Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Bronx Health Sciences High School
High school 11X249
750 Baychester Ave.
Bronx
NY 10475

Principal: Miriam Rivas

Dates of Review:
March 7, 2017 - March 8, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince
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 Health Sciences 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<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 Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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 Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Findings
The school has established a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to the entire school community and provides guidance support to ensure students’ educational goals include paths to college and career readiness.

Impact
The principal consistently communicates high expectations to the staff, resulting in a culture of mutual accountability that provides effective, focused, and clear feedback to staff and students. Guidance and information to attain the next level and develop a path to college or career choices are clearly present.

Supporting Evidence

- The school supports high expectations and the academic growth of both teachers and students by offering ongoing feedback through several methods of support, including a school mission statement, memos, and emails that evaluate areas of growths and needs, thus informing schoolwide goal setting. Teachers engage in a system that includes extensive professional development, lesson observations, intervisitation, and informal walkthroughs. Students have rubrics for every assignment with actionable feedback given, as evidenced through examination of work in classrooms and work presented at the student meeting.

- There is a college readiness program that begins in grade 9 and includes mentoring of students having difficulties. Students in grades 11 and 12 have a college advisor who proactively begins the college process. All students receive guidance supports on the college process and receive teacher feedback regarding Regents exams and college and career readiness. The school has partnerships with parents/families to support student progress through the use of surveys and special programs of celebration. Moreover, student voices are heard as they become stakeholders in their learning. Students meet with various college representatives through a hosting program, there are college workshops, and tours, and students are able to attend college fairs. Students can apply for various leadership positions within the school and have started clubs, student government, and community involvement programs, such as neighborhood Health Fair, working with the American Cancer Society, and volunteering at the Bronx Zoo to learn animal behavior, anatomy, and physiology. In the Community Service Handbook, students have choices where they can volunteer, such as nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, hospitals, or associations to benefit children or the homeless.

- Juniper Grades, a computer-based program, is used to communicate to parents about their children’s progress and enables messaging between the teacher and the parent and/or the student. Teacher teams meet parents for conferences they deem necessary for immediate intervention. There is a full-term calendar based on a two-term year, with course requirements for each grade, as well as a handbook for students, staff, and parents. In addition, there is a schoolwide contract of expectations for academic, professional, character, and personal growth and development for all students. These expectations present non-negotiables with a focus on academic rigor, infusion of the school’s health theme, and an interdisciplinary approach to core subject areas.
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 are informed by Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Most students are appropriately engaged in challenging tasks and demonstrate high-order thinking skills in discussions and work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Student use of technology and cooperative learning groups are key components of daily instruction, as seen in the seven lessons observed. Several classes were interpreting and analyzing text and citing evidence. Graded student work included actionable written feedback from the teacher, accompanied by aligned rubrics. Pedagogy is aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, and curricula and teaching strategies provide multiple entry points, as shown through curriculum units, lesson plans and observations. For example, in a grade nine English class, students were working in pairs. Some students had art images while others had visual text examples to determine details in poetry. Differentiation was established in groupings that later discussed the meaning of being a “dove” during the Vietnam War versus being a “hawk.” Students discussed explanations that showed a connection to broader ideas in other subjects or in real life.

- In a grade 12 English Language Arts (ELA) class, students were discussing *The Divine Comedy* by working together in small groups, sharing ideas and discussing their reflections. There were instructional and process charts around the room. Each student had a packet that included a list of glossaries and a discussion rubric, and a dictionary was on each table to provide support. Each group of students had the responsibility for analyzing Dante’s initial response to the narrator’s journey and the sign over the entrance to hell. The teacher was circulating and using a checklist to assess discussions. Students were pushing each other to respond to textual evidence and read passages aloud. Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* questioning was established from the assignment and continued through student responses.

- Students in most classrooms visited engaged in group learning, with the teacher conferring with them to lead to more essential questioning by the students. In a grade 9 math class, the teacher was circulating and vocabulary was on the board as a “do now” for students to copy and put into sentences. This took time for all students, as they looked through their personal glossaries in their math notebooks. The students did not have the opportunity to share their answers and, when in pairs afterward, did not listen to each other’s statements. There were missed opportunities for student-to-student interaction, and, furthermore, the teacher did not interact with the paired groups while circulating.
### Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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#### Findings

Curricula and academic tasks are aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and content standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts, emphasize rigorous habits, and foster higher order thinking skills for all learners. Purposeful decisions are made to build college and career readiness.

