Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Bronx Haven High School
High school 07X381
333 East 151st St.
Bronx
NY 10451

Principal: Jazmin Rivera-Polanco

Dates of Review:
December 15, 2016 - December 16, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Tracie Benjamin-Van Lierop
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


School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</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>Developing</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Additional Finding

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

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</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>Proficient</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>Proficient</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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 1.4 Positive Learning Environment | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

The school’s approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional support is informed by a theory of action that emphasizes the importance of knowing students well in order to holistically meet their needs. Structures are in place so that each student is known well by at least one adult who helps to personalize attendance supports and coordinate social-emotional learning and youth development.

Impact

The school meaningfully involves student voice in decision-making to initiate, guide, and lead school improvement efforts. Guidance supports impact students’ academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- The Single Shepard program, which pairs a guidance counselor and social worker to support students from high school graduation to college enrollment, has increased collaboration with the entire staff. Through this increased collaboration and student voice from the females, who represent 48 percent of the student population, the staff realized they had a variety of programs to address the needs of their male students, but none to meet the needs of their female students. As a result of this collaboration among faculty and students, the Girls Empowered Motivated and Strong (G.E.M.S.) group was created. G.E.M.S. works with students on self-esteem, professional and personal relationships, academic and social-emotional goals, and making healthy decisions. During the student meeting, students reported the impact this group has had on their health and grades. A student with diabetes reported having a healthier diet because of what she has learned in the group about her previous poor food choices, which used to negatively impact her attendance that has since improved. Another student spoke of the emotional support she receives as the parent of a small child, which enables her to persevere to work hard, stay in school, and potentially attend college. The student stated, “This is progress for me because when I entered the school, college was the furthest thing from my mind and now I’m considering it so my family can have a better life.”

- Building Better Men (BBM) is a group started for the male students. This group was created to build leadership qualities for the male students, who are predominantly Black and Latino. There are factors taken into consideration when choosing participants for BBM, such as maturity levels and the need of support to re-direct them on the right path. Some students have reported feeling invisible and others invincible. The ultimate focus of the group is to create a unified community of young men who are able to understand their connection to each other, school community, and the continuous work and dedication needed to achieve their goals. Consequently, many of the members are chosen to take on leadership roles within the school or mentor students who are new to the school community.

- Bronx Haven staff believes in creating a safe environment for all students. The staff and students have worked together to form a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) group, which is also referred to as the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA). The school created the group to ensure that students are given the space and opportunity to feel free to discuss important matters regarding their sexuality, a supportive alliance between LGBTQ and straight students, and maintain an anti-bullying culture.

- In collaboration with East Side House Settlement, the school’s Community Based Organization (CBO), teachers engage in kid talk sessions where they discuss students’ areas of strength, areas of concern, interventions attempted, and next steps.
Findings
Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs that students learn best when exposed to instruction that is personalized and rooted in a growth mindset model informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact
Instructional alignment reflects student work and levels of discussions that are varied across content areas, limiting higher order thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Students in an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) science class were heterogeneously grouped and worked on a density lab assignment. The teachers attempted to bring in real-world applications and provide students with opportunities for hands-on activities. However, student work products in each group varied as there were students who needed additional teacher support. The special education teacher worked with one group and collected data as she observed their progress, while the general education teacher circulated throughout the room to check-in with students. However, after the special education teacher moved to the next group, students continued to have misconceptions about the assignment, as reflected by their incorrect responses or lack of work on their worksheets. In a social studies ICT class focused on identifying key elements of and analyzing a political cartoon, both teachers and students supported students who were struggling with articulating their thoughts. In one group, a student assisted her classmate by reminding her to reference her notes. In another group, the teacher encouraged the student to use the interactive whiteboard to take a closer look at the displayed propaganda images. The students’ work consisted of an independent meme analysis, leading to the development of their own political cartoons to support a cause from a specific time period containing the key elements.

