Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Bronx Academy Of Health Careers
High School 11X290
800 East Gun Hill Road
Bronx
NY 10467

Principal: Dawn Santiago

Dates of Review:
November 29, 2017 - November 30, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Jorge Estrella
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

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</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>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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>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>
</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>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

School leaders consistently emphasize a culture of learning that communicates high expectations for college and career readiness to all stakeholders and provide support to meet those expectations. Teachers and school leaders effectively communicate high expectations towards a path to college and career readiness to all students and families.

Impact

A shared understanding of the school’s high expectations results in a culture of mutual accountability for student progress. The school successfully partners with families to ensure that all students are making progress towards college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders ensure that high expectations are frequently communicated to the entire school community via the school’s embedded college and career principles and initiatives. The school uses diverse approaches to communicate these expectations, such as professional learning time, newsletters, emails, text messages, and teacher team meetings, through discussions at regular lead teacher meetings, department meetings, Initial Planning Conferences (IPC), as well as middle and end of the year conferences. The Staff Handbook is another way to communicate expectations. It is used as a guide for teachers about expected pedagogical practices aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, professionalism, and logistics. The most recent school survey report shows that 100 percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the principal makes his or her expectations for meeting instructional goals clear to the staff.

- Conversations with school leaders, teachers, and the review of professional development documents and observation reports show evidence of high expectations for teacher practice through use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching to inform ongoing feedback that is directed towards meeting the needs of all learners. For example, “Incorporate classroom activities that not only will promote student thinking, but will ask students to explain their thinking.” Professional learning sessions, common planning time meetings, and one-on-one conferences are dedicated to creating a shared understanding of effective teaching practices and provide training to all faculty. Teachers shared that the school’s commitment to collaborative professional growth and reflection has contributed to development in their practice. Teachers shared that they engage in sessions to observe a classroom video with focus on using questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning and using assessment in instruction.

- School leaders and teachers have an ongoing process to communicate high expectations to families regarding college and career readiness via on-line platform where teachers and teachers can communicate about attendance, homework, and behavior. This is communicated to parents and students during orientations at the beginning of the school year, via mailings, online grading system, throughout the year during Parent Association meetings, Family Night, parent teacher conferences, and other school events. Communication of success and expectations is shared to parents via their school newsletter, which is published after each marking period. Additionally, school leaders and teachers are committed to preparing students for the academic rigor of college via advanced placement classes offered both on and off campus. Students are also enrolled in College Now courses through Lehman College, and City University of New York. In total 76 students are taking at least one AP course and 13 are enrolled in College Now courses. As a result of this work, 81 percent of students graduated within four years, and 59 percent of students graduated and enrolled in college or other post-secondary program within six months which is above NYC by two percentage points.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the curricula, however, teachers’ formative assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Students inconsistently receive actionable feedback and next steps regarding their achievement. There are limited checks for understanding that do not include opportunities for student self-reflection, thus hindering student ownership over their own learning.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders shared that teachers use rubrics to gather information on student academic achievement on several learning tasks. Teachers also make use of pre-course/unit baselines, group projects, Common Core performance tasks, class assignments, student conferences, student self-assessments, student discussions, questioning, and common assessments. There is a school-wide grading policy that is included in the teacher handbook that guides performance, which is communicated to students and parents using an online grading system. Although students mentioned the grading policy, rubrics, teacher feedback, a review of student work products presented during the small-group meeting with students revealed that feedback is inconsistent across grades and subjects. Some feedback indicated “Great team work, I noticed you took different roles and worked diligently to complete the task. In your chart there is an error. For method two you added by three, instead of multiplying.” Other reviewed student work samples revealed just grades, checks, or circles on rubrics used. Furthermore, samples of student work products with written feedback were displayed on hallway-bulletin boards, but student work was not displayed in several classrooms and portfolios reviewed revealed limited written feedback.