#### Impact

All learners have access to rigorous academic tasks that are embedded in a coherent way across all subjects, including essential questions, performance tasks, project-based learning, a senior research project, extensive required health and science electives, and partnerships with community groups, ensuring greater student learning outcomes.

#### Supporting Evidence

- As evidenced in unit and lesson plans, scaffolding and higher order thinking skills and assignments are embedded into planning. A modified template of UBD (Understanding by Design/G.Wiggins) is used as a tool for designing and aligning lesson plans. Within this format there are essential questions and performance tasks, along with differentiated strategies for all learners. There are structures in place to make adjustments based on student performance in classes and on summative and formative assessments, increasing purposeful outcomes toward college and career readiness. Moreover, there are technology classes for each grade, and all eleventh grade students take a college and career skills class once a week which includes an internship with community partners, such as the Bronx Botanical Gardens.

- Curricula are modified based on data derived from ongoing analysis of student work. This includes assessments of individual and schoolwide projects, NYC performance tasks, and NYS Regents. Students are required to complete fourteen health and science electives beyond the core courses and a minimum of 420 hours of health-related community service. Many students who volunteer at health-related facilities ultimately are offered internships at these facilities. This process, with partners such as Montefiore and Beth Abraham Hospitals and the American Cancer Society, promotes career awareness and success by allowing students to participate in real-life work experiences.

- There is a BHS Project which engages students in researching topics, writing outlines, and creating final projects which are then presented grade-wide. The project ensures that the Common Core Learning Standards are present and reach all students, including students that need curriculum modifications and/or refinement. A component of the curricula is a senior exit project, a formal, career-related research paper, including citation of sources. All teachers are building Socratic seminars and debates into curriculum units for ELA, humanities, social studies, and science classes.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and assessments aligned with the curricula and use the results of common assessments to adjust curricula and instruction. Teaching strategies systemically embed scaffolding and on-going checks for understanding.

Impact
On-going assessments provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement, supporting and strengthening student discussions and work products. Effective adjustments are made to meet all students’ learning needs based on consistent checks for understanding.

Supporting Evidence
- Teachers use common rubrics aligned with the curricula as evidenced through curriculum units and lesson plans. These rubrics provide actionable feedback to students with suggestions for improvement, as seen in student workbooks at the student meeting and on display in classrooms. At both meetings, teachers articulated a clear goal that every lesson plan has scaffolding and multiple entry points to support learning for all students. Conferencing notes around student work and discussions assist teachers in checking for understanding and the need for reteaching. There is a schoolwide grading policy as well as teacher use of formative and summative assessments in the classroom to establish baselines and measure student growth and achievement in the specific content areas. A key assessment that informed the instructional practices in the school was the MoSL ELA Performance Task. The English department team analyzed the results of this task as well as student work products and determined that students needed support in writing evidence with detail. This information was shared during a professional development meeting.

- All teachers use common ELA and math assessments from based on the Common Core. Working in teams, teachers are improving assessments and analyzing data to have a common understanding of the performance and progress of students. Checks for understanding and student peer and self-assessments are part of an overarching plan that captures the types of assessments needed and the expected outcomes. Students can now recognize their own strengths and weaknesses, and this information is shared during grade team meetings. This plan is informed by the Common Core and Danielson Framework for Teaching, along with a process to measure student learning through writing tasks, shared rubrics, and scaffolding practices. Teacher checklists are used as tools for assessment in instruction for all tasks and assignments. Teachers also monitor student progress during extra instructional time and with an online tracking system to adjust student groupings, resources for scaffolding, and instructional strategies.

- After examining student work in both subject area and grade level teams, teachers relay their findings to the entire staff so they can use this data to revise and determine next steps to meet the needs of all students. Teachers are adjusting curriculum to reteach specific skills identified as deficits for at-risk students during small group instruction. Teachers stated that they have identified foundational skills challenges in writing assessments through examination of student work and common assessments. Every lesson has embedded checks for understanding, such as exit-slips, Depth of Knowledge questions, and performance tasks. Student work is posted on bulletin boards with rubrics containing actionable feedback. Student tasks are monitored on Skedula, an online grading system which students and their parents can access to monitor progress.
### Findings

School leaders, teacher leaders, and instructional leaders support the development of all teachers with effective feedback and next steps. Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths and challenges, and there are frequent cycles of classroom observation and analysis of student work and data.

