



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

Bronx High School of Business

High School X412

**240 East 172 Street
Bronx
NY 10457**

Principal: Ana De Jesus

**Date of review: May 5, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Heidi Pierovich**

The School Context

Bronx High School of Business is a high school with 308 students from grade 9 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 2% Asian, 28% Black, 67% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 31% English Language Learners and 24% students with disabilities. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 78.9%.

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 <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , 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	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
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Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in organized inquiry-based professional collaborations. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Professional collaborations promote the achievement of school goals, support the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, and strengthen the instructional capacity of the teachers who have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Grade teams from grades 9, 10, 11, meet two times a week to look at student work using a protocol called *Writing is Thinking through Strategic Inquiry* (WITsi). While all are focused upon improving student writing, the grade 11 teacher team inquiry revolves around improving the Global History and Geography Regents exams. One teacher stated, and others agreed, “Since we started with WITsi last year, my focus shifted from only a science teacher into one who uses more literacy strategies in classroom which is something that I would not have used in the past. This focus on daily literacy strategies is in writing activities and formative assessments across the grade so students see it.” Other teachers agreed, “Before this [I thought] English is English and math is math, and now I see it is intertwined and we are building their literacy strategies and [students have to] justify their answers using ‘but, because, so’ and appositives.” Teachers agreed that this has helped improve their pedagogical practices.
- The school’s master schedule is purposely built to accommodate an entire day for common planning time during which subject teacher teams meet with content coaches, outside consultants, and peer collaborative teachers to support them in curricular planning and looking at student work using a protocol. “Collaboration is new and wasn’t available [before this year]. Without the block of time, I couldn’t focus on planning my next class. It is helpful to my instructional practice [because] we share with the team and a coach to get other ideas.” The work of the teams varies and encompasses planning lessons, using data, sharing best practices, and analyzing student work. Teachers stated that common planning time has helped improve their practice. A teacher stated, and others agreed, “I think having the whole day [to plan and collaborate] is a privilege and working hard with the team and coaches spending time together is very useful.”
- Each team has a teacher leader who facilitates team meetings and meets with administration twice a month. Teacher leaders report student data and progress to the administration and are liaisons between the team and administration, evidencing distributive leadership. Additionally, there is a steering committee where any teacher may suggest agenda items and attend the meeting. The principal sends an email about the agenda items, and at the steering committee meeting, administration and teachers discuss and make decisions. One item entailed determining the mock Regents logistics.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best. Lessons inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula so student tasks and discussions are not always accessible to all students.

Impact

As defined by the instructional shifts and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, are not yet sufficiently engaged in high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Staff believe their instructional focus is students learn best if teachers explicitly teach students the skills to engage with text and provide daily opportunities to apply those skills, then students will be able to develop and support verbal and written arguments with evidence. Yet, these practices are just beginning to be implemented across classrooms.
- In some classes, the level of rigor and questions was evident and provided students with discussion opportunities, while in others, it was uneven. In a history class for English Language Learners (ELLs), groups of students discussed and created an evidence-based speech that one representative presented as a lawyer to the “judge” (the teacher) and “jury” (a panel of students) using a rubric. Student representatives presented their claims and evidence without notes. However, not all lessons had such a high level of rigor or class engagement. In a bilingual history class, students started to watch a video in Spanish; when the video had technical difficulty, the teacher switched to another video in English about African kings while students were to take notes. The teacher did not model for students. As a result, a few students gathered notes on the graphic organizer, while others either did not understand the task or did not have enough time to complete the work, as evidenced by their minimally completed note-taking handouts. Additionally, the teacher asked students to discuss the content using accountable talk stems, but students did not discuss, resulting in the teacher often answering his own questions. Similarly, in a bilingual science class, the teacher posed rapid-fire questions in Spanish that prevented some students from being able to answer or discuss. In an algebra class, the teacher stood at the board and solved problems while asking rapid-fire, low-level Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questions including, “Is this what it looks like?”, “What kind of equation is this?”, and “What kind of function is it?” Few students answered, and when they did, it was in single word answers; students did not have opportunities to share their thinking.
- In an algebra class, students were in data-determined groups where they had a “teacher assistant scholar” (students who have taken the Regents and are within range of passing who work closely with the teacher to plan) to facilitate the work, whiteboard slates to practice solving problems, and opportunities to discuss their solutions and help each other. Similarly, in an English Language Arts (ELA) Integrated-Co-Teaching (ICT) class, students prepared for an upcoming Socratic seminar by finding evidence to support claims and noting reasons for who was most at fault for Romeo and Juliet’s deaths. Yet, in an economics class, students were to annotate articles to support their research and find evidence to support claims in content groups. However, many students arrived late to class, resulting in groups being rearranged to accommodate latecomers. Without set protocols, the teacher reiterated directions and lost the pacing of the lesson plan.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills inconsistently and reflect planning to provide students access.

