



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

Bronx Career and College Preparatory High School

High School X479

**800 Home Street
Bronx
NY 10456**

Principal: Julia Baly

**Date of review: April 12, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Clarence Williams Jr.**

The School Context

Bronx Career and College Preparatory High School is a high school with 322 students from grade 9 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 43% Black, 54% Hispanic, and 2% White students. The student body includes 15% English Language Learners and 27% students with disabilities. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 79.3%.

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	Celebration	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 <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	Additional Findings	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	Focus	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:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and content standards that integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

School leaders and staff make purposeful decisions to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students. A diversity of learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, have access to the curricula and tasks, and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal has made curricula and planning a priority and this is in evidence in all Common Core-aligned curricula documents reviewed. As evidenced in the semester two grade 9 Algebra unit plan, school leaders and faculty collectively made the decision to adjust the curricula using instructional shift 1, focus. They significantly narrowed and deepened the scope of how time and energy was spent during lessons. This allowed teachers to focus deeply on only the concepts that are prioritized in the standards. Additionally, all planning documents include tiered activities for students who are “at, below, or above level” aligned to the same learning objective.
- The curriculum is modified based on student data. Evidence is seen in the grade 6 unit. School leadership provided an original unit on test sophistication. The goal of the unit was to prepare students for the state exams by teaching them to be stronger readers and writers, tackling stamina, volume, and comprehension simultaneously. Unit test data showed that most students answered questions about the central idea of a text and supported their answers with details. After this data was analyzed, the unit was refined to include instructional practices designed specifically to target these standards. The modified unit included the use of graphic organizers to write down how a plot unfolds as well as how the characters respond to changes in the plot. The revised unit plans include reading plays, incorporating instructional centers based on skills, and texts from different genres to compare and contrast.
- Teachers show lesson plans that demonstrate adjustments in instruction for students with disabilities and English Language Learners based on classroom assessments. In a grade 6 lesson on ancient Egypt, all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, were heterogeneously grouped. The lesson plan called for the teacher to verbally translate texts and provide support to build vocabulary skills. For example, asking students to expand their responses by using open-ended prompts such as, “This happened because....”

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations connected to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to the entire staff. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students.

Impact

School leaders provide training and have a system of accountability for expectations and teacher teams provide detailed feedback, guidance, and advisement supports that prepare students for the next level. However, not all students and families access the necessary information to make decisions about their next steps for college and career.

Supporting Evidence

- Through the electronic distribution of the staff handbook, the school leadership outlines the expectations of the staff. The impact of the handbook can be seen with regards to Danielson *Framework for Teaching* by focusing on the classroom environment. The handbook states that standards and rules must be posted in the classrooms, this was evident in all classrooms visited. The principal uses a staff news publication to communicate high expectations. The principal spoke about the implications of the math and English Language Arts exams with regards to preparing for an untimed test, stating that latest studies indicate that some students experience less anxiety with timed tests, as opposed to untimed tests and that instructional practices must prepare students. When meeting with teacher teams, they confirmed that students reported experienced less anxiety with the timed test. During student interviews, they also stated that they prefer the timed test.
- The professional development calendar outlined expectations for rigor in the classroom. Teachers have an opportunity to focus on planning and how to deliver instruction that engages all students in meaningful conversations. This was evident in most classrooms visited whereas teachers asked clarifying questions and prompted students for responses as well as answered questions. An example was seen in a grade 4 social studies class during which the teacher asked the students, “How would your lives be different if your family members never immigrated to America?” Students were prompted by asking where their families came from and what they thought life was like for their parents.
- Leadership has documented school wide assemblies on expectations for Regents exams and SAT scores for college and the collaboration with the Children’s Aid Society. As a result, students and families participated in a college and career preparation program organized by the school in conjunction with the Children’s Aid Society to discuss expectations for college. Areas of focus were career interest beyond graduation, developing a career plan, and a career interest survey. Students interviewed stated that it was helpful and informed them of expectations for college, however they felt it could have been better attended.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use and create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

