Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Bronx International High School
High school 09X403
1110 Boston Road
Bronx
NY 10456

Principal: Joaquin Vega Vargas

Dates of Review:
May 24, 2018 - May 25, 2018

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

Bronx International High School serves students in grade 9 through grade 12. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

### 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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School 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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>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>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>
Findings

School leaders articulate high expectations for professionalism via weekly newsletters and new teacher orientations. Teachers establish high expectation for students through support of a college advisor and coach.

Impact

Teacher facilitation of professional development and inter-visititation, fosters mutual accountability for high expectations. Student feedback from college advisors and coaches prepares students for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leader articulates clear expectations for professionalism through a weekly newsletter that informs staff of professional development opportunities, team meetings, and after-school events. In addition, team- and discipline-leader meetings conducted by staff members articulate the expectations for Performance Based Assessment Tasks (PBATs) and provide PBAT mentoring support to students. A new-teacher orientation provides support in adapting to the PBAT process. During this orientation, teachers are informed about the components of the PBAT process such as presenting, questioning the presenter, and grading student work using PBAT content specific rubrics. Additionally, the PBAT handbook delineates the expectations for teachers, students and mentors during this process. Teachers hold themselves accountable through grade-level team meetings to monitor student progress on PBAT completion.

- Professional development opportunities and peer content coaches support teachers including those new to the profession to ensure that high expectations are met and are aligned to the school’s instructional foci and goals. The professional development plan is tiered by instruction, technology, PBAT design, literacy, and social-emotional related topics. Professional development topics include, “The Art of Questioning” which is aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, teacher-facilitated workshops on the norming of PBAT projects, and the Bridges method which is used to unpack vocabulary to support students’ literacy needs. Teachers are held accountable for these expectations through the observation process, and reviewing teacher outcomes on the school’s online grading platform. Teachers hold themselves accountable through inquiry cycles, intervisitations with peer feedback, and designing professional development through the professional development committee.

- Teachers and other staff have set clear expectations that prepares students for the next level. In addition, students are exposed to college level experiences through College Now and Advanced Placement with support from a college advisor and coach to navigate through the college admissions process. A work-based learning coordinator works with students to analyze students’ strengths and weaknesses and then matches with partner companies for internships. As a result of these structures, the school has an eighty percent graduation rate, and the school is outperforming its comparison group in college and career readiness.

- Staff members have established a culture for learning that provides all students with effective feedback and prepares them for real-world experiences in their educational journey. Students participated in an app-designing initiative and researched and interviewed local businesses to solve a common problem. Students designed an app that allowed customers to place their orders online thus mitigating long lines. Students entered their project into a competition and placed first. Additional real world experiences are fostered through the school farm whose products are sold to the community. Students mentioned that as a result of these opportunities, their presentation and English speaking skills have strengthened.
Area of Focus

Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy
Rating: Proficient

Findings
Teaching practices consistently reflect the schoolwide belief that students learn best through authentic, experiential, project-based tasks that place students at the center of their learning.

Impact
Across classrooms teaching practices foster student discourse; however, there were missed opportunities for students to show ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices consistently reflect and support schoolwide beliefs that students learn best through authentic, experiential, project-based tasks that place students at the center of their learning. In addition, groups take responsibility for their learning. In an Algebra I class, the learning objective stated, “How do we describe quadratic equations using their elements?” Students were engaged in a differentiated-station activity, tiered by complexity. Students in each group had a chance to think, compare, critique and present their process of solving the problem. One member of the group was required to teach group members their process for solving a problem. Similarly, in a science class, students were engaged in building an effective hydroponics system to grow lettuce and basil. Students were to investigate the effectiveness of plant growth in a soil versus a water environment. Students were observed working on different facets of the prototype-building process such as constructing a light source and measuring the pipe for the water flow in the hydroponics set up; however, these practices were not evidenced in the vast majority of classes.

- In an economics and government class, the objective of the lesson was, “What is socialism? What does socialism look like in Cuba?” Students read a modified version of the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba. Using a graphic organizer, students were tasked with using evidence from the document to explain, “How does the Cuban Constitution set up a socialist society?” Additionally, each group generated their own questions and were required to answer them such as, “How does socialism affect the interactions of people and government?” This is followed up with a group share-out. Similarly, in a reading and discourse class, students read their own texts and chose differentiated scaffolds to ascertain noticings of characters in their text and the strategies the author used to capture changes in their stories. Students were the center of their own learning as they discussed their texts with a partner. In another ELA class, students also read their own texts and took part in a fishbowl activity and utilized protocols for discussion; however, only two students posed questions to the student presenting his text; thus exemplifying missed opportunities for student groups to take responsibility for their own learning.

