



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Bronx Guild

High School X452

**1980 Lafayette Avenue
Bronx
NY 10473**

Principal: Sam Decker

**Date of review: May 8, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Renardo Wright**

The School Context

Bronx Guild is a high school with 315 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 32% Black, 64% Hispanic, 1% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 34% special education students. Boys account for 57% of the students enrolled and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 77.0%.

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	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	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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders have established a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff and students. These high expectations are consistently communicated through professional collaborations that provide instructional supports and prepare students for college and career readiness.

Impact

The supportive learning environment enables professional collaborations and mutual accountability that result in growth for teachers and enhanced student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- At the beginning of each year, school leaders provide a professional handbook for teachers that outlines clear expectations and professional obligations. The staff handbook also includes lesson planning, grading policies, and upcoming state exams and assessments. In addition, teachers are provided professional learning opportunities throughout the school year based on The Danielson Framework for Teachers. For example, one session provided teachers with tools to engage students in learning (3c) by focusing on students' IEPs.
- The school has secured a school-wide interactive online grading system, Pupil Path, to provide ongoing communication to students about their social and academic progress. Students can view their attendance, assignments, transcripts, and current grades. During the meeting with students, students expressed how this online grading system provides them with current information that can be used to support them to achieve their academic goals.
- In September, all students are provided with a student handbook which provides a clear overview of the school's expectations. The handbook includes information about internships, attendance, dress codes, marking periods, and graduation requirements. In addition, students are provided a College Process handbook which provides information about preparing for the college process. This serves to clearly convey the school's high expectations for all its students.
- During the school year, all students are required to participate in an off campus internship at various professional companies and organizations to fully prepare them for college and career readiness. In addition, students are taught resume writing to prepare and support them with future job searches. During the visit, seven resumes written by students were reviewed.
- The school has partnered with Hostos Community College and Bronx Community College to participate in a program called College Now. The purpose of the program is to motivate and prepare south Bronx high school students for the reality of higher education and the college experience by offering them an opportunity to take college level courses and earn college credits while still in high school. Students can begin taking college courses during the 11th grade.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula so that all learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks. Student work products reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Learners were actively engaged and there were multiple learning opportunities to promote higher order thinking skills and high level discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teacher lessons were differentiated for students to provide multiple entry points to curricula and to ensure all learners are were actively challenged and engaged. In a 9th grade math class, a teacher provided different Sales graph organizers to support the different groups of learners while they constructed bar or line graphs based on the sales information of a company. The teacher also provided computer laptops for students who were performing above level. In a 9th grade science classroom, students performing above level were provided bonus experimental questions asking them to describe in writing the difference between electromagnet and solenoid.
- Across some classrooms, there were evidence of high levels of active engagement and discussions. For example, in a 12th grade ELA class, students were assigned groups to discuss the qualities of good questions based on a literacy text. Students were also encouraged to use academic vocabulary during their group discussions. They used words such as competitive, glimmeringly and handicap among others. In a 10th grade global class, students were assigned to small groups to discuss their graffiti plans for the Berlin Wall. In addition, students played a role in their groups and they were provided computer laptops during the discussions to present and support their graffiti plan and design. Other instructional tools shared during their activity were graphic organizers, visuals and posters.
- Across some classrooms, lessons were cognitively challenging to promote higher order thinking skills and meaningful discussions. For example, in an 11th grade ELA classroom, students were presented with two templates for a theme cube and two scenes, The Great Gatsby and Bodega Dreams. For each scene, students were asked to determine the theme, paraphrase what was going on in the scene, and explain to their assigned partners how the scene connected to the theme. Students were also required to explain why the scene is important to the rest of the novel. In a 12th grade trigonometry class, students were required to divide monomials by monomials before using strings to create pie graphs.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning standards and the instructional shifts. Higher-order thinking skills are emphasized for all learners across the grades and content areas.

Impact

The school's curricular decisions build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all learners. Academic tasks push students thinking across grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- During the school year teachers work closely to develop and adjust curriculum. Samples of unit overviews across the different areas provided evidence of alignment to the Common Core Standards and included the instructional shifts. For example, an ELA unit overview required students to determine a theme or central idea of a piece of literature and analyze in details its development over the course of the text. A performance task of the same unit asked students to read one short story and poem and write a paragraph in which they identify the controlling idea of the text. A humanity unit overview required students to analyze and summarize primary and secondary sources of informational text.
- Many of the tasks observed in students' folders and hallways displayed were aligned to CCLS and content standards. Bulletin board displays show standard based instructional tasks with teacher feedback
- A review of an ELA lesson plan for grade 9 indicated that students were asked to determine the theme of one passage from the Great Gatsby or Bodega Dreams and cite evidence from text to support their claims. A global lesson plan included a full page informational text about the Berlin Wall and required students to provide evidence from the text to support their claims and final work products.
- Samples of reviewed performance task assessments emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills across the grades and subjects. For example, a reviewed performance task assessment in a global unit overview required students to research, using multiple resources, an "ill" in society and create a "muckraking" campaign through photography or writing. Students to include English language learners and student with disabilities also required to provide written suggestions for political or social reforms that could address this ill. In a history unit overview, the performance task assessment required students to write a letter from the perspective of a soldier returning from war to the president about the changes he has seen in American society as a result of the war.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms teachers use assessments, grading policies and content rubrics that are aligned with the school’s curricula to determine student progress. Teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of checks for understanding.