Impact

Teachers provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Common assessments across grade and subject areas are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Using assessments, teachers provided actionable feedback to students. A Living Environment data action plan includes baseline assessments and notes areas of concern such as, that some students are unable to make connections between evidence and claim, have poor comprehension skills, and infrequently cite evidence from text. The plan also gives an itemized break down of the previous Regents exam results with the percentage of students that answered a specific set of questions incorrectly. Teachers administered a mock Living Environment Regents examination after reviewing the data. They gave students back the same assessment with an in-class activity to look at gaps, and allowed learners an opportunity to redo the test without giving them their scores. Students and teachers confirmed that teachers also had discussions with students to analyze wrong answers.
- Actionable feedback was evident across all classrooms. Student work and folders showed feedback on rubrics, and note attachments showed commendations, areas for adjustment or improvement and next steps. On a portfolio piece from an art class, the teacher stated, "You've been developing this theme of supernatural/mysterious concepts. I like how it works as both realism/surrealism." On an English Language Arts mid-term assessment, a teacher provided actionable feedback such as, "Next steps: analyze focus on author's purpose in your responses", "develop a clear thesis statement in the beginning of the essay", and "collaborate with peers during turn and talks to strengthen your responses."
- Across most classrooms, students stated that the rubrics were referred to while providing actionable feedback and that teachers articulate to them their level of progress and areas of weakness and strength. In a grade 9 math class, the teacher used levels of understanding to assess student comprehension by asking students to raise from one to four fingers. The teacher made assessments based on responses and modified instruction based on student responses. The teacher then went on to model two methods to solve an equation, the table method and the distributive method. Regents classes use rubrics derived from the Regents examinations, self-grading rubrics across all subjects and grades, and rubrics for long essay questions. The school uses baseline assessments and mock Regents as well as Regents exams. The base line exams impact planning and grouping. All assessments provide data on student performance as evident in the unit planning observed in the curricula.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking.

Impact

Teaching practices are informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and instructional shifts. Across classrooms, all students produce meaningful work products and participate in discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- During a student interview, students expressed that they learn best by peer-to-peer assessment and interaction, active engagement within a student-centered classroom, and small group instruction. Across classrooms instructional strategies, such as accountable talk, and questioning strategies including “Turn and Talk”, “It Says, I Say, and So”, and Socratic Seminars were observed and used effectively. It is written explicitly in every department’s action plan to require students to make their thinking visible. Each lesson plans for purposeful grouping.
- Accountable talk annotation was used by students. In a grade 11 United States history and government class during the independent text analysis, students were required to read annotate and answer text-based questions and cite the text during small group and whole group instruction.
- Student work products and discussions demonstrate high levels of student thinking. In a grade 9 English Language Arts class, students were required to analyze a text and answer text dependent questions. Students selected quotations and explained how they reflect the guiding question and why they are important. All answers required text based evidence. Using a protocol that prompted them to use a topic sentence, evidence, paraphrasing, analysis, and a concluding sentence (TEPAC), students discussed, supported, and articulated their findings.
- Students stated that they learn best through peer-to-peer learning to promote high levels of thinking. Student work products demonstrate continued evidence of high levels of student thinking as observed in a grade 10 geometry class. Students partnered with each other and then groups were assembled based on performance levels on prior assessments. Students asked clarifying questions and remained on task.

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have built leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions.

Impact

Professional collaborations strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers and promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher leadership affects student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- To promote distributive leadership, the Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) team met on March 23, 2016. Although there is administrative representation on the team, the meeting was facilitated and chaired by a teacher. The minutes of the meeting demonstrated the agenda included updating the curricula and unit plans. The team is responsible for presenting updated curricula to teachers and discussing the modifications, resulting in adaptations to instructional practices in the classroom. The agenda stated that the science and math teachers are working with their departments on curriculum and lesson planning for each of their subjects. They also noted that all STEM team members discussed a protocol for classroom observations and questions they had regarding different elements of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* rubric and how to improve teaching practice.
- Teacher teams have inquiry-based collaborations. The humanities team meeting discussed a tuning protocol in United States history. The team discussed one teachers’ tuning protocol, and discussed its alignment to the curricula, stating that the teacher’s lesson plan engaged students by using questioning techniques which are in alignment with the curriculum. Modifications may include the addition of reflective questions such as “How long did reading take?”, “Did all students finish reading?”, or “How were students graded on the ranking?” Teachers also discussed an example of a successful practice that increased student engagement and a practice that had not yielded deeper student discussion.
- Each department has a data driven action plan. The purpose of this plan is to look at baseline assessments, observations, areas of strength, and areas in need of improvement. The math team data action plan was based on observations from the baseline assessment that included evidence that students were not answering questions correctly and not paying attention to detail. In the mock Regents exam, the data showed students performed low on constructive response in algebra and geometry. Areas in need of improvement were cited as decoding/reading comprehension and problem solving skills. The math action plan also showed students had areas of strength in the ability to read graphs and calculating graphs.