Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Bronx Collegiate Academy
High school 09X227
240 East 172 Street
Bronx
NY 10457

Principal: Darryl White

Dates of Review:
April 19, 2018 - April 20, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Edward Hazen
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 Collegiate Academy 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>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>
<td></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>
<td></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>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Additional Finding</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>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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Additional Finding</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>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>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>Area of Celebration</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

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

School leaders support the professional growth of teachers using strategic cycles of observation that inform professional development and provide effective feedback to teachers, including next steps.

Impact

An effective observation cycle using the Danielson Framework for Teaching and collegial support from teacher peers result in elevated schoolwide instructional practices that promote professional growth, reflection, and improved pedagogy.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leadership team has an effective formal observation cycle in place to support the professional development of teachers and provide actionable feedback on instructional practices via frequent classroom observations and follow-up collegial conversations. School leaders frequently analyze teacher observation data and student data to determine progress toward meeting the schoolwide instructional goals and make adjustments accordingly to ensure alignment to the instructional foci. For example, the school leadership team provided professional learning sessions on co-teaching models and set expectations for the co-teaching partnerships at the school to ensure the strategic use of instructional time as well as student data and work products during collaborative planning. Similarly, teachers new to the profession or the school receive support directly from the teacher leader for their department and from the peer collaborative teacher along with support from their teacher team colleagues. Teachers reported that this structure results in the closure of gaps in their professional learning and helps them align their practices to the instructional foci of the school.

- Teachers report that the structured observation and inquiry work cycles, including weekly teamwork focused on improving pedagogy, classroom inter-visitation, and meaningful feedback on formal and informal observations by school leaders and teacher peers, has resulted in a supportive culture that has increased teacher capacity. A review of written observations confirms that teachers receive actionable feedback with next steps for improvement. For example, a teacher rated developing was provided with next steps to enhance student engagement. Leader feedback directed her to “plan academic tasks that reach level 3 or 4 on Webb’s Depth of Knowledge,” and ensure that lessons are relevant so that students can answer the question, “Why am I learning this?” Teachers reported that intervisitation and collegial feedback has strengthened their pedagogy and helped them implement strategies to support schoolwide goals. Professional growth is reflected in the school’s Advance data, where the percentage of teachers rated Effective or Highly Effective is 100 percent, indicating the positive impact of the school observation cycles and teacher-to-teacher feedback.

- Feedback supports teacher development and aligns teachers’ align professional goals with school leaders’ clearly articulated instructional foci. School leaders participate in professional learning and inquiry work alongside teacher teams, resulting in teachers and instructional leaders reflecting on their pedagogy and working in partnership to meet both school and personal goals. Moreover, school leaders have established learning cycles with a professional development plan that identifies professional goals aligned to gaps in instructional practices and provides professional learning to strengthen teachers’ ability to close the gaps. For example, after engaging students in the close analysis of text, teachers and leaders identified high levels of student discourse, and purposeful writing across contents as areas in need of improvement and made recommendations for additional support for teachers to improve their practice in these areas.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use a variety of Common Core and content standards-aligned assessment data to set classroom and individual student achievement goals and to plan next steps for instruction. Teachers use rubrics to provide feedback to students.

Impact
Common assessment results, including Regents exam data, are used to adjust curricula, determine students’ progress toward meeting the Common Core and content standards, and plan supports for students. While teachers provide feedback with actionable next steps, leading to improvement in student achievement, feedback varies across classes and is not yet meaningful to students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use rubrics and assessments to monitor student progress and provide actionable feedback with next steps for improvement. A review of student work samples showed evidence that most students receive rubric-based feedback with next steps to improve their writing. For example, in an Advanced Placement (AP) language class, a student was able to explain how the teacher’s feedback about how to provide stronger textual evidence to identify an author’s purpose had helped strengthen her performance on subsequent essay writing tasks. Other students acknowledged that similar feedback from teachers has helped them improve their writing as well. Not all students, however, could articulate how teacher feedback had resulted in an improvement in their writing across content areas or in math. Thus, the teacher feedback is not yet meaningful for all students across all classes.

- Teachers regularly administer common assessments such as baseline and end-of-unit assessments and commonly administered quarterly “IAs” or Interim Assessments. In most classes, teachers create on-demand writing assessments and use exit tickets as a formative assessment to determine adjustments to instruction. For example, students identified as struggling with differentiating the causes and effects of the Civil War in a social studies class were provided with graphic organizers in a subsequent class. Additionally, Teachers conduct an item-skills analysis of mock Regents assessments to prioritize high-leverage standards and plan instruction accordingly. Teachers share data with students on the standards mastered and standards to focus on to be successful on the New York State Regents. However, not all teachers create a clear picture of student progress toward the mastery of their goals.

