Quality Review Report

2016-2017

East Bronx Academy for the Future
Secondary School 12X271
1716 Southern Blvd.
Bronx
NY 10460

Principal: Sarah Scrogin

Dates of Review:
March 9, 2017 - March 10, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Lenneen Gibson
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

East Bronx Academy for the Future serves students in grade 6 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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<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>Additional Finding</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

<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>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
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### Systems for Improvement

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</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>
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<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>
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<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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

The implementation of restorative practices, the East Bronx Academy (EBA) Starts initiative, and an advisory program foster the school’s approach to building a safe and inclusive culture. The advisory advocates and “kid talk” meetings ensure that each student is known well by at least one adult.

Impact

The school’s approach to building a safe and inclusive culture values student voice and allows students to be known by an adult very well that impacts students’ academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has supports in place such as restorative practices, relationship building circles, and EBA Starts that reinforce the school’s values, and implements an advisory program resulting in a safe and inclusive school culture where student voice is welcomed and valued. The school has partnered with the Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, which provides staff with training in restorative circles. Time is embedded in the school schedule to conduct circle time and academic and social emotional activities grounded in building trusting relationships with the students that are immersed in the school’s core values of “What does it mean to be a Knight?” These values include: redemption, love, and collaboration/community. This is also exemplified through the implementation of a food pantry to service families in need. An advisory program also provides students with another opportunity to have a safe space to build relationships with their peers and “staffulty” (staff and faculty). The advisory program also allows students to monitor their own academic progress to ensure scholastic success. Advisors monitor advisee progress through the use of advisory trackers. As a result of these practices, the number of suspensions has been reduced from 167 in 2015 to 35 in 2016.

- Student voice is valued and included in school improvement efforts. Students are part of the School Leadership Team (SLT), which is an integral decision-making body in the school. Student focus groups on negotiable and non-negotiable behaviors have been conducted. Students also provide feedback on the effectiveness of the advisory program by completing advisory forms. For example, students were using their headphones, but they were not being confiscated. As a result, the rules about wearing headphones have been more relaxed, and there is more student ownership in this rule. The student council known at The Knights had a voice in selecting the school’s logo and mascot, which included a letter writing campaign. A student recently testified before the city council and discussed that restorative circles in the school has supported him. During the student group meeting, students attested that homework clubs, game clubs, a softball team, Regents prep, trips, and college trips all resulted from student voice.

- Advisory advocates ensure that each student is known well by at least one adult. An advisory advocate is a staff member who serves as a mentor to a young adult to provide tier one interventions. During the student meetings, students verified this by identifying counselors, teachers, and safety agents as adults they know really well and who provide them with emotional support. Teachers meet weekly as a team with guidance counselors to conduct “kid talk” about groups of students who are at risk. During “kid talks,” a student’s strengths, challenges, current interventions in place, and the next steps for the groups of students are discussed. As a result of these initiatives, the graduation rate has increased.
# Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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## Findings

Content specific checklists and rubrics are aligned to the school’s curricula. Common assessments such as *The Achievement Networks* and school-created assessments are used to determine student progress towards goals across subject areas.

## Impact

Data from common assessments are tracked and used to adjust curricula and instruction. Assessments are aligned to the school’s curricula and provide actionable feedback to students, but this feedback has yet to provide a clear portrait of student mastery regarding student achievement.

## Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use checklists such as the scientific task explanation, and rubrics such as the mathematical practice rubric, an argumentative writing rubric with criteria such as claim, reason, evidence, analysis (CREA), a document-based question rubric, and other content specific rubrics that are aligned to the school’s curricula to provide actionable feedback to students regarding their achievement. For example, a math quiz was assessed using a math quiz rubric. The feedback to the student cited the need to work on applying the area formula on a triangle, simplifying expressions using order of operations, and modeling fraction and division problems with a division number sentence. A science performance task required students to assume the role of a physician who recently diagnosed a patient with an immunodeficiency disease. Students were required to write a letter to the patient citing his/her prognosis, explained the disease transmission as well as treatment. A performance task rubric as well as track changes in Google Docs were used. The feedback to the student suggested comparing and contrasting the immune responses of a healthy with an unhealthy person when the body is attacked by a pathogen.

- Math teachers conducted an item analysis using *The Achievement Networks* assessment tool and focused on the standard concerning positioning rational numbers on number lines and coordinate planes. Analysis of the data showed that ten percent of the students answered the question aligned to this standard correctly. An error analysis showed that students were making a conceptual and procedural error regarding this question as positive and negative integers move along a vertical number line defined by a thermometer. As next steps, teachers decided to reteach this standard by addressing the concept that values increase or decrease as you move up or down a vertical number line. As a result of the math teachers conducting an item analysis of *The Achievement Networks* assessments, teachers are making adjustments in their units, conducting re-teaches of content, and creating small groups of students not attaining mastery on the assessments. Although adjustments are being made to instruction, the demonstration of an increase in mastery for all students was not evident.