- In a social studies class, the guiding question asked, “Should the United States welcome refugees from the Middle East?” Students observed images of Middle Eastern refugees on their iPads and made inferences in their groups. Partners exchanged their thoughts in their native languages. Students were tasked with creating a fictional character based on historical context of the images observed. Students used graphic organizers to chronicle the setting, personality, and events surrounding their character. Students in the group shared the responsibility of explaining the character. Similarly, in another reading and discourse class, students selected their own leveled articles, their groups based on topic interest, and generated their own inquiry question to discuss topics such as immigration. Student-generated questions included, “Why do people migrate to the United States?” “How do they become citizens?” Student groups were observed taking ownership of their learning; however, these practices were not evidenced in the vast majority of classrooms.
### Additional Finding

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

Teachers incorporate the Common Core Learning Standards into lesson and unit plans, and integrate the instructional shifts of citing textual evidence and constructing arguments. Curricula and academic tasks such as Performance Based Assessment Tasks (PBATs) consistently emphasize rigor.

**Impact**

Curricula and academic tasks provide access for all learners by emphasizing rigor, higher-order thinking skills, and build coherence towards college and career readiness.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Lesson and unit plans integrate the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts in order to build coherence and promote college and career readiness. All unit plans across the content areas integrate the instructional shift of citing textual evidence to support claims and constructing viable arguments. In addition, unit plans have inter-disciplinary structures that are interspersed, and some plans show extensions for high-achieving learners. For example, an Algebra I unit plan required students to read an excerpt from a text about the fundamental counting principle. Using evidence from the text, students were tasked with demonstrating their understanding of the steps of this principle by answering challenge questions, thus incorporating literacy strategies into math. A science unit plan delineated a task that required students to read excerpts from a text on how to create an effective hydroponic system, annotate it, and write their lingering questions. Additionally, the plan also made inter-connections with math in the use of quadratic functions.

- Tasks across subjects challenge all students to think critically, ensuring that students can demonstrate their thinking through the work products they create vis-à-vis PBATs and pre-PBATs. A math PBAT required students to analyze the fairness of lotteries or the likelihood of winning game shows by conducting research through the lens of probability and statistics. Students were tasked with a written analysis of the strategies used and with justifying their conceptual and logical arguments. A math pre-PBAT for diverse learners required students to use basic operations in finding the total floor areas of a house. Scaffolds such as visuals were used as support for the diverse learners to access the task.

- Academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits so that all learners have access to curricula. An ELA task required students to write an autobiography forecasting thirty years into the future. Diverse learners used leveled materials to support them in preparation for the task. Another ELA task required students to write a literary analysis essay on the text, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*. Using two to three pieces of evidence from the text, students were required to justify a theme that supports the book. Scaffolds for English Language Learners (ELLs) included an outline that deconstructed what information is needed in each portion of the essay.
Findings

Common assessments such as PBATs are used to determine student progress towards goals across subject areas and provide students with feedback that is aligned to the curricula.

Impact

Common assessments are used to inform student progress towards mastery of learning outcomes. Feedback to students is actionable and provides clear next steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers analyze assessment data and make data informed decisions to adjust curricula. Results of a January and May Independent Reading Level Assessment (IRLA) showed a reduction in percentage of students reading at the third- to eighth-grade levels, and an increase in the percentage of students reading at the high school level. The results of the data analysis were used to inform text selections for students, the grouping of students, and the formation of a new course called reading and discourse to ensure that students are reading critically daily. Similarly, ELA Regents item data was analyzed and used to inform decisions around small group instruction for ELA Regents preparation. Teachers use the ELL Data Analysis Tool (EDAT) to support and inform instruction, curricula and progress monitoring for ELL students. Data from the 2017-2018 School Snapshot showed that this work is closing the achievement gap for English Language Learners and the lowest performing students.

- Teachers analyze students' common assessment such as PBATs to determine student progress towards goals such as graduation. Teachers use the four-point New York State Performance Standards Consortium PBAT rubric to assess student work for mastery across the content areas. A progress-monitoring tracker is used to chronicle student performance on PBATs and track ELA Regents performance. In addition to the tracker, the school uses an online mastery-based grade-reporting system that is aligned to the learning targets to monitor student progress towards mastery in all subjects. At the time of the review, 54.4 percent of eleventh-grade students were on track to present graduation level math PBATs, 50 percent of students were on track to present science and ELA PBATs, and 39 percent of students were on track to present their United States history PBATs.

