



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2015-2016**

**Bronx Regional High School**

**High School X480**

**1010 Rev. J. A. Polite Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10459**

**Principal: Colin Thomas**

**Date of review: December 10, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Jacqueline Gonzalez**

## The School Context

Bronx Regional High School is a high school with 266 students from grade 9 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 33% Black, 64% Hispanic, and 2% White students. The student body includes 9% English Language Learners and 11% students with disabilities. Boys account for 40% of the students enrolled and girls account for 60%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 71.0%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

The majority of teachers participate in effective structured, professional collaborations and have access to distributed leadership opportunities across the school.

### Impact

Teacher collaborations focused on analysis of teacher and student work, promote the achievement of school wide goals, strengthen instructional capacity and ensure that teachers play a key role in making decisions about how students learn best.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teaching teams meet daily during the school's Zero Period. Teachers indicate that the opportunity to work together on the implementation of the Common Core Standards and the instructional shifts has allowed them to strengthen their individual pedagogical capacity. The math team as well as other content area teams comprise two to three teachers each and use their meeting time to discuss strategies for supporting individual and groups of students based on needs identified in the analysis of student work.
- A review of team meeting notes shows that teachers review the Regents exam scores and student responses to determine teaching strategies for particular units of study. They also discuss rubrics and different ways to provide teacher feedback to ensure students improve their work. The math department works on specific content skills in each of their team meeting times including how to structure lesson plans for the week. A science teacher stated that the team time is essential for consistency across classrooms and strengthens his practice based on feedback and collaboration with his colleagues.
- Teachers participate in a variety of leadership structures including the rotation of facilitation of meetings as well as the facilitation of professional learning for their colleagues to strengthen content area and pedagogical strategies across classrooms. Teachers have opportunities to visit one another's classrooms to learn from one another and provide feedback about instructional strategies. Across the school, teachers including the art teacher and the teacher who provides Special Education Teacher Support Services, that are not part of the Zero Period teams, are kept informed about key decisions via email and frequent less formal verbal communications so that all teachers participate in key decisions about student learning and are in collaboration with one another to support student progress.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

Across some lessons, pedagogical strategies are intended to require students to demonstrate their learning. Work products and student discussions inconsistently reflect higher order thinking and participation.

### Impact

Although teachers' questioning and discussion techniques are aimed at increased student engagement and participation, they yield uneven opportunities for a variety of learners to engage in discussion or higher order tasks.

### Supporting Evidence

- In a history class, focused on students were asked to choose a question from a variety of options, that they would respond to by providing text-based evidence for their claim as well as an explanation of how the text supported their answer. In a math class students were able to provide a variety of ways that they could prove that a quadrilateral was a parallelogram either by using formulas for the slope of a line or by demonstrating their thinking and sharing their strategy with classmates. However, across several other classrooms teacher questioning was mostly teacher directed and did not prompt higher order thinking or student to student discussion.
- Lessons observed reflected different portions of the workshop structure, which consists of teacher modeling, guided practice and independent practice. In one lesson during teacher modeling of a response to a question about harmless lies that parents sometimes tell their children, the teacher gave a verbal example of what a thorough response might include- details, explanations and evidence. In a guided practice portion of a math class, students provide their explanations and work on the board and the teacher corrects errors for all to see. In a social studies lesson, students wrote their opinion about gun control based on two texts.
- Across classrooms, student discussion is minimal as it is mostly teacher directed and often limits the participation of many students. While some teachers push students to think, elaborate and cite textual evidence, in some lessons observed, teachers' questions led to one word answers and did not foster elaboration or deeper thinking as outlined in lesson plans. In other lessons, the teacher provided definitions or added explanations to students' short answers. However, these supports, which provide access to tasks for English Language Learners and students with disabilities, were inconsistent across lessons. There was little evidence in student work or discussions across lessons that students participate in or own their learning.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty make purposeful decisions to ensure that curriculum is aligned to the Common Core Learning standards, including the instructional shifts. Revisions to curriculum are informed by an analysis of student data and work products.