Impact

The curricula and academic tasks across grades and subjects inconsistently provide access for all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, so that they are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers and administration have implemented the “Frame of the Day” to some lessons, PowerPoint slides, or handouts. The Frame of the Day includes three questions posed by teachers, “What are we doing?, Why are we doing this?, and Where is the leading to?” It is intended to provide students with an understanding of the lesson’s purpose, as the student population is composed of 31% ELLs and 24% students with disabilities. Staff uses *EngageNY* for ELA and math. For social studies and science, the staff has recently adopted the New Visions’ curricula.
- Lesson plans do not all include the same components. A few lesson plans include focus content and practice standards, objective/lesson outcome, tasks, Do Now, launch/expectations for learning with the Frame of the Day, mini-lesson, checks for understanding, independent work, pair work, share out/summary, and exit ticket. Other lesson plans include the following additional components: essential question, “students will be able to,” vocabulary, materials, homework, activity assessment, and closing/reflection. Other lesson plans add components such as assessed standards and addressed standards, grouping and rationale, and exit slip. Another lesson plan includes procedures, accommodations, homework, and summary. Although another lesson includes a culminating task and grouping, it does not have a summary, exit slip, or standards. Most lessons include time allotment per activity. The lack of consistency in planning components used leads to uneven implementation of curricula and varying degrees of task appropriateness. Some lesson plans include a graphic organizer for all, while others use tiered worksheets. Some unit plans show revisions based on student work or WITsi, while others remain without modification for the current population of more than 50% ELLs and students with disabilities.
- Several sample lesson and unit plans demonstrated evidence of incorporating WITsi sentence expansions to create complex sentences or appositives for ELA, math, and social studies. There is evidence of staff meetings with coaches to look at student work and reflect on adjustments to curricula. Yet, of the three shared staff reflections from ELA, some presented only general next steps; those with specific next steps were missing evidence of making refinements or that refinements made had resulted in students having access to cognitively engaging curricula and tasks.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The staff is developing their use of common assessments to measure student progress toward instructional and individual goals. Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Teachers inconsistently used results to adjust curricula and instruction or make effective in-the-moment adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- In an Integrated Algebra class, the teacher had “teacher assistant scholars” help facilitate group work and help peers understand before having to ask the teacher for support. The teacher made a mid-workshop adjustment after checking on student understanding at a few tables. This was the only adjustment made in all class visitations, although there were other opportunities and needs. In an ICT ELA class, the teachers provided students with a checklist to self-assess during group work and discussion. There were only two other rubrics or checklists provided to students. In an algebra, an ELA, and a history class, students were asked higher-order thinking questions and were able to demonstrate understanding through discussion or student work. Yet, several other teachers asked whole class, low-level DOK questions and accepted one or two responses before moving on. One teacher asked rapid-fire questions, while another answered his own questions; these practices left many students without an opportunity to share their thinking or left the teacher without an opportunity to adjust instruction to address students' learning. In several classes, teachers moved from group to group checking on task completion. In a history class, the teacher walked around asking students who were working in groups to discuss their ideas after reading; yet, students had not completed the annotation activity and were not ready to discuss. Several teachers moved from group to group, but they did not track the results of student responses or questions for use with making pedagogical or curricular adjustments.
- Consistent monitoring of student progress based on instructional adjustments is beginning to become a regular practice. When asked, students explained that they know how to use rubrics and checklists to improve and grade their work, “We look at the four and standards and know what we need to add on to an essay or other type of work.” Students also spoke about, “using a checklist of elements that need to be included and as you do the assignment, [you] check it off and look for spelling mistakes or errors.” While rubrics and checklists exist for assignments, in only one class, an ICT ELA, did students use such tools to self-assess.
- Teacher teams have developed common assessments and performance tasks across grades and subjects. For example, staff have incorporated the “but, because, so” and appositive methods from WITsi as noted in grade teacher team agendas for most core subjects and in a sample lesson adjustment based on WITsi results. Additionally, subject team agendas evidence professional learning provided to staff regarding methods of refining curricula and instruction based on results from common curricular assessments. Yet, adjustments to curricula across grades and subjects are not yet routine; teachers do not yet fully disaggregate student data across assessments which prevents them from determining student progress.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

High expectations are consistently communicated to staff via the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and through training and ongoing communication. The administration and staff communicate expectations to students and families and keep them abreast of student progress toward college and career readiness.

Impact

The administration maintains a system of accountability toward expectations amongst staff and helps families understand student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Beyond weekly family engagement contact via phone, email, or in-person meetings, staff also communicates with the home through an online grade book called *PupilPath*, a parent and student portal. Some students stated that they check *PupilPath* at least once a week, if not twice, while others get their updates directly from their teachers. Additionally, students receive progress reports during each marking period. Students stated that they visit their counselor for updates on their grades and for copies of their transcripts. A few parents stated that they also check *PupilPath*, while others are more comfortable calling or making an appointment directly with the teacher. Administration provides time to discuss issues with families during “café con leche” meetings held twice weekly. Parents stated that they are very pleased with the level of communication from the teachers and administration.
- Parents shared the support they receive with the college selection process through workshops, college fairs and tours, and the completion of the financial aid and school applications through the school’s support services from the guidance counselor and community-based organization (CBO). Parents stated that college tours included out-of-state schools as well. Students agreed that the school helps to prepare them for college and career and cited several colleges they have visited. Guidance counselors, administration, and staff from the CBO meet with students to discuss being on track for graduation, Regents, college applications, and financial aid. Parents spoke about tutoring and college and career information sessions during Saturday sessions. Also presented on Saturdays are academic open house meetings for families to receive updates on their children’s progress toward graduation and workshops, for example, in learning English and computer literacy.
- Administration sets the tone throughout the year by providing staff with consistent messages regarding expectations, such as delineated school goals, action plans, and next steps, in the new principal’s staff meeting. Administrators and teachers discuss high expectations during the initial individual planning conferences which are also used to develop teachers’ goals. Classroom observations are followed by meetings to provide specific and actionable feedback to further focus on the implementation of schoolwide initiatives of argumentative writing, WITsi, appositives, sentence expansions, and writing complex sentences. Teachers on the professional development (PD) committee conduct inter-visitations, share best practices, and create and present PD to their peers as informed by staff surveys. A follow-up system includes frequent observations with actionable feedback and coaching from outside consultants and a lead teacher to support staff working toward the school’s achievement goals. Administration and staff spent a weekend retreat to reflect on this year and begin planning for next year.