- English Language Arts (ELA) teachers analyzed common assessment data based on student performance on standards such as citing textual evidence to support what the text says and drawing inferences as well as determining the central idea of a text. Teachers adjusted instruction by modeling annotation of selected texts, by creating annotation symbols, and also by providing targeted instruction for specific groups of students. Data analysis was conducted on a science unit test on vectors and projectiles. Analysis showed that only ten percent of the students knew how to add vectors to produce equilibrium and were unknowledgeable of using a ruler to draw a vector to scale. Adjustment to instruction included re-teaching these standards and differentiating instruction for specific students.
Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 1.1 Curriculum  
**Rating:** Proficient

### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that unit plans are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Teachers modify curricula and academic tasks using student work and data.

### Impact

Alignment of the curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and the integration of the instructional shifts build coherence and ensure college and career readiness for all students. Refinements of the curricula and tasks ensure that a diversity of learners have access to the curricula.

### Supporting Evidence

- A sixth grade social studies unit plan contains elements such as the enduring understandings, essential questions and skills, learning targets, performance tasks, formative and summative assessments, content approaches, anticipating barriers, learning activities, academic vocabulary, and learning supports for diverse learners. The unit plan shows alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and the incorporation of the instructional shift of citing and analyzing textual evidence for historical content and describing and analyzing arguments. An eighth grade social studies unit plan similarly shows the same elements and the integration of the instructional shifts such as writing arguments to support claims and reasons, and well as analyzing evidence. An eighth grade ELA unit map also shows the same elements and the incorporation of citing textual evidence, analyzing the text, and drawing inferences. The integration of the similar shifts across grades and subject areas demonstrates coherence and promotes college and career readiness for all students.

- Teachers schoolwide use data trackers to analyze student classroom performance data to make modifications to lesson and or unit plans. A science unit plan shows modifications in terms of the grouping of students and the anticipated barriers into the content for specific students. Differentiated strategies for diverse learners are listed to ensure access to the curricula. An ELA unit plan also shows modifications in the grouping of students, anticipated barriers into the content for specific students and an addition of a new topic into the pacing calendar. Data for diverse learners also included the reading levels their reading levels and strategic grouping also noted on the unit plans.

- Assessment data, such as *The Achievement Networks* assessment tool, is used to modify academic tasks in mathematics. For example, students did not attain mastery on the questions that assessed ratios. Modifications such as constructing a ratio and proportion performance task, incorporating manipulatives to reinforce the ratio, and proportion concepts and including more open-ended questions on the same topic. Similarly, marking period data was analyzed for a targeted group of students. Based on a mathematics academic task, students, specifically diverse learners, demonstrated difficulty articulating in words which equation matched the corresponding graph and why. Modifications to the task included reconstructing the problem to include common errors and misconceptions so that students could identify and explain the error as well as correct the error.
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

The implementation of the Teaching Assistant Scholars (TAS) program exemplifies practices that articulate a set of beliefs about how students learn best. Teaching strategies, such as the use of scaffolds and communicating in a student’s native language, consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

Teaching practices provide multiple entry points so that all learners have access to appropriately challenging tasks. Teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and demonstrate a set of beliefs of how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal articulated that the core belief about how students learn best at EBA is by doing and collaboration. EBA has a TAS initiative in which students are vetted through a course and assigned to tutor in a particular subject. In a science class, students were working on different tasks or experiments. For example, some students were designing their own experiment to test the acceleration of a falling object; another group was designing free body diagrams, while another group was graphing the force of friction of an object. A TAS was seen collaborating with a student and explained how to find a missing variable. The TAS asked the student, “What are you keeping the same?” The student responded, “Pattern and distance.” The TASs were seen assisting and collaborating with the various student groups. In a math class with diverse learners, a TAS was observed explaining to a group of students how to use the standard, factored, and vertex forms to solve a problem on a white board.

- Teaching strategies across classrooms such as using scaffolds and communicating in a student’s native language provide multiple entry points into the curricula. In a mathematics class, the learning objective stated, “Students will be able to create and interpret box and box whisker plots.” Working in collaborative groups, students were working on a worksheet on creating box whisker plots, but also had a scaffold that delineated the steps to creating a box whisker plot that was used as a support tool in solving the problems. Students were also observed communicating in their native language in discussions about creating box whisker plots and using the computer program, Starfall, for additional support. In a global history class with diverse learners, students were tasked with answering the essential question, “Was communism beneficial for the Soviet Union?” Using a graphic organizer entitled, “Focus skill #1 – Evidence and Elaboration,” students analyzed documents on Lenin and Stalin, identified two pieces of evidence to support a claim and reason, and wrote two to three sentences for each piece of evidence. Students were observed annotating their readings and using the graphic organizer to note their evidence.

- The use of scaffolds provided opportunities for all learners to have access to the curricula as well as appropriately challenging tasks. In an ELA class with diverse learners, the learning objective for the class stated, “How can I create short responses that reflect understanding of the questions and skills related to fictional texts?” Students analyzed two short passages entitled, “The Spot” and “Wolf.” Using a scaffold and the answer, detail, detail, explain (A.D.D.E) protocol, students answered questions related to the passages and cited textual evidence to substantiate their answers. In an Advanced Placement English Language Composition class, students were conducting three rounds of a literature circle on texts such as *The Odyssey, The Stranger, Hamlet, and Things Fall Apart.* Students used two scaffolds, one entitled, “Lit Circle Final Presentations,” and a note catcher for the literature circle that called for a summary, theme, literary element, and an interesting noticing from the book to those leading the circle.
Findings
School leaders and staff effectively communicate with families about the culture for learning and high expectations connected to a path towards college and career readiness.

