Quality Review Report

2015-2016

The Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music

High School X442

2780 Reservoir Avenue
Bronx
NY 10468

Principal: Jerrod Mabry

Date of review: November 17, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Tracie Benjamin-Van Lierop
The School Context

The Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music is a high school with 426 students from grade 9 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 2% Asian, 24% Black, 70% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 5% English Language Learners and 18% students with disabilities. Boys account for 36% of the students enrolled and girls account for 64%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 89.6%.

School Quality Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school…</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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| School Culture | | |
| To what extent does the school… | 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 | Celebration | Well Developed |

| Systems for Improvement | | |
| To what extent does the school… | 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 | Well Developed |
Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training. School staff effectively conveys expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness and successfully partner with families.

Impact
A culture of mutual accountability to support student progress toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence
- The school’s unique model, which includes a robust, coherent music program in addition to their academic program, provides students with clear expectations of what they need to do in order to graduate from high school career and college ready. To support their students in achieving these challenging academic goals, school leaders and staff consistently work with families to ensure their students attain a 90% grade point average, 90% attendance, and a score of at least 80% on all Regents exams. This message is also communicated via the Parent Coordinator throughout the school year by means of monthly parent trainings, JupiterGrades, school newsletter, and in-person meetings with teachers. Parents of grade 9 students stated, “The administrators and teachers remembered my name and my child’s name after meeting us once during orientation.” Another parent of a student with a disability stated, “The school helped my son get a part-time tutoring math and this has made me want to take a proactive role in ensuring my son will be successful after high school.”
- Teachers participate in professional development focused on the Danielson Framework for Teaching, specifically domain 3b, Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques as they continue to move toward student-centered instruction and increase Regents passing rates and college and career readiness scores. For example, school leaders and staff have increased their intervisitation schedules within both grade level and content areas.
- Staff weekly calendars are sent electronically which communicate information regarding observation expectations, student progress reports, and musical performances. For example, information focused on parental communication includes reminding teachers to keep their student’s families updated on their progress and that their professional periods on Friday’s is an optimal time to update gradebooks and contact the parents or guardians of all students.
- The school orchestrates ongoing events and creates multiple opportunities to partner with and engage families in learning, fostering their participation in a culture of high expectations connected to college and career readiness. Examples of these partnerships include the New York Police Department’s Celebration of Mother’s in the Force, Urban Male Leadership Program’s Hispanic Heritage Celebration, and College Now at Lehman College.
**Area of Focus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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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. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

**Impact**

While students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products, the integration of high quality supports and extensions varies across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers believe students achieve at high levels when they have choice and the staff has incorporated Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles into their teaching techniques in order to provide students with choice in selecting class assignments and projects. For example, in a grade 10 Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) English class, students had the opportunity to choose from four different tasks based on their interests and skill level ranging in topics from Women’s Rights to the Civil Rights Movement however, some students did not have a clear understanding of how their choice connected to the overarching goal. In a grade 11 Math class, all students were focused on the same task selected by the teacher, and student choice of assignments was not evident.

- Teachers provide students with rigorous and challenging material that is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) by pre-determining student groupings that ensure peer-to-peer discussions and student-led Socratic seminars are happening in their classrooms. However, the level of discussion and questioning varies across the school. In a Math and Science class students were encouraged to use academic language yet, the Depths of Knowledge (DOK) questioning levels ranged between recall and skill with minimal strategic and extended thinking questions.

- In a grade 12 Music class, students prepared for the Winter Concert production where they played notes, rhythms, articulations, and dynamics correctly at rehearsal tempo. The teacher engaged in questioning and discussion techniques to ensure students were integrating their instrumental performance technique with the historical context of their musical selections. Students were asked to take into consideration their stamina during the performance and determine, “Where can we breathe?” How can we improve phrasing?” How can we improve intonation?”
Additional Findings

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), integrate the instructional shifts, and make purposeful decisions. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact
A refined curriculum promotes accessibility and college and career readiness for all students including students with disabilities (SWD’s) and English Language Learners (ELL’s).

