students in meaningful discussions that led to high order thinking skills.
- In contrast, in an algebra class, the learning objective was, "Students will be able to translate verbal phrases onto algebraic expressions/equations and algebraic expressions into verbal phrases." Students worked individually and in pairs on the assigned task of translating verbal statements into equations as the teacher walked around providing support to students. The teacher checked for understanding as he went from student to student and then modeled a specific problem, which he saw students were having problem translating into an equation. He also engaged students in demonstrating how they solved the problem and had students demonstrate on the board. The teacher said that he welcomes everyone's participation, including students who have learned how to divide in a different way in their countries of origin. All students were able to share their responses, were challenged with different levels of difficulty, and met their learning objective for the lesson while as one student explained, "The problems got harder."

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Units of study reflect planning to provide access to students; however, rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills are inconsistent across classrooms. Curriculum alignment to the Common Core is emerging.

Impact

The inconsistency in planning lessons that are aligned to the Common Core leaves students unable to reach specific learning standards.

Supporting Evidence

- Most teachers use the Understanding by Design format in planning their units and include evidence of the instructional shifts. For example an English language arts (ELA) unit examining honor in *Of Mice and Men* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the teacher listed texts of increasing complexity, provided a list of academic vocabulary to be taught within the unit, and laid out a balance of writing including evidence based writing and argumentative writing. Teachers are supported in their planning of curriculum through the Transfer school Common Core Institute, the New Visions Learning Design Collaborative, and through an in-house coach. Units of study reflect alignment to the Common Core; however, most lesson plans show no evidence of content or Common Core standards.
- Lesson plans are created using the Understanding by Design templates. However, inconsistency in alignment of all subjects to Common Core prevents teachers from accurately assessing students' progress toward meeting all performance standards. For example, in classrooms visited, lesson plans in Unites States history, global history, and living environment did not include any Common Core standards or New York State content standards to support the learning. However, lesson plans in English language arts, geometry, and algebra include Common Core standards that are grade and content aligned.
- Curricula reflects planning for inclusion of multiple entry points to allow access to the curriculum for all students, including students with disabilities, who comprise 20% of the school's population. For example, an ELA unit included entries of learning styles survey, sentence starters, outlines, guided note taking, picture prompts, and videos noted in the multiple entry points section of the lesson plan. While unit plan templates include notation of multiple entry points, observed visits to class evidenced that these were not consistently applied.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school has a uniform grading policy that aligns to the school's curriculum. Teachers use common assessments and rubrics to determine progress towards goals.

Impact

Students receive on-going actionable feedback on their benchmarks assessments every three weeks. The review of Regents data supports curriculum adjustments.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's uniform grading policy, which consists of academic behavior 15%, participation 25%, demonstration of learning 25%, demonstration of mastery 35%, is displayed throughout the school giving students clear expectations on how they are graded. Benchmark assessments are administered every three weeks and are used to assess student progress in every content area. Teachers analyze these common assessments and determine in which skills students need additional support. For example, teachers determined that based on the last assessment, students still need to learn how to identify important evidence that would help them to support their claim. Teachers then worked on re-designing lessons that would support students improve their skills.
- Regents results and item analysis are reviewed regularly and are used to program students in the appropriate class in order for them to re-take Regents exams they have failed in their previous schools. These common assessments are also used to target individual supports to students, such as tutoring on writing an argumentative essay, and curriculum is adjusted to meet their needs. Students are assessed at in-take the moment they arrive through baselines, and then through benchmarks, and final assessments at the end of each cycle. Students said that they always know how they are doing in their classes because the benchmark exams are given regularly and progress reports are issued.
- The use of rubrics is a common practice in this school. Teachers assess student work using a uniform writing rubric, which assesses claim, evidence, reasoning, task requirements, organization of writing, timeliness, and content.

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

Teachers’ engagement in inquiry teams is building their capacity for analyzing student work and assessment data affecting instructional improvements that are furthering student learning.

Impact

Structured professional collaborations lead to increased student achievement and attainment of school goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet to analyze student work in order to improve student outcomes. For example, teachers met to go over essays students wrote in their earth science class for the prompt, “Why have humans been able to sustain exponential growth despite being over our carrying capacity?” The student work focused on writing a claim and supporting it with evidence. Teachers followed the Looking at Student Work Protocol and scored essays using a rubric. Teachers then responded to, “What is the student able to do? What is the student struggling with?” Then teachers provided feedback on patterns observed in the student work, and instructional changes they can make to improve student learning. The school’s focus on reading across the content areas has helped to increase Regents results. English Language Arts Regents data shows an increase from June 2013 to June 2015 from 65% passing to 95% passing.
- The school has several teams including two Transfer school Common Core institute teams, which provide feedback on a specific skill, monitor skill attainment and adjust instruction as they review student work at the team meetings. Teachers provide actionable feedback to students, based on their assessment analysis using tools such as the rubric they created titled, Essential Question Writing Rubric”. A school coach leads an integrated algebra team focusing on curricula alignment to Common Core. In addition, an advisory team focuses on attendance, identity, intake, scheduling, and outreach planning. These structures support the school’s goal to increase attendance and to engage all teachers in the implementation of school wide feedback systems and structures.
- The hiring of coaches through reDesign, to work individually with teachers in the implementation of the Common Core and the instructional shifts has supported teacher development. For example, teachers are learning how to analyze student work and how to use assessment data to impact instruction. Since coaches lead most teams, they are also able to provide coaching and professional development at the team level. These practices have helped to improve teachers’ skills to positively impact the delivery of instruction and have built capacity from coaches to teachers allowing teachers to have more ownership of student learning across the school.