Impact

The school’s use of school wide assessments, data analysis, and feedback allows teachers to make meaningful instructional adjustments and revisions to improve student learning outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- During the school year, school leaders and staff assess students reading abilities by incorporating a school-wide diagnostic reading test. After school leaders receive the results from the assessment data, students identified a performing at the bottom 1/3 are immediately assigned to READ 180, an online reading program that consistently assesses and monitors students’ reading levels and abilities across the different content areas. The READ 180 reading program provides opportunities to challenge students who show significant growth while providing appropriate levels of intervention and support for those students who are showing very little growth. School leaders and teachers use the data results to monitor and track students’ progress throughout the school. In addition, school leaders and teachers shared that school-wide assessment results have informed them of what curriculum adjustments are needed at the classroom or grade levels.
- School leaders have incorporated school-wide grading policies that are aligned to standard based grading rubrics. During the visit, observed rubrics were accompany by actionable feedback and clear next steps from teachers. For example, one student rubric feedback read as: “Strong evidence to support claim; next steps, challenge yourself to really make the reader think before leaving them”. During the meeting with students, some students presented work samples that were provided written feedback from teachers. Students expressed that they often use grading rubrics across the different content areas to complete projects and assignments.
- Across some classrooms, students were engaged in peer editing and assessment. For example, in an 11th grade ELA class, students were assigned to partners and provided a Peer Revision worksheet. The Peer Revision worksheet provided clear directions for supporting students as they peer edited each other’s work.
- Across classroom, teachers consistently check for understanding during the lessons. Teachers checked for understanding through conferring, questioning, exit slips, and sharing out. In a 9th grade math class, the teachers consistently walked around the room and asked students various questions to assess their understanding during the lesson. In another class, a teacher provided students with exit slips to record in writing their understanding of the lesson.

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

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations during which pedagogical practices, student work, and school-wide assessments are reviewed and analyzed. Distributed leadership structures are in place across the school.

Impact

The work of shared leadership and teacher teams has strengthened teacher collaboration resulting in improvement to student learning outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have incorporated ongoing professional collaboration across the school to include the vast majority of teachers to improve teaching practices and/or students’ academic outcomes. These professional collaborations include the Learning through Internship team, Literacy team, Special Education team, Grade teams, and Content teams. The learning Through Internship team monitors the internship curriculum and program. The Literacy team is responsible for looking at school-wide assessments to design professional development, implementing protocols for looking at students’ work, and ensuring the integration of literacy across the different content areas. The Special Education team discusses social/emotional behaviors, and addresses special education related issues. Grade teams meet weekly to analyze students’ work using inquiry like protocols and to modify curriculum and literacy practices across content in all grades. Content teams use and assess performance tasks and Mock Regents to modify instruction. As a result of these collaborations, teachers have improved their pedagogy and the way curriculum is reviewed and adjusted.
- The school leaders provide leadership structures by using some staff as Teacher Leaders and Administrative Liaisons. They are viewed as instructional leaders. Teacher leaders and administrative liaisons serve on the different teams throughout the school and are instrumental in developing and facilitating professional learning opportunities for staff. During the visit with teachers, it was shared that teacher leaders and administrative liaisons also work very closely with teachers and school leaders in making key decisions that impact the school community. For example, teacher leaders met with the administrative team and made recommendations to incorporate supplemental instructional materials to support diversity in the classrooms and materials were approved.
- During the visit, a 12th grade teacher team met to discuss and analyze a student’s work samples. The four member teacher team all shared the identified student being discussed during the meeting. Each teacher on the team shared out how well the identified student was currently performing academically. Afterward, each team member carefully assessed the students’ work and reviewed his grade level Lexile reading assessment and then devised a plan of action to support the student in making academic progress. Teachers stated that there are times when the plan of action includes the changing of teaching practices or making lesson adjustments. The members of the teacher team shared that they meet weekly to discuss and plan immediate actions for students across their grade who are not meeting promotional standards. The team expressed that they meet with those identified students to share the team’s plan of action to promote academic progress.