



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Bronx Theatre High School

10X546

**99 Terrace View
Bronx, NY 10463**

Principal: Charles Gallo

Date of review: December 19, 2015

Lead Reviewer: Elaine Lindsey

The School Context

Bronx Theatre is a high school with 435 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 31% Black, 66% Hispanic, 3% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 23% special education students. Boys account for 30% of the students enrolled and girls account for 70%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 86%.

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	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	Additional Findings	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	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

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

Findings

Teacher teams 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 to improve student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers participate in structured professional collaborations. Vertical and horizontal teams meet daily using protocols to review curricula, student data and work products in order to strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers and align teacher practice to the school's goals and instructional shifts. Teams utilize the tri-state rubric for alignment and common language for rigorous instruction. Team meetings are memorialized via Google docs with current issues and next steps.
- Teacher teams have contributed to the achievement of school goals resulting in higher credit accumulation and Regents pass rates. School wide goals are shared regularly during team meetings and across departments to inform next steps for upcoming student projects and to ensure alignment. The social studies team shares upcoming topics with the English language arts (ELA) and arts team allowing ELA to select primary sources that support the social studies topics.
- During an observation of a Teacher Team meeting teachers brought student work and used protocols to analyze trends and patterns of argumentative and text based writing using primary and secondary resources.
- Distributive leadership structures are in place through team leaders who meet weekly with administration to discuss meeting outcomes and plan agendas. Additionally, the school's professional development committee allows teachers to have direct input in decisions around professional development topics for the school year. Shared leadership has resulted in a more collaborative environment and ownership of school wide initiatives.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Pedagogical practices inconsistently provide 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 an anatomy lesson students worked in groups of two to three to complete a power of hydrogen (pH) lab report and discuss in groups. Although the lesson plan indicated that students of varying levels will work to describe an understanding of what are the uses and management as it relates to acidity and alkalinity, most students finished early and began walking around the classroom engaging their friends in discussions that are not about the lesson. While the teacher was observed checking in with student groups, there was uneven use of effective grouping and scaffolds to ensure access for all learners.
- In classrooms visited, students' participation in rigorous discussion was inconsistent, and student work products did not always demonstrate mastery of learning objectives. Dialogue was often teacher-student-teacher with mostly full-class discussions being call and response, with limited number of students responding to teacher generated questions. In three out of seven classes students provided feedback to peers and generated their own questions. In a Living Environment class students were given a rubric to use for rating and provide feedback to peers; however the same 4/12 students participated providing feedback based on their opinion and not aligned to the rubric.
- Across classrooms visited, students worked in flexible groups or independently; however extensions to lessons did not consistently challenge all learners. In a global studies class students were directed to work in pairs or independently to complete a MEAL paragraph. However, students did not engage in discussion with their peers and students who were more advanced were not provided with opportunities for higher level thinking that extend beyond paragraph writing.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

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 content areas.

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

- Teachers are using curricula from Engage New York, New York City Department of Education and New Visions network across grades and disciplines. This year global studies and United States history are using theNYCDOE social studies scope and sequence. Curricula are refined utilizing the tri-state rubric, and further alignment is ensured through Atlas curriculum mapping software. Teachers work together during common planning time to revise units and lesson plans with a focus on writing and using textual evidence to support claims.
- Teacher unit plans and curriculum maps provide evidence of the school's development of rigorous academic tasks that are accessible to a variety of learners, and curricula are developed to ensure coherence. A social studies unit covering the German Occupation is aligned with English language arts which utilizes the diary of Anne Frank and Maus. The math department created a coherent unit on HIV/AIDS using mathematical statistics to develop tasks and projects around those infected by the virus to highlight the connections between mathematics and science. Teachers have refined curriculum to provide more opportunities for students to practice writing skills. Writing in global studies and United States history include Main Idea/Evidence/Analysis/Link (MEAL) writing.
- Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined during content and grade level meetings. Student work is analyzed, discussed and adjustments to instruction are made based on student performance. Teachers use graphic organizers, charts and timelines to scaffold work for English language learners (ELLs) across content areas. Specifically, English language arts and social studies units utilized rubrics that were modified so that Students with disabilities (SWD) and ELLs were responsible for 2 parts of a 5 part rubric with scaffolds to introduce the remaining parts in smaller chunks. Additionally, teachers noted that some students who are English deficient needed handouts in their own language so in some classes, assignments and graphic organizers are distributed in both languages.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use common rubrics and assessments to track student progress and make adjustments to meet the learning needs of all students across grades and content areas.

Impact

The school's systems to monitor progress through data analysis and common assessments are used to guide adjustments in units and lessons to meet the learning needs of all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- Baseline assessments, measures of student learning and mock Regents are administered to inform instructional decisions. A review of data revealed student weakness in writing that includes making claims and citing evidence from text to support. As a result, a writing initiative has been implemented across grades and disciplines.
- The school wide grading policy specifically identifies seven forms of assessment so all learners are addressed. These include projects, essays, written exams, quizzes, oral reports/presentations, group projects and scenarios.
- The school utilizes common rubrics to determine progress towards goals across grades and subjects.
- A review of teacher lesson plans indicates consistent use of formative assessments such as exit slips, teacher created assessments and checks for understanding that lead to adjustments such as re-teaching topics. Plans include exit slips or reflections to ascertain student understanding. Visits to classrooms revealed consistent use of exit slips in lesson plans and at the end of lessons.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	------------------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

High expectations are consistently messaged to staff, students and families through the Danielson Framework, Skedula, professional development and other modes of communication. Workshops and frequent updates keep families apprised on student progress towards college and careers.

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

- School-wide goals and expectations are shared with teachers at the beginning of the school year and reinforced during weekly staff meetings and professional development sessions. Frequent observations using the Danielson Framework and feedback hold staff accountable for expectations for teaching and learning.
- Advanced Placement (AP) classes in English and French expose students to college level course work.
- Parents participate in workshops and work with the school's college advisor to support their child through the college process. Parents attend meetings and orientations to review the importance of 80% on math Regents and 75% on English Language Arts Regents.
- Parents shared that they receive regular updates on their child's progress from teachers, through access to Skedula (on-line student information system), progress reports mailed to homes before the end of each marking period and calls from teachers and guidance counselors.