- Students in an algebra class independently factored quadratic expressions. Some students worked independently while others worked with a partner or a group while the teacher facilitated student progress. Most students did not complete the assignment, with the majority of the students not answering the question on the worksheet, “Why did we make adjustments to all the quadratic expressions we worked with today?” When students were asked to explain their thinking in attempting to solve the expressions, students had difficulty or simply stated they did not understand the task.

- In an ICT humanities class, students led the conversation while one teacher captured student response data and the other teacher facilitated the conversation while students used two primary source documents to determine the purpose of Abraham Lincoln writing the Emancipation Proclamation. The discussion transitioned into students writing a response to the questions, “What is the author’s purpose?”, “What events led to the Civil War?”, and “If you were the leader of a group of discouraged followers, what would you say to inspire them to continue their struggle?” All students participated in the discussion and one of the student roles during the discussion included a participation checker. However, some students used statements that included “I feel…” and did not always support their responses with textual evidence.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Purposeful decisions are made to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students. English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers work collaboratively to ensure the curricula is consistently aligned to the Common Core in addition to planning and refining the curricula on a weekly basis. A forensic science lesson plan based on the similarities and differences of psychopaths and sociopaths was revised to include additional differentiated strategies such as frontloading vocabulary words, and identifying different types of murders based on motivation, location, and timing. PowerPoint notes were included with student handouts and for some, a graphic organizer categorized by quality, description, and psychopath and sociopath were added resources for students who needed additional supports.

- The school’s curricular choices stem from student needs. The principal stated, “Our students are coming from schools where they have been unsuccessful and it is our responsibility to design and implement curriculum based on their learning gaps. We make sure our Common Core aligned curricula include real world applications for our students in reading, writing, and speaking.” Teachers’ concerns with students’ writing skills resulted in a teacher designing curriculum to support students with basic writing skills that teachers report is having a positive impact on the structure and quality of paragraphs in student essays. Students also reported their improvement in writing across content areas due to the focus on improving their foundational writing skills.

- When prompted during a student meeting to speak about a project that they believe has promoted college and career expectations, students noted the “Day of the Dead” project because of the many aspects of the assignment. They included organization of their content, layout and design, the use of graphics and reliable sources, mechanics, and the presentation of their work. Students added that having an opportunity to work on a project that they were able to culturally relate to was equally important to them as well.

- In global history, school leadership and teachers reviewed student data and noticed that students were struggling with document-based questions and needed to improve their close reading skills and elaborate their written responses connected to the text. Teachers revised their curriculum to add more opportunities for student discussion and participation by encouraging students to reference the texts during their class conversations while also making meaning of the texts with their peers and to then transition into a written response.

- The school has 77 percent of students who are overaged and under-credited, 22 percent students with disabilities, and six percent ELLs, and the curricula reflects revisions to meet the needs of these groups of students, specifically the lowest achieving students. However, the curricula do not reflect academic tasks that have been refined and planned across all content areas for the highest achieving students.
### Additional Finding

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

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

#### Impact

Teachers and students obtain actionable feedback regarding student achievement. Teachers use assessment results to adjust curricula and instruction.

#### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers and school leaders use the New Visions data sorter and Power School to inform instructional next steps based on students needs. Teachers used assessment data across content areas and student work to determine that students were struggling with their writing. Students were not elaborating on their ideas and not completing additional drafts of their essays. As a result, teachers realized that their students needed additional opportunities and time to have more discussion and teacher-to-student conferencing in support of their writing. Students increasingly understand that their first drafts are a part of their assessment and that second and sometimes third drafts are part of the writing process.

- The school shifted their benchmark assessments from two to three weeks in order to have a deeper understanding of student progress. Teachers have three weeks to teach a unit of study and then assess their students’ learning, which is then reviewed with students the following week. Based on ongoing and summative assessments, teachers use data to inform re-teaching concepts that were not mastered and to adjust their curricula. As a result, according to the New York City Department of Education’s School Quality Snapshot, this school rates excellent in closing the achievement gap for students with disabilities, overage and under-credited students.

