

# Quality Review Report

## 2016-2017

**Bronx Career and College Preparatory High School**

**High School 12X479**

**800 Home St.  
Bronx  
NY 10456**

**Principal: Julia Baly**

**Dates of Review:  
May 17, 2017 - May 18, 2017**

**Lead Reviewer: Jorge Estrella**

## The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Celebration** to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Focus** to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as **Additional Finding**. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

## Information about the School

Bronx Career and College Preparatory High School serves students in grade 9 through grade 12. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm>.

## School Quality Ratings

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area	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	<b>Area of Celebration</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>Area of 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 Finding</b>	<b>Developing</b>

## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area	Rating
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</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 Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

### Systems for Improvement

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area	Rating
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Developing</b>

## Area of Celebration

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

School leaders and faculty collaborate to adopt and adapt curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. Academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

### Impact

School leaders and faculty make purposeful decisions that allow for coherence across all grades and a focus on college and career readiness skills for all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty collaborate to adopt and adapt curricula aligned with Common Core and instructional shifts by developing units of study that emphasize key standards and reflect appropriate challenges across all grade levels. The principal reviews curriculum maps at the beginning of each semester to determine if they have the standards properly connected to the content, and that learning objectives and assessments are in alignment to the performance tasks. School leaders and teacher teams have developed a school-wide unit and lesson plan template to build curricular coherence. All plans reflect exposure to the instructional shifts such as balance of informational and literary texts, writing from sources, and a deep understanding of problem solving in math. The lesson plan for grade ten Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class utilized a Socratic seminar approach to identify different leadership styles, analyze *Animal Farm* by George Orwell, and argue from the point of view of the characters. Also, to promote college and career readiness, the school incorporates an entrepreneurship curriculum where students, working in teams, apply concepts, strategies, and skills learning across content areas; the ultimate outcome is to design, build, and market innovative products. As a result, students are able to think, question and discuss at higher levels while making connections and experiencing the real world.
- Units and lesson plans in all content areas include several entry points to engage all learners in rigorous habits and higher-order skills. Tiered problems, modified texts, opportunities for student choice, and graphic organizers give struggling students access to engaging and challenging curricula. A living environment lesson plan based on solving environmental problems in New York City includes a section where students will research one of four environmental problems facing the city. The lesson includes modified tasks and supporting extensions for students with disabilities and ELLs, and supports such as translated text, content-specific dictionaries, video clips, modeled activity, explicit verbal and written instructions, accountable talk stems, flexible grouping and annotation. There is evidence of similar instructional planning across from lessons reviewed from different disciplines and grades. As a result, all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, participate in challenging tasks that promote high-level thinking and engage students in real-world learning experiences.
- Curricula consistently emphasize high-level skills aligned to Common Core and the school's expectations for college and career readiness. A global studies class requires students to answer questions such as, "How did the scientific revolution change how people view truth in the world?" Students were asked to explain their answers using relevant details while citing textual evidence. An environmental science lesson about soil and salinization asks students to write a hypothesis, write on ecological and economical questions that they would like to answer in their lab activity and then discuss the feasibility of beginning farming in a land with different levels of salinization.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

While some teachers are beginning to include tasks and classroom discussions that comprise higher-order thinking, such tasks and discussions were inconsistent across classrooms. Teaching practices are beginning to provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