### Impact

As evidenced in observation reports and feedback briefings, there are clear expectations for teacher practice and support for teacher development that aligns with schoolwide goals for improvement in pedagogy.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal stated that particular attention is paid to ensuring that teachers have a clear understanding of what it means to learn at the level of the Common Core and accurately employ the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. This is supported by extensive professional development, which is mostly done in-house. However, when opportunities arise for teachers to go to outside workshops, they go and are covered in their classes, with the responsibility of turn-keying information to the entire staff. This helps to strengthen teachers’ instructional skills to improve student work products and classroom procedures. Professional development is calendared weekly and is based on teaching experience and individual teacher needs. Common planning times are scheduled during the day for teachers to meet in different team configurations, including a Danielson Team, to share insights on learning styles and teaching and learning practices.

- Teachers revealed that they meet regularly during and after school to discuss instructional strategies and student work. There is rigorous unit planning using the UbD approach and established protocols for looking at student work to support teacher success. There is also a buddy system where an effective teacher is paired with a developing or early career teacher. Formal and informal feedback with actionable steps is aligned to the Danielson competencies, where areas of growth and needs are evaluated. Teachers are involved in professional walks and a cycle of peer-evaluation, and feedback is calendared. Teachers stated they are comfortable sharing best practices through intervisitation and during peer feedback, and they feel supported by administration and their peers.

- All teachers have received additional professional development in Danielson *Framework* in Domain 1, involving designing coherent instruction, and Domain 3, around questioning and discussion techniques, with the goal of strengthening teachers’ core practices. Teachers engage in feedback sessions with administrators and receive a rationale relating to their practice directly aligned to the Danielson *Framework*. Next steps include peer observation of an effective teacher practice within their grade, an instructional strategy to apply, and a timeframe for when an administrator will return to observe teacher progress. As a result of this cohesive system, teachers are applying instructional skills that support the implementation of the Common Core, resulting in schoolwide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</thead>
</table>

**Findings**

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations where they systematically analyze their own practices as well as student work and data.

**Impact**

The instructional capacity and coherence among teachers has increased along with student achievement for students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Professional development is based on teaching experience and individual teacher needs. Common planning times are scheduled during the day for teachers to meet in different team configurations to share insights on learning styles and needs of individual students. Each subject area team has created its own rubrics and focuses on practices and protocols to develop supportive partnerships. Based on recent agendas, there has been inquiry-based professional development for all teachers to inform strategic classroom assignments for students. There has been a 30 percent increase in teachers rated effective in designing and implementing performance-based tasks or activities. There is a Danielson inquiry team along with grade and department teams. These teams work along with the professional development committee to have targeted presentations based on data collection, evaluations, and peer-feedback. The PD plan is strategic in providing pedagogical support based upon careful review of all available school data, noting trends in student performance and the achievement gaps identified when analyzing performance indicators, such as item skills analysis within key content areas.

- Teachers interviewed all agreed that the collective efforts of teacher teams have had a direct impact on their approaches to student grouping and looking at student data, with informed teacher collaborations focusing on improving student-learning outcomes. Teachers revise curricula based on multiple sources of data, including formative and summative scores, benchmark assessment results, and classroom observational data from student work. Teachers analyze student work, giving feedback on the next steps needed to enhance instruction. Due to this extensive ongoing process across grades, students are seen in most classrooms engaging in accountable talk, formulating questions, and thinking critically. As stated at the team Q&A meeting, “Collaborative sharing has helped to build essential skills into the curriculum.” Teachers stated at all meetings that they take on responsibility for their professional development rather than relying heavily on top down delivery, in which teachers could be “passive observers.” Therefore, they have an active schedule of intervisitation to see best practices and learn about what has been successful, giving feedback to each other using Danielson’s rubric.

- Teacher teams discuss instructional practices with peers and make timely adjustments to curriculum and instruction. At the grade 9 teacher team meeting, which is cross-curricular, teachers were examining a student feedback form, discussing ways to look at student work and debrief with students effectively. The form emphasized a student’s strengths, weaknesses, and goals, both short and long term, along with actions to take to achieve these goals. This form was then transferred into lesson planning and re-teaching initiatives. As stated at a teacher team meeting, the teams strive to make improvements in learning that are demonstrated in student work products, such as writing that shows the use of academic language, direct quotes, and citations. Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work including classroom practice, assessment data, and student work products, supporting each other by providing feedback on next steps to inform instruction.