Impact
The school community articulates high expectations and provides clear guidance and progress towards those expectations for all students to prepare them for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- Staff members implement effective strategies for communicating high expectations about college and career readiness and partnering with families to ensure students meet those expectations. Parents are apprised of their children’s academic progress through report cards, monthly progress reports, weekly parent engagement meetings, and phone calls to the home. Middle school parents receive parent packages delineating the expectations for students at each grade level. Parents are also involved in teacher team “kid talks” to partner with school staff to provide additional support for students. In addition, portals, such as PupilPath and KinVolved, also keep families abreast of their children’s academic progress as well as their attendance. Monthly newsletters to parents and student handbooks also delineate expectations to the families. Monthly parent meetings, computer training workshops, and high school equivalency preparation courses are provided for the parents. Parents partner with the school and serve as Community Ambassadors who welcome students into the school daily and serve as mentors for chronically absent students. Parents of the School Leadership Team (SLT) mentioned that they contribute ideas on curricula that have resulted in a college mathematics preparatory course being offered.

- The school community has set clear structures such as an advisory program that articulates high expectations to students. During a visit to a ninth grade advisory class, students were conducting a progress report review by looking at their grades and organizing classroom performance data on the progress report review. Students conduct an inventory of their grades, set actionable goals and action plans to achieve by the end of the marking period. A student said that since having advisory and setting goals for herself, she has seen improvement in her algebra class. As a result of implementing the advisory program, there has been an increase in credit accumulation and an overall course pass rate of ninety-one percent for the current cohort of ninth graders.

- Teachers and staff have set systematic structures such as a progressive academic, college, and career expectations plan that begins in middle school and continues throughout the high school grades until graduation. A college and career tracker is used in tandem with the program that tracks credit accumulation, college preparatory classes such as Advanced Placement and College Now, performance on Regents exams, TAS program involvement, and college exam prep classes for Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Tests (ACT). A college seminar course on what is required to be successful in college is embedded in the school’s offering of classes. Career and counseling checklists and timelines are provided at each grade level that delineate the expectations towards college and career readiness. Career fairs and college visits are instituted for all grades, and students have a choice among colleges to visit. A transition coordinator works with diverse learners on post-secondary plans. As a result of the systematic communication from the staff, the school has an 83 percent graduation rate. Out of the 85 graduates, 76 students attended two-or four-year colleges.
### Additional Finding

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<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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**Findings**

Grade, subject area, and leadership teams are distributive leadership structures that are embedded within the school. Teacher teams systematically analyze student work for students they share.

**Impact**

Teacher teams analyze assessment data resulting in shared improvements in teacher practice and mastery of goals for groups of students. Teacher voice plays an integral role in decisions that affect student learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams provide a data-based rationale and analysis of student work that inform their decisions to adjust teacher practice and to create goals for groups of students. A humanities teacher team was observed engaging in inquiry work. The goal of the meeting was to analyze student work based on their initial observations and to reconfirm their findings. In addition, the meeting sought to answer if the interventions put in place for groups of students were effective or needed to be adjusted. Teachers used a *Looking at Student Work* protocol to analyze a group of six students’ document-based question argumentative essay. The teachers identified trends and challenges in the student work such as students’ exhibiting solid organization and using transitions in their writing. Students needed support in evaluating multiple pieces of evidence. Next steps for the students included creating a scaffold for the students that supports them in evaluating multiple pieces of evidence.

- A high school ELA team looked at students’ disaggregated ELA Regents exam data and observed students were demonstrating challenges with analyzing figurative language, not citing enough evidence from the text, nor using evidence relevant to the literary element and theme. As a result of analyzing the data, strategies that were implemented included a Socratic seminar emphasizing evidence based claims, using the high school ELA reading level tracker to plan instruction, and creating a literary theme and element reading response journal entry. As result of the teacher teamwork, the class of 2017 demonstrated a 78 percent passing rate on the ELA Regents exam.

- Distributive leadership structures are embedded so that teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school. There are subject team leaders who serve as facilitators for team meetings and coaches for individual teachers providing feedback to teachers on the school’s and the team’s goals aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Grade team leaders facilitate meetings by partnering with guidance counselors and learning specialists to plan interventions for diverse learners and to engage in “kid talk.” Subject and grade team leaders meet with the administrative team weekly as a teacher leadership team to set goals, reflect on progress, plan agendas for weekly team meetings and promote school culture and adult learning. Week long retreats during the summer allow for additional planning for the coming school year. As a result of reviewing progress towards school goals, the *Reading Revolution* was implemented at the high school level to support students in decoding. The distributive leadership structures over the years have resulted in numerous teachers and assistant principals becoming network leaders, deputy network leaders, principal leadership facilitators, principals, assistant principals, lead teachers, and model teachers.