- Reviewed student work included actionable feedback that was aligned with accompanying rubrics that guide their efforts. Students across cohorts agreed that they receive feedback on a daily basis. One student said, “We get graded on whether we meet standards or are above or below. We always know how we’re doing.” A review of projects and class assignments incorporated rubrics, with a particular focus on writing. A Participation in Government assessment included an informational writing rubric that assessed the organization of complex ideas and concepts, development of relevant facts, the use of varied transitions, and a concluding statement that supported the information presented. The feedback provided to the student informed the second draft in which the student received a higher grade.

- Student work on bulletin boards, in portfolios and notebooks, in addition to student comments, demonstrate the value the school places on providing actionable feedback to students. However, feedback that was actionable and meaningful to student progress varied across classrooms.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students.

Impact

Ongoing feedback is provided to help families understand student progress toward post-secondary expectations. Staff offers ongoing and detailed feedback and guidance supports that prepares students for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- Advisors work closely with families and conduct home visits when necessary to ensure students stay on track to graduate. “The school does a good job of keeping parents informed. The genuine care and preparation for life after this school is taken seriously here. It is truly a haven”, stated a parent. Another parent commented, “I appreciate the support the school provides with internships, working papers, and financial aid information.” Overwhelmingly, parents spoke to the success their children experienced in this school community after experiencing many failed attempts in other schools.

- The school offers college and career programs such as College Now, which offers high school students an opportunity to enroll in college courses with a professor and experience college readiness both academically and socially. Students also have the opportunity to receive free college credits if they receive a grade of C or better. Students appreciate the exposure to internships. “It gets us ready for the work force or college and it opens a door for us that we didn’t know would open”, stated one student. Many of the students interviewed did not have a resume before they came to the school and now they report having resumes with internships and paid jobs on them. Another student shared, “My internship also helped me decide what I don’t want to do as well.”

- Students are tracked through their senior year to ensure that they are accumulating credits and passing their Regents exams using a graduate chart checklist. The chart allows their guidance advisor to evaluate how many students are college bound each year as well as how many stay matriculated after their first semester. Some of the items that are tracked include the expected date of graduation, the status of financial aid applications, City University of New York (CUNY) and other college and university applications, the college orientation date, and the college or certificate program that the student will be attending starting in the fall or spring semester. Twenty percent of students have pursued a CUNY school, and one percent New York State public and private colleges.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</table>

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused.

Impact

The instructional capacity of teachers is strengthening, typically resulting in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers participate in inquiry content teams every week. Teams analyze their students' work and content to ensure alignment and that the consistent implementation of the Common Core is meeting their students' needs. The focus on a growth mindset is improving teacher practice through their provision of more targeted feedback to students. The inclusion of station work in lessons is increasing student engagement and attendance. Teachers have informally engaged in intervisitations and follow up with each other after the visit. During a social studies teacher team meeting, members analyzed students' document based essays and found that students were able to provide multiple perspectives. However, not all students provided specific examples from the text. As a result of this analysis, teachers decided to implement a five-step protocol for students to follow.

- An English Language Arts (ELA) ICT teacher has seen an increase in the number of students who have demonstrated progress using specific graphic organizers to assist in organizing their thoughts for argumentative essays. This skill can be a challenge for some of her students with disabilities. Some students are now writing entire essays without the organizer because their skill sets are developing. Students take Regents exams in ELA, Algebra, Living Environment, and social studies. Students have shown the greatest improvement from their incoming proficiency levels and performance on the ELA Regents exam.

- Teachers acknowledged that they are incorporating more metacognitive questions into their lessons and discussions with students. "We want students to really think about what they find challenging in our lessons and what they recognize helps them to do better in class. We want our students to be reflective", stated a history teacher. Teachers and leadership believe that the improved instructional practices and sharing of ideas have led to their students graduating at a higher percentage than the school's comparison group, comprised of populations of similar at-risk students who were far off track for their age.