### Impact

Administrators and teachers build coherence and promote college and career readiness across content areas in curriculum designed to meet the needs of diverse learners' needs.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school's curriculum is common core aligned and includes content standards curricular documents include unit maps and lesson plans. Teachers use resources from Curriculum Mapper, a website, to identify the skills, strategies assessments and resources that will be used with each of the units of study within each content area. A review of documents provided reflected the consistent use of these resources for pacing of content area lessons.
- In order to ensure that college and career readiness skills are promoted for all students, the school has adopted the workshop model for all content areas. The structure provides opportunities for teachers to model a skill or strategy, time for students to practice with teacher guidance and then engage in independent practice. As most students in this transfer school are working on accumulation of credits and Regents exam preparation in order to meet graduation requirements, many of the units are based on test preparation. The workshop structure in lesson plans provides an interactive learning experience with group work and time for discussion for students' that is not solely Regents test preparation.
- Lesson plans include questions and activities that emphasize rigor and higher order thinking for all students including students with disabilities and English Language Learners. Teachers generally include the particular scaffold and strategies that they intend to implement and supports for particular students. For example, in a math class, English Language Learners may refer to a document with notes on characteristics of a parallelogram and higher achieving students are given a differentiated task.
- Student work is utilized to make adjustments to lesson and curriculum. Teachers use results from Regents exams and Regents type questions designed as exit tickets to modify instruction, revise lesson plans and reteach skills and concepts. These revisions are mutually agreed upon in teacher team meetings and strategies to support students in lessons are developed collaboratively. For example, the math team discussed how they use errors from student work and Regents exam responses to clarify concepts for students. The English Language Arts (ELA) teacher discussed how she works with other content teachers to provide support to address revealed flaws in students' written responses for assessments in history and science. These adjustments are based on students' needs and ensure that all students have access to the curricula.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

Across grades and content areas, teachers use a school wide grading policy, common rubrics and assessments that are aligned to the curricula to analyze information about student learning.

### **Impact**

Assessment practices provide information to teachers and students about achievement and help them to track individual progress towards learning goals.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The school has a common grading policy that teachers say is essential to their support of student progress. Every semester students receive four report cards. Semesters are divided into four cycles, the first cycle culminates in a letter grade, the second one in a numerical grade, the third in a letter grade and the final is numerical. These shorter cycles allow teachers to make timely adjustments, provide feedback to students and determine academic supports based on students' needs. The school wide policy also promotes coherence across content area and grades so that expectations for students are clear.
- The school uses common assessments based on the expectation for Regents exams to determine student progress towards goals for each grade and subject area. These results have been used to adjust the curriculum and instructional strategies. For example the school utilizes annotation as a school wide strategy for helping students organize their thinking as they read a text. The decision to implement this was based on analysis of student writing and responses on assessments indicating that students were not reading closely or comprehending the connection of selected text- based evidence to the quality of their written responses especially in global history and living environment assessments.
- The school has integrated the workshop model which allows opportunities for students to practice their responses to Regents type questions in class based on the results from former years' Regents data. The school's focus on student writing has led to improvement in the results of Regents exams scores overall particularly in the percentage of students passing the exams with scores greater than 65%, including a 12% increase in Global History and a 16% increase in English Regents exams.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and staff consistently communicate professional expectations to teachers via criteria outlined in the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Additionally the school share information with students and families about goals for college and career readiness.

### Impact

Administration provides training and has a system for holding teachers accountable to expectations. Teachers and school leaders help students and families understand student progress towards post-secondary readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal consistently communicates high expectations to staff based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching and provides the appropriate training in each of the components of the Framework to make sure the teachers can be held accountable for those expectations. Professional development documents such as agendas, calendars and copies of workshop materials reflect a clear focus on how school leaders expect faculty to demonstrate the competencies of the framework. The administration provides multiple opportunities for teachers to learn together, share practices and access resources aligned to the expectations.
- Parents indicate that they receive frequent communication from the principal and the teachers about their children's ongoing performance in class as well as attendance and feel they understand where students are with regard to credit accumulation and progress towards graduation. The accessibility and approachability of the principal and staff has been instrumental to their children's success as stated by one parent, "When I have limited patience, the school has high expectations and supports my child. They never give up on them."
- The school provides informational sessions for students and their families about the expectations for college and career readiness. In addition to orientation sessions with the guidance team upon arrival to the school, parents attend several workshops and meetings to learn about the college application process and opportunities for post-secondary opportunities. The school has a Living for the Young family through Education (LYFE) program which provides childcare for students with young children as a motivation for young parents to continue their education without further delays. Programs such as Knowledge for College Day and College week give students opportunities to learn about the multiple college programs and career options on site as well as through college visits. The school partners with community colleges and North Central Bronx Hospital to allow students to explore possible college and medical career options.