### Impact

Across some classrooms visited, teacher-centered practices lessen opportunities for students to consistently engaged in tasks and classrooms discussions that result in high levels of student thinking and participation.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are actively working to improve student critical thinking skills through questioning, discussion and academic tasks. However, in-class questioning and discussions demonstrated inconsistent levels of rigor and participation. Most classroom discussions observed were between teacher and student, and text-based discussions were limited and only observed in two classrooms. In one class, students were provided with two articles related to *Animal Farm* and an article about current political events in the US. In preparation for a Socratic seminar activity, students were asked to annotate these texts and then engage in a discussion citing textual evidence. This level of engagement is yet to be implemented in other classrooms. In most classes observed, students had limited opportunities to cite information, most of the conversations that took place were between teacher and student, and this resulted in many missed opportunities for students to engage in high-level discussions.
- In an ICT Living Environment lesson, the task sheet was tiered into differentiated tasks as provided by the teacher for each group, and there were also language supports for ELLs including translated documents and the teacher-assigned partners. Most students worked collaboratively in groups where each student would have an assigned role within the group. They were engaged in the lesson and were annotating text, while teachers listed comments made during the share out and asked students clarifying questions to ensure understanding of the content. Tasks were scaffolded to make it more accessible for all students. Accountable talk stems were widely used by students, who were engaged in meaningful conversations. During the algebra lesson, students were working on quadratic equations, while the teacher asked many questions and dominated the lesson by maintaining full control of the learning; there were few opportunities to engage students to come to the board, solve the problem, and explain their process to the teacher and peers. As a result, there were missed opportunities to have students explain their thinking to classmates and to promote shared understanding of concepts, skills and strategies.
- In some classrooms, students were observed engaging in peer-to-peer or full-class discussion, but were not generating their own questions or responding directly to their peers. For example, in an environmental science class observed, students were asked to complete the work in groups and prepare a hypothesis and questions about soil and salinization. In this task, students were reading, annotating text from their case scenario, and having discussion within their groups. The teacher facilitated the process by meeting with each group to provide support or to push their thinking to accomplish their task. Students used accountable talk stems and academic vocabulary while generating their own questions. This level of student engagement in higher-order thinking skills and student participation in discussions has yet to be implemented across classrooms consistently.

## Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are loosely aligned with the school's curricula to determine student progress toward goals in most grades and subject areas. Although teachers are focusing on a school-wide formative assessment practice, teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

### Impact

Limited feedback to students at the classroom level reflects an inconsistent use of ongoing checks for understanding, student self-assessment and adjustments to instruction, thus student achievement is hindered, and teachers are limited in meeting all students' learning needs.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers shared that they use Common Core-aligned rubrics, checklists, and a school-wide grading policy aligned to the curricula to assess student achievement across grades and content areas. This was consistent with reviewed instructional planning documents and work posted on bulletin boards, with student work showing rubric-based feedback with next steps for the students to improve their work. However, a review of work products in classrooms showed that most feedback was given on writing tasks. In the meeting time with the students, they were asked to bring three samples of their best work from different subject areas. Some teachers' feedback on work products was aligned to rubrics with specific next steps, while others simply had a percentage or number grade, and/or a brief comment. The quality of the feedback varied from "Nice insightful ideas! Next time set up your essay in paragraphs (intro, body, conclusions) and add more analysis." to "Not bad, be more specific." Other samples consisted of the teacher only circling portions of the rubric, with no explicit next steps. This inconsistent actionable feedback hinders students' ability to improve performance on learning tasks.
- School leaders have identified a goal of increasing teachers' use of checks for understanding in the classroom, and teachers are expected to assess student learning on a daily basis in various forms including levels of understanding (LOUs), active listening, journaling, homework, exit slips, and quizzes. In their plans, teachers incorporate LOUs, exit slips, self-assessment questions, and rubrics to ensure ongoing checks for understanding. For example, during the observation of a United States history class, teachers and students used an LOU method using questions to assess their individual progress of finding supporting evidence from text to answer the question, "How do you think the Watergate scandal affected the attitude of Americans towards government?" While the students were on task, the teacher circulated about the room interacting with students noting their responses. Then, the teacher offered feedback to students and pushed them to higher levels of thinking by connecting the lesson to current political events in the United States. However, the use of ongoing checks for understanding and on-the-spot adjustment of instruction is yet to be implemented across classrooms. This uneven practice of using checks for understanding to adjust lessons on the spot hampers teachers' ability to support all students' learning needs.
- During a student meeting, some students articulated and demonstrated how rubrics for writing provided them with feedback to self-assess and adjust their writing. Students also stated that they use rubrics help them better understand what they need to do for higher levels of achievement and to track their progress. However, they mentioned that this type activity is not too frequent in most subjects; other students reported not being engaged in self-assessment activities. Also, across classrooms, students were rarely observed using rubrics to gauge the effectiveness of their work, thus limiting opportunities for students to understand their own areas for growth.

