



**Department of  
Education**  
Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2018-2019

**Bronx Latin**

**Secondary School 12X267**

**800 Home Street  
Bronx  
NY 10456**

**Principal: Annette Fiorentino**

**Dates of Review:  
April 17, 2019 - April 18, 2019**

**Lead Reviewer: Phyllis Siwec**

## 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 Latin serves students in grade 6 through grade 12. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm>.

## School Quality Ratings

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area	Rating
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	Additional Finding	Proficient
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	Area of Focus	Proficient
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	Additional Finding	Proficient

## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area	Rating
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

### Systems for Improvement

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area	Rating
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the schools instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products	<b>Area of Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.3 Leveraging Resources</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

Structures in place allow faculty to engage in department teams along with other team configurations that ensure professional responsibilities are aligned with the school's instructional goals. Teacher assignments and student groupings and support are strategic.

### Impact

The strategic design of the school's master schedule and team structures consistently promote high levels of accountable collaboration among school staff and access to college and career readiness and improved instruction.

### Supporting Evidence

- Strategic decisions are made to maximize staff time via the design of the master schedule that promote collaboration and focus teacher time on instructional work. For example, department team meetings are once a week such as the science department team meeting in which teachers use the inquiry protocol for lesson study so that structures of a lesson plan are analyzed in order that the workshop format is present (I do, we do, you do), opportunities for students to speak, read and write are present, multiple formative assessments are indicated; and clear expectations for student success are delineated with explicit expectations for any co-teacher. Questions from the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels one through four are also included. As a result of lesson study, teachers can gauge the quality of each other's lesson plans and instructional intentions. Once a month, the entire staff meets. Additional teams include Learning Partners who meet every other week and the special education team meets every three weeks. School goals that focus on collaborative teamwork are aligned with the regularly scheduled meeting times in that teachers have time to focus on instructional work and student engagement with their team mates.
- This year with many new teachers, school leaders designed a professional development (PD) coaching format that includes a model teacher who facilitates after-school PD once a week for all first- and second-year teachers. In addition, the model teacher and peer collaborative teacher have set meeting times during the day for coaching sessions. They meet with administration at least twice a month to relay the progress being made in the areas of classroom management, student engagement, and curriculum development.
- Teacher assignments and student groupings are strategic to promote access to college and career readiness. For example, readiness for college is present in the eight Advanced Placement (AP) course offerings which include AP Calculus, AP Statistics, AP Literature, AP Spanish, AP US History, AP Government and Politics, AP Environmental Science, and AP Biology. These courses are taught by school staff who have training and qualifications to teach college-level courses and are on staff at the school. Students are part of the AP for All Program and take part in the assessments and Saturday courses, and communication about AP for All is sent to all parents of students enrolled in AP courses. The AP Environmental Science teacher was recognized last year as being one of the top AP teachers for that course across New York City. For students who are challenged learners, tutoring sections have been established and are taught by school staff who have skills and training to support students so that they can succeed in passing Regents exam. There is also a Saturday Academy that was established and redesigned to meet more students' needs. College Ready English class and math class have been developed with school staff to prepare students for college course work. Once students have caught up, they can take electives.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to curricula and reflect a belief system grounded in the conviction that every child has the right to an exemplary education, informed by the instructional shifts. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points into the curricula, but not always high-quality extensions.

### Impact

Although many students across classrooms produce meaningful work products, in some cases, there are missed opportunities for all students to engage in challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- Common teaching practices include: on-demand writing, argumentative writing, and Socratic seminars, which occur in all grades and subjects and are guided by beliefs about how students learn best. Specifically, Socratic practice was revealed in an Advanced Placement (AP) Government lesson that demonstrated the preparation for a Socratic seminar based on furthering the concept of fiction and non-fiction with point of view in analyzing *Fake News and the First Amendment*. In addition, students created questions to ask each other during their practice sessions as a lead-up to the longer version of the Socratic seminar to be held the next day. In another example, on-demand writing was featured in a grade-eleven AP English class in which students had a choice of three different options in writing an essay about poetry: compare and contrast two poems, or write a personal response to any one poem, or an essay to persuade the reader that a song is also a poem. As a result of choice with supports, engaged students produced student work products that were meaningful as expressed by students.
- A mixed-aged group of interviewed students shared their own best ways to learn that included: group projects; problem-solving; in discussions and primarily visually across all subjects; receiving feedback from teachers and from classmates and peers. As one student stated, "I take some time to look at what is presented and I see what I can improve on and what was wrong. I use the feedback in the future." Further best ways to learn are teachers or group discussions as corrective; using rubrics; Socratic seminars; debates; proving points and offering counterpoints; any group activities and discussing misunderstandings. Although most classes demonstrated engagement and modeled these approaches, there were observed classes that did not engage or involve all students in higher-order thinking skills and strategically provide multiple entry points. In a science class on cells, students were given the same learning objective which is stating two similarities and two differences between animal and plant cells. The stated modifications and/or scaffolds for those who needed them were virtually identical and opportunities to write out evidence and self-assess as to how to obtain higher ratings on rubrics were limited.