- During the student meeting, students articulated that the feedback they received on their work is used to inform corrections for first and second drafts of their papers. Students also mentioned that they peer-assess their colleagues’ work using rubrics customized for specific criteria. Students also monitor their progress on the PBATs through the online grading system. Teachers post written and electronic comments on student work. A sample of feedback on a student’s ELA work commended the student for the arguments they presented in their writing. As a next step, the teacher advised the student to think about their audience when waging their argument and to think of multiple perspectives as the student delineates the argument. Another example of feedback to a student advised the student to unpack their evidence and connect it to the audience, thus making the feedback actionable. Student work samples reviewed showed teachers using an online platform to provide comments on student work in the form of endnotes. Examples of feedback included recommendations for accurate citation of sources, the need for additional evidence to support data, and revisions cited for a literature review.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders provide feedback to teachers that includes strengths, challenges, and next steps. Trends in feedback are used to plan differentiated professional development.

Impact

Feedback to teachers about instructional practices and targeted professional development promotes teacher professional growth.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of observation reports showed that teacher feedback was aligned to the instructional focus of achieving mastery-based learning, the instructional shift of academic language, and skills. Trends in commendations cited teacher strength in engaging students in learning. An observation report mentioned that learning activities were aligned to the instructional outcomes, and made student thinking visible via a gallery walk. The area of improvement recommended that the teacher include more academic language during the lesson, use a word wall, and graphic organizers to support the ELLs in language acquisition. Next steps for the teacher included professional reading material on subject specific ELL vocabulary instruction, videos, and, during the content-level grade team meetings, review best practices and strategies for implementation of vocabulary that is aligned to PBATs skills and outcomes. As a result of the feedback, the teachers demonstrated highly-effective practices across all domains of the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

- Trends in next steps in observation reports included using assessment in instruction consistently aligned with the teacher goals of providing student opportunities to self-assess. Observation reports mentioned incorporating assessment practices so that students are aware of the success criteria and continue to transfer their previous knowledge to newly-learned concepts. Support for the teachers cited viewing videos that demonstrated ways to deepen student understanding through assessment. In addition, teacher recommendations suggested reviewing best practices and strategies for implementing assessment and using data to enhance academic achievement during content-level team meetings. During the teacher meetings, teachers stated that the feedback they get during their team meetings and intervisitations supports their pedagogical practices.

- The trends in teacher feedback are used to inform the differentiated professional development provided to teachers through the planning work of the professional development team. Professional development is tiered by support for instruction, literacy, technology, the PBAT process, and social-emotional support. For example, the professional development plan cites targeted sessions for teachers on integrating language and content strategies into instruction, and strategies to support students in posing high-level questions. Literacy workshops on the Hochman Writing method provided another layer of support to teachers.
Additional Finding

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<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

All teachers engage in inquiry-based professional collaborations and analyze student work using the Tuning protocol. Distributed leadership practices such as teacher leads are embedded in the school.

Impact

The professional collaborations on content level teams has strengthened teacher capacity and resulted in schoolwide instructional coherence. Distributed leadership allows teachers to play an integral role in decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet weekly in grade- and content-level teams where they develop curricula, share best practices, and implement schoolwide instructional practices and school goals, thus resulting in coherence across grades and promoting college and career readiness. A review of teacher team notes revealed that the reading and discourse teachers met to discuss ways to support the group’s goal of supporting lower-level students in moving two or more reading levels. Teachers discussed reviewing skills such as genre and complex sentence analysis, IRLA implementation, and vocabulary work on prefix and suffixes. As a result of this collaboration, teachers produced a reading and discourse scope and sequence, constructed a reflective student survey to learn more about who their students are as readers, and conducted intervisitations in order to share best practices for implementing strategies for students to annotate their work.

- A social studies team reviewed a problem of practice, and used a Tuning protocol in order to provide the teacher with next steps to support their instructional practice. The presenting teacher provided context for a task that students directs students to produce an essay that focuses on one aspect of African-American experiences from slavery to Civil Rights. Teachers asked clarifying questions and provided the teacher with suggestions such as helping students establish a specific time frame to ground their research. As a result of this professional collaboration, the social studies department mapped out the language, literacy, content, and social studies skills needed in order for students to graduate. In addition, the team produced a document that aligns social studies content and skills through reading, writing, research, and analytical skills for all grades, thus resulting in coherence across the grades.

- Distributed leadership structures are embedded, such as teachers serving as leads on content, instructional teams, and committees known as the Coordinating Council. Teacher leads ensure that the protocols are being used accurately during the inquiry cycles, lead professional development for the staff, and meet with the administration bi-monthly to discuss the work done in the teams while communicating the leadership’s high expectations. Teachers on teams also rotate roles such as time-keeper, note-taker, and presenter during team meetings. Teachers also serve on the professional development team that is responsible for designing and facilitating the professional development in the school. Thus teacher voice plays an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.