## Additional Finding

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

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff through ongoing feedback and professional learning aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teacher teams and staff have established a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations to all students.

### Impact

Teachers are aware of and understand that school leaders hold them accountable for teaching and learning that meets the leaders' expectations, and that they receive professional development and support to achieve their professional goals. Students are receiving messages of high expectations and guidance in preparation for the next academic level.

### Supporting Evidence

- High expectations are consistently emphasized to the faculty through weekly meetings and via the principal's memoranda, emails, faculty handbook, and agenda meetings, including those for professional development where faculty members are expected to reflect on their practice through collegial conversations, journal writing, examining student work, informal observations, conversations with students, or simply thinking about their teaching. High expectations are clearly delineated in the faculty handbook, where school leaders at the beginning of the school year facilitate a workshop to ensure that everyone understands and internalizes key elements of the faculty handbook that will impact learning and teaching.
- Frequent classroom observations and feedback from classroom visits hold staff accountable for meeting expectations. Teachers shared that they receive timely and accurate feedback from school leaders and peers, via intervisitations and professional development aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, with a focus on questioning, discussion techniques, scaffolding questions to activate prior knowledge and formative assessments.
- Students shared that across content areas they are using helpful strategies for college such as annotating, using text evidence to support their claims, analyzing evidence, using multiple approaches to solve problems, and working in groups to discuss different topics. They also shared that taking the entrepreneurship course has helped to explore their potential by engaging in a real-life experience of launching a business. The consistent use of these strategies equips students with the necessary tools to a successful transition to the next level where there is a stronger connection between the real-world applications and academics.
- School leaders ensure guidance and advisement supports for students designed to guide students in developing post-secondary success plan with a strong emphasis on the transition to college. The school has a full-time college advisor who tracks students' progress in the college search and application process. Students have opportunities to enroll in advanced placement courses, as well as college courses at Lehman College through the College-Now program. In addition, the school developed a partnership with a community-based organization that supports, advises and guides students, parents, and staff through the college application process. They also offer workshops, such as resume writing, job-readiness, and filling out the FAFSA. College trips have occurred, including overnight trips outside of New York City.
- School leaders and teachers host the Step-Up Night for the next graduating class and their parents. This event is a college application process information session, which gives the parents an overview of important dates and an outline of college requirements and the application process. In this event, school leaders make introductions to the senior team, guidance counselors, and advisors; they also exchange current information and begin the partnership with families in the journey towards college and career.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders support teachers with effective feedback and next steps from frequent cycles of observations and student work analysis. The feedback is aligned with the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, resulting in clear expectations and promotion of all teachers' professional development.