- Students take the January Regents assessments and teachers share item analysis data with students so they can improve their scores on the June exams. Similarly, IAs are administered across disciplines to assess students’ levels of comprehension of the content standards and their level of application of academic writing across disciplines. These results are also used to measure student progress toward individual goals and determine instructional groups. Moreover, assessment results are used to provide feedback to students and families, plan next steps for improvement, and make ongoing adjustments to curricula and lesson plans. Adjustments include targeted scaffolds for students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs). For example, most teachers modified lessons to include MTV (“Making Thinking Visible”) worksheets, vocabulary boxes, sentence frames, and accountable talk stems as scaffolded supports for groups of students. However, not all teachers use assessment data to consistently adjust curricular and instructional decisions.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

There is a process in place to ensure alignment of the curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and to plan rigorous academic tasks for all learners.

Impact

The curricula reflect rigorous academic tasks and discourse that build coherence across grades, disciplines, and support college and career readiness for all students, including those with diverse learning needs. While many teachers plan higher-level cognitive tasks for English Language Learners (ELLs) and the highest-achieving students on a consistent basis, others have yet to plan at this high level.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of curriculum documents across grades and subjects indicates evidence of departmental teamwork to integrate the Common Core and instructional shifts in English Language Arts (ELA), math, social studies, and science. Across subjects and grade levels, students are required to cite supporting textual evidence to justify their stances on an issue when making a claim, either in writing or during classroom discussions. Departments plan units of study that are culturally relevant and incorporate current events and issues to engage students in text-based discussions, writing from sources to make arguments, and promoting the adoption of academic vocabulary. To foster higher levels of classroom discussion, teachers have identified prompts that encourage accountable talk and the inclusion of academic vocabulary, embedding these into many of their lesson plans. Further, most teachers use Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* to identify the level of rigor of the academic task and level of questioning in their lesson plans.

- Staff members meet weekly to work in collaborative teams to review and revise units of study and lesson plans to ensure accessibility for all students. Analyzing student work samples and assessment data, including commonly administered quarterly interim assessments and Regents exams, teachers adjust lesson plans and curricula to include supports such as scaffolds and differentiated tasks and materials. School and teacher leaders and collaborative peer teachers conduct lesson plan studies and inter-visitations. Subsequent to inter-visitations, teacher teams use observations of students work to discuss the impact on grade level and departmental co-planning and refine teaching and learning strategies. Teachers revise lessons to enhance student access and include research-based instructional strategies such as identifying possible student misconceptions.

- A review of meeting minutes and agendas indicates that most team meetings focus on creating engaging lessons that encourage student-centered conversations, providing whole class and individualized supports that allow multiple access points into the lesson through differentiation of tasks and enrichment for students. Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) teachers meet to plan lessons based on the needs of students to ensure multiple entry points, scaffolding, and differentiation, using best practices identified by teacher teams. For example, teachers use data to create ability-level groups and select leveled texts in students’ zones of proximal development. However, a review of lesson plans indicates that some teachers are not yet including differentiated instruction in their individual lesson plans to ensure that all students, including the ELLs and the highest-achieving students, are cognitively challenged.
## Findings

Across classes, instructional practices reflect the school’s philosophy about how student learn best. Teaching strategies consistently provide teacher-generated scaffolds that allow most students to engage with the curricula.

## Impact

Teaching practices align to shared beliefs about pedagogy and curricula. Multiple access points into lessons are provided so that all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs), are engaged in challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking.

## Supporting Evidence

- School leaders’ articulated beliefs about how students learn best emphasize that all lessons must be student-centered and include higher order thinking questions to generate high levels of student discussion. Additionally, school leaders and faculty believe that students must be provided with ample opportunities to write productively. This has led to the adoption of do now writing activities to provide additional writing opportunities and to assess students’ level of understanding of the learning objective in real time. Beliefs also emphasize that pedagogy must engage students in purposeful academic tasks and authentic discourse which emphasize high levels of rigor to promote college and career ready skills. School leaders and teachers identified the alignment of teacher-posed questions to students to Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* as the best way to have instructional practices match the schoolwide goal. The use of questioning techniques, such as using open-ended questions and having students elaborate on answers by explaining their thinking, was observed across most classrooms visited. For example, after a student shared how she solved an algebraic equation using a think aloud protocol, the teacher asked, “Who feels confident they can add to that or provide an alternative strategy?”

- To align pedagogy to the schoolwide instructional foci and promote coherence across grades and content areas, teachers have adopted common instructional strategies and discussion protocols, such as MTV. Across classrooms, teachers were observed reminding students to make their thinking visible by explaining how they arrived at a solution to a problem or elaborating on an answer and citing specific text-based evidence to support their reasoning. To support students and serve as a constant reminder, teachers use common MTV materials and worksheets. For example, in a ninth-grade living environment class, students were provided with MTV worksheets and checklists and directed to work collaboratively to design a reproductive system poster. Moreover, the teacher reminded students that their conversations would be monitored and they should take progress notes to ensure they were making their thinking visible to one another.

- Teachers provide multiple entry points into lessons so that all learners are engaged in appropriately challenging academic tasks and student work reflects high levels of student thinking. In a co-taught English as a New Language (ENL) and English Language Arts (ELA) class, the teachers explicitly modeled how to identify an author’s use of personification in a story by using a text-to-self reference to her car coughing when she attempted to start it, which was similar to the author’s use in the text. Prior to starting the partner practice, the teacher modeled how to determine which text-based evidence would support an exemplary answer to show how an author’s choice of words personifies an inanimate object. The teacher then assigned students a team task in which they had to find their own examples of personification in the text. The teacher visited each group to monitor the level of student engagement, and students were provided with an MTV conversation checklist to monitor and record their levels of discourse.
Findings
The school leaders and faculty consistently communicate high expectations to students and their families. A culture for learning has been established and communicated across the school community.

Impact
Systems of accountability for student progress and partnerships with families ensure that all students are aware of their progress toward graduation and college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff implement effective strategies for communicating high expectations about college and career readiness and partnering with families to ensure that all students are challenged to meet or exceed those expectations. The school leaders host college-ready workshops to engage parents in discussions about the Common Core Learning Standards, including the link between mastering the Common Core and becoming college and career ready. Faculty and students reported that the expectation is for students to be prepared for the next level by achieving at or above proficiency on the school's IAs and Regents exams in Regents-bearing courses, by the end of the school year. By their senior year, students are expected to be college and career ready as measured by the College Readiness Index (CRI) and the number of students receiving advanced Regents credits. Faculty shared that because of the school’s philosophy of pushing all students toward mastery, the percentage of students identified as college-ready rose from 12 percent in 2015 to 20 percent in 2017.

- The School Leadership Team and faculty are committed to not only communicating high expectations to students but also to providing the ongoing support that is required for them to meet those expectations and promote students’ ownership of their academic work. The staff has a set of clear, systematic structures, such as guidance, college preparatory advisement and assistance, and college counseling, that ensures that students are aware of progress toward their college and career goals. All students reported that they are aware of the high expectations the school leaders and teachers have set and feel that they are being adequately prepared for the next level. Students also responded favorably to the schools’ adoption of the Future You program that requires them to consider what they would like to major in when they attend college and consider a career choice, so that they can begin to prepare now. Moreover, students reported that they frequently meet with their guidance counselors and/or college advisors to ensure that they are on track to graduate college-ready. As a result, the four-year graduation rate increased from 55 percent in 2016 to 67 percent in 2017.

- Students and parents reported that they are aware of the school’s expectations to prepare all students for college. They receive regular updates on students' progress through traditional report cards, but most families opt to use the school’s online system, which allows students and parents to monitor progress in class and credit accumulation on a regular basis. In fact, the majority of students stated that they use the school’s online grade reporting system at least weekly. Parents expressed appreciation that they participate in a personalized conference with their children and school staff to map out a pathway to college. Senior students and their parents further reported that the support students have received through guidance and advisement has resulted in their getting into the colleges of their choice by the time of the school visit.
**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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</table>

**Findings**

Teacher teams use common planning time to analyze student data and engage in inquiry-based professional collaboration by content area, embedding the Common Core Learning Standards into lesson plans and units of study.

**Impact**

Across grades and departments, teacher teams’ use of a structured protocol to analyze data and student work products has resulted in improvements in the implementation of the Common Core and instructional shifts as well as strengthened teacher instructional capacity and improved student achievement.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams use a structured protocol to review student work and analyze assessment data to make shared curricular and lesson plan improvements, aligned to the schoolwide goal of creating student-centered lessons that facilitate high levels of student discourse and collaboration. Teachers collaborate to create rigorous lessons that have students engage in purposeful academic tasks and authentic discussion, emphasizing high levels of thinking to promote college and career readiness. The grade level, departmental, Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT), and ENL teams engage in inquiry work to examine the impact of specific instructional strategies on student achievement. After changes are made to units of study and lessons and strategies are implemented in classroom practice, the teams reconvene to assess which strategies had an impact on student learning. Strategies that identified as effective in addressing a gap in achievement are then shared across grades and content areas. Teachers are encouraged to observe a colleague’s lesson so that they can emulate the practice schoolwide, resulting in schoolwide instructional coherence.

- Teachers reported that as a result of common collaboration time, there has been a positive impact on their professional practice and student learning, as they have time to share and discuss specific pedagogical strategies and practices that can improve student engagement. Teachers reported analyzing common IA benchmark assessments and Regents exams as well as informal assessments, such as exit tickets, to determine how well students were able to back their claims and counterclaims with sufficient supporting textual evidence when writing an argumentative essay or engaging a verbal debate. Teachers further noted that as they added supports for students with disabilities and ENL students to push them to use academic language and accountable talk, students responded positively and became more willing to participate in meaningful discussions in class. Consequently, the progress of these groups toward the schoolwide vision of increasing student discourse in all grades and classes was enhanced. This was evidenced by a 67 percent four-year graduation rate in 2017, which exceeding the Renewal School Benchmark goal by 4 percent.

- Teacher teams meet regularly to analyze assessment data from a variety of sources, including formal New York State Regents exams. School leaders and teachers also administer to students common quarterly assessments in all disciplines to provide teacher teams with baseline data to inform changes to curricula and instruction. The data is used to create instructional groups and provide targeted interventions for struggling students. These practices have resulted in a 12 percent increase in the average Regents completion rate, from 33 percent in 2016 to 45 percent in 2017, which exceeded the Renewal School Benchmark goal by 5 percent.