Supporting Evidence
- The school has developed a curriculum library that includes curricula that has been updated, revised, and re-written to ensure alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards as well as provide all students with access to cognitively engaging material. In particular, the Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) teachers revised their unit plans to ensure their lessons were meeting the needs of this subgroup. As a result, the grade 10 English unit on *The Great Gatsby* and *The Great American Dream* was refined to include music and articles from that historical period in order to increase student engagement and pass rates for College and Career readiness levels on the English Language Arts Regents exam.

- An Algebra unit and the respective tasks were changed for the 2015-16 school year based on baseline student data from the beginning of the year and previous year’s student performance data. The teachers determined student pairings needed to be more purposeful and heterogeneous, self-assessment strategies needed to be modeled by teachers and students who were already engaged, and incorporating the animation via the smart board increased student understanding and decreased the number of student misunderstandings.

- Throughout the school year, school leaders collect and review unit and lesson plans to confirm alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards and UDL guidelines and principles. In addition, school leaders provide teachers with feedback and recommended next steps for their plans.
Quality Indicator: 2.2 Assessment  Rating: Proficient

Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school’s curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades.

Impact
Teachers and students are provided with actionable feedback and results are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence
- Teachers incorporate assessments in all lessons and use that data to guide their instruction both within the lesson in addition to moving forward within the unit. Teachers also use this data to inform their student groupings, differentiation needed for the lessons and any additional supports that may be needed. The ICT Algebra teachers use data throughout the class period from the Do Now activity to the end of the Exit Slip activity to determine which students have achieved the lesson objective and which students may need remedial instructional supports. The data also has informed the teachers of which areas they may need to spend increased time on in their units.

- The school has developed common rubrics within each department that are used by both teachers and students. The rubrics clarify what high quality work should encompass and allows for consistency across grades. When appropriate and in alignment with the school’s focus on Universal Design for Learning, students develop rubrics for class specific assessments giving the students a sense of ownership and responsibility for meeting grade level expectations.

- Teachers utilize common assessments to track student progress and inform curricular and instructional decisions. For example, all grade 9 students took the Scantron Performance Series English Language Arts and Math exams in September and used the results to inform their student grouping decisions, remedial coursework programming opportunities, and teacher instructional strategies.
Findings
Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work including classroom practice, assessment data, and student work. Distributed leadership structures are embedded so that there is effective teacher leadership.

Impact
Teachers play an integral role in key decisions resulting in shared improvement in teacher practice that affect student learning and improve mastery of goals for groups of students across the school.

Supporting Evidence
- Within teacher teams, teachers use the Atlas protocol to collaboratively look at student work and the Tuning protocol when reviewing lesson plans to inform improvement of their practice and student mastery. Since implementing these protocols into their weekly meetings, teachers have commented that there has been a direct correlation in their confidence and individual and collective practice.

- Intervisitations are a major focus of how teachers improve their practice. A teacher stated, “Intervisitations used to be done in a vacuum somewhat and now it’s deliberate and purposeful.” Another teacher stated, “We have all committed to visiting at least two teachers before the Christmas break and I know we’re all going to achieve this goal.”

- Using the itemized analysis in their teacher team meetings, teacher leaders decided to create the Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) team that has increased the goal objectives met for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities. The ICT team has also informed teaching practices for the other teams. For example, the use of accountable talk stems, annotation tools, and writing supports are being used across grades and departments for all students.

- Teacher leaders play an important role in the hiring process for all potential new instructional hires. The school’s hiring methodology which was created in collaboration with school leadership and teachers include require candidates to describe their experience working in an urban setting, statement explaining their desire to work at their school, experience with the Common Core Learning Standards, and an explanation of what teamwork means to them. This hiring methodology has created an environment where student learning needs are put first.