### Impact

The frequent cycles of observations and the use of multiple forms of clear and specific feedback has led to improved instructional planning across classrooms and a shared sense of urgency described by school leaders and teachers about higher instructional expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders designed six-week cycles to frequently observe all teachers and provide timely effective feedback aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. The observations process includes pre- and post-observation conferences. Student work produced during lessons observed is referred to in written feedback to teachers and referenced during the feedback conference between school leaders and teachers. The review of *Advance* reports indicates that school leaders are meeting their observation targets. As a result, an opportunity for teachers to grow their practice and increase capacity is evidenced in ongoing analysis of teacher and student work.
- A review of observation reports revealed that feedback offers teachers next steps for their analysis of student work. One report indicated that during the post-observation conference, the school leader discussed with the teacher about students using the school-wide annotation strategies during the lesson. Six of the nine students annotated during the group work. Of the six, most mainly underlined details and only one of the students boxed words. A suggestion from the school leader included to plan their next steps with regard to annotating that included developing explicit lessons to model and encourage students to box unfamiliar words and keep track of questions and ideas in the margins.
- New teachers benefit from the individualized support they receive from the two mentors assigned to each new teacher, as well as additional support from department chairs and school leaders. Also, at the beginning of the school year, new teachers are provided with a staff handbook that clearly delineates the school's high expectations for instruction and school culture, which is presented in a workshop format, so new teachers can interact and ask clarifying questions. Also, new teachers cite the usefulness of the established structures for teacher team collaboration, mentoring, school leaders on-going communications with faculty and invitations for intervisitations.
- Feedback from intervisitations is another approach used by school leaders to promote best practices and support teachers' professional growth. Teachers use protocols and a log with specific next steps and timelines for teachers to implement new strategies learned. During these instructional activities, teachers are focusing on Domain Three of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, instruction and are engaging in low inference note taking. During debrief sessions, they provide feedback where teachers identify strengths, challenges, and areas for development, all of which supports their continued growth. Also, mentors and department chairs are working with new teachers on lesson planning, classroom management and instruction to promote a consistent growth in their teaching craft. The school's approach to offer feedback in multiple formats and voices received by teachers has created a culture of professional collegiality that stimulates clear expectations for pedagogical practice. During the meetings with teachers, one teacher shared, "I am in my second year of teaching and the feedback I received from supervisors and colleagues has been crucial to improve my work with students." Another teacher shared that, "the one-on-one sessions with my supervisor, have provided me with specific strategies to support my students, especially to introduce new vocabulary and tips for time management."

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Teachers engage in inquiry-based professional collaboration that promotes distributed leadership and adjustments to teaching practices.

### Impact

Professional collaborations strengthen pedagogy and contribute to effective instructional practices in the classroom, and they provide opportunities for teachers to assume leadership roles in curriculum planning and development.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders ensured that all teachers participate three times a week in structured inquiry-based professional collaborations. Teacher teams meet to review curricula, work products, and student data to elevate the instructional capacity of teachers and align teacher practice to the school's goals and the Common Core. During collaborative team meetings, teachers used multiple sources of information such as results of Regents exams and mock Regents performance task assessments, formative and summative assessments, feedback received from school leaders and peers, as well as attendance and disciplinary incident reports to determine key areas of needs across the school. As a result, they determined that students were having difficulty implementing reading and writing strategies as they varied by classes and content. Teacher teams created school-wide instructional strategies that students can use across classroom and content areas such as common annotation, using different symbols and organizers, accountable talk stems, levels for understanding strategies and purposeful grouping. The implementation of these strategies was evident in instructional planning documents and they are all displayed on top of students' desks, thus improving practice and making progress towards goal attainment for all learners. Teachers reported that weekly collaborative planning meetings strengthen their instructional capacity, and one teacher shared that collaborating with peers has helped to improve her day-to-day planning.
- During the observed teacher team meeting, teachers used the Looking at Student Work protocol to focus on the task and student work. One teacher brought two pieces of textual evidence where students had to explain and support their claims. Teachers analyzed strengths and areas of growth, in addition to recommending instructional next step. Teachers' findings indicated that students gathered outside information, produced writing, and struggled to identify cause and effect, and showed grammatical errors that affect meaning and interpretation, and had difficulties following through with their thesis and identifying the ultimate effect of being positive or negative. Strategies suggested during the team meeting included; the use of sentence starters, continued reinforcement of writing mechanics, mentor provided text, engaging students in self-evaluation activities, and one-on-one conferences. The consistent effort of teacher teams results in increased capacity to implement Common Core curricula and meeting the needs of diverse learners.
- Department chairs represent all major content areas and take primary responsibility for facilitating team meetings and intervisitations, participating in cabinet meetings, providing input on curriculum decisions and facilitating professional development. For example, one team noticed a need to provide teachers with data support. Based on that need, teaches received targeted training around data. Then, each department had one full day, analyzing data from past Regents exams and developing action plans. These were updated throughout the year based on data from common assessments from departments, and action plan strategies are reflected in adjustments to the curricula. Teachers expressed feeling valued, and gave examples of key decisions that helped with changes to the school schedule, revising the structure of the teacher team meetings, having input on curricula purchases and adapting the advisory curricula.