- School leaders reported that ongoing informal assessments take place in every lesson through the use of questioning in the classroom. Using Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK), teachers develop higher-order thinking questions to assess student learning. Also, teachers implement checks for understanding using various methods, such as entrance and exit slips, color coded cards, teacher observation, and rubrics. However, in observed classrooms, teacher assessment practices inconsistently included checks for understanding that yielded meaningful information about students’ needs. During the lessons in the AP Biology class and in the grade ten Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) English class, teachers consistently monitored students’ progress, gathering information of their responses using their formative assessment tools; then reassigned students to other groups or paused the lesson to address the entire class to redirect discussion’s approach. However, similar checks for understanding, with follow-up on findings from checks for understanding during instruction, were not noted in several of the other classrooms visited.

- Although students and teachers reported that self-assessment practices are implemented across grades and subjects, those practices were not observed during classroom visits. Only a few unit reflection sheet documents and a student academic performance self-reflection and action plan were provided. Students’ responses were limited in extent and quality, and there was no input from teachers. For example in a linear equation reflection sheet, student wrote, “I felt great about the inverse skill because I always got that part and I know what I am doing when I inverse.”
**Findings**

School leaders and teachers provide a rigorous curriculum that is aligned to the Common Core, integrates the instructional shifts, and embeds DOK in tasks and activities that consistently promote higher-order skills for all students.

**Impact**

Students benefit from coherent curricula that offers a range of experiences that fosters critical thinking skills, supports learning, and promotes college and career readiness.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders and faculty use curricula that is aligned to the Common Core and NYS standards with the instructional shifts embedded in science, social studies, and English, including the New Visions curricula and the NYC Engaging Powerful Writers Scope and Sequence. Collaborative planning and refinement of curricula occurs during common planning time. Faculty works on creating and sharing unit and lesson plans, as well as giving feedback to one another using a school-wide protocol and unit plans are submitted to school leaders via an online collaboration platform to ensure Common Core alignment to specific state standards. This approach to designing instructional planning ensures that “live documents” are reflecting modifications on an ongoing basis for all student planning, including targeted planning for students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs).

- In all lesson plans reviewed, the learning objective is in terms of what students will do based on Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. Additionally, in alignment to the instructional focus and to promote coherence, lesson plans include components such as objective, do now, essential question(s), academic vocabulary, differentiation strategies and scaffolds to support all learners, materials needed, strategies/activities, assessments, and closure. Also, lessons provide opportunities to engage students by using evidence from a variety of text sources to support arguments in discussion and to promote active engagement through collaborative learning; both in small intentional grouping instruction and Socratic seminars. For example, in a grade ten English lesson plan, students have to use textual evidence to analyze how gender affects individuals and society. In grade nine algebra I lesson, students have to use variables to represent two quantities in a real-world problem that change in relationship to one another, then write an equation to express one quantity.

- Reviewed of instructional planning documents revealed that curricula includes rigorous, open-ended performance tasks grounded in DOK. Lesson plans demonstrate evidence of planning for multiple entry points in order to meet the needs of all learners and offering opportunities for students to make their thinking visible. For example, a lesson plan for an Advanced Placement (AP) Biology class noted dedicated time for students working in small groups to create a four-minute presentation on a specific question given on cellular respiration. This lesson plan indicated that students would complete a different task that involved the identification of anaerobic respiration, lactic acid fermentation, analyzing the difference between anaerobic and aerobic respiration, and summarizing the process of cellular respiration. The grade nine algebra lesson plan, creates opportunities for all students to engage in rigorous tasks for peer-to-peer support to explore problems at different DOK levels. Students will work in groups creating equations, tables, and graphs from real-world situations and using them to solve problems.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Findings**

Teaching practices are becoming aligned to a shared set of beliefs connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. While lesson plans incorporate multiple entry points, their use to support student thinking and participation is inconsistent and uneven across the school.

**Impact**

The inconsistent use of multiple entry points into the curricula leads to missed opportunities to engage all learners in consistently challenging tasks and higher order thinking, demonstrating their work at high levels and being active participants in their learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Although lesson plans aligned to the curricula and illustrate the school-wide belief that students learn best when they are engaged in rigorous student-to-student discussions, grounded in evidence, this was inconsistently seen across classrooms. Student-to-student discussion was inconsistently observed across most classrooms visited. In one AP English class, the teacher engaged students in a Socratic seminar activity, where they had to cite evidence to support their arguments. However, in a grade ten global history class, students did not engage in meaningful discussions because the questions asked by the teacher did not promote student-to-student engagement. As a result of these uneven teaching practices, some students have limited opportunities to have authentic student to student engagement or produce meaningful work.

- In a grade eleven environmental science class, students were assigned to work in groups to determine the relationship between precipitation, temperature, and plant growth. The teacher circulated around the room to monitor student progress, but observed what they were doing without engaging with students or providing feedback, resulting in little impact on students producing high quality work products. Some students were observed copying content onto their chart from the textbook, some were not able to explain their group collaboration process, while others just observed their peers.

- While lesson plans included multiple entry points and scaffolds, teachers are yet to fully include the strategies into their lessons. For instance, students at different levels including students with disabilities and ELLs are given the same access points to the work, allowing some students to deeply engage with the material and reach or exceed standards. In a grade nine Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) English class, students were engaged in a discussion using the Socratic seminar approach. During this activity, students were observed using modified text, dictionaries, graphic organizers, as well as having higher achievers facilitate the discussions. The teacher also provided native language support for ELLs. However, in a global history class, the teacher missed opportunities to have students use the scaffolds planned to engage students about the industrial revolution because of his teacher centered approach.

- In a grade eleven chemistry class, students described the properties and “personality” of an element based on its physical and chemical properties. The students used the periodic table of elements, as well as a profile questionnaire to compare the properties within two elements. Students were provided with a laptop to access an online sharing platform to record their findings. During this lesson, there was evidence of student inquiry, hands-on engagement, peer discussion and support, as well as individual conferencing. However, during a grade ten English class, a few students were actively participating in the lesson while the rest of the students were not engaged. Neither of the teachers prompted them to participate in the lesson. In a grade nine algebra lesson, despite sitting in groups, all students were working on the same problem independently resulting in a missed opportunity for student engagement.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

School leaders use data from the frequent cycle of observations based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching to provide feedback and plan targeted professional development to improve teachers’ practice.

Impact

The alignment of effective targeted feedback with professional learning practices has resulted in teachers having a more comprehensive understanding of their areas of strengths and those that need to be further developed in order to meet or exceed the expectations of the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders develop frequent cycles of teacher observations that supports teachers’ development, professional goals, and offers actionable feedback with next steps for improvement. The review of the cycles of observations revealed that at least two administrators conduct each teacher observation which promotes norming and calibration of teacher practice while improving the teacher observation process. Feedback sessions take place after all observations providing school leaders and teachers the opportunity to discuss the lesson, review student work samples and have the teachers’ reflections on lesson delivery. Teachers shared that the feedback provided during formal and informal observations has been instrumental to reflect on their practice and is an opportunity to have professional conversations which helped them improve their pedagogical growth. Feedback includes an area of strength, an area of growth, action plans for improvement, resources, and assessment of improvement based on student outcomes. For example, in written feedback the recommendation states “Encourage students to ask questions in order to extend each other’s thinking to promote substantive discussions." Teachers and school leaders shared that during initial planning conferences, they identify professional learning goals for the school year which are revised during mid-year conferences. This process provides teachers with several opportunities to engage in structured shared reflection on their practice and to participate in targeted collaborations and professional learning designed to improve teacher practice. School leaders and teachers reported that they use internal capacity via intervisitations for teacher development and leadership, for this activity, the instructional team uses the observation Focus Point Protocols and a Peer-to-Peer Observation Form.

- A review of an observation reports reveals targeted feedback that provides teachers with clear next steps. For example, in written feedback provided to a teacher, the evaluator recommended to the teacher “As discussed during our post-observation conference, you should assess students using Regents questions and periodically analyze student assessment data to inform instruction. In addition to class data, I suggest you utilize the Regents item analysis form June and August results to get a sense of the skills students have performed well in and those they need further support with.” Another written feedback states “Incorporate classroom activities that not only will promote student thinking, but will ask students to explain their thinking. For instance, in future lessons on population growth, present different case studies, say, of distinct countries, to students and let them figure out when and why population size changes/fluctuates. They can then comparatively analyze their 'exciting findings' and defend their explanations.”

- Teachers are provided with professional learning opportunities to deepen their understanding of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Activities in these sessions included the use of the rubric where they note the specific differences between developing, effective, and highly effective. To further dive into the rubric, teachers engage in intervisitations as well as videotape their lessons. Then, in their collaborative sessions, they observe the lesson, take low inference notes and arrive at ratings along with constructive feedback for their colleague.
Additional Finding

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

**Findings**

All teachers engage in inquiry-based professional collaborations aligned to the school’s goals, Common Core, and the instructional shifts. Distributed leadership structures are embedded to foster effective teacher leadership.

**Impact**

The approach for professional collaborations empowers teachers to work towards the achievement of school-wide goals, including implementation of Common Core-aligned instruction for all students. Distributed leadership practices promote teacher’s voice in high-level decisions about teaching and learning that affect student learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders have established a teacher team structure that meets weekly in collaborative groups in both grade level and department teams to support each other with developing their professional practice. The professional learning plan enables teachers to support one another through intervisitations and lesson/unit study. Select teachers also work with instructional coaches and/or peer collaborative teachers. Teachers reported that during the professional learning sessions, they regularly share best practices, divide into working groups, and design interventions for individual or groups of students. One teacher noted “For this year we have been heavily involved in designing scaffolds across grades and content areas.”

- Conversations with school leaders, meetings with teachers, review of agendas, minutes, and actions plans showed that grade teams focus on student behavior, academic progress, and attendance. Based on student data, teachers plan instruction by creating and sharing unit and lesson plans in department teams and give feedback to one another using various protocols. For example, during the English Language Arts (ELA) team meeting, teachers, used the Consultancy Adapted for Examining Student Work protocol to view one selected piece of informational writing, ask clarifying and probing questions, offer warm and cool feedback, reflections, and determine that although the student seems to have good writing skills, he needed to work on sophistication and refine counterclaims and include refutation. Then, the use of graphic organizers, rubrics, mentor texts, reflection and chunking was proposed. Other inquiry-based documents from different subject areas revealed similar trends. As a result of these collaborations, teachers are shifting from teacher-led instruction to more student-centered practice as was demonstrated in some classrooms. For example, teachers engage their students in think-pair-share, turn and talk, accountable talk, Socratic seminar discussions, debates, peer-tutoring, multiple source inquiry, and other forms of collaborative learning.

- School leaders promote shared responsibility and ownership for the work of the school by promoting teacher leadership. Teachers stated that they are involved in high-level decisions with school leaders who participate in team meetings as thought partners, and are open to ideas presented by teachers. For example, teachers serve as team leaders where they meet regularly with school leaders to align department goals to school-wide goals. They also facilitate each weekly meeting, maintain agendas and minutes, and follow up on the next steps determined by each team. Teachers also participate in the hiring process and plan and facilitate professional developments. As part of colleague peer mentoring, they meet one-on-one with their colleagues, conduct intervisitations to provide formative feedback, and have a space to share pedagogical strategies. Teachers shared that the principal values their input in key school decision making such as curricular decisions regarding instructional planning structures, scaffolds, and planning college and career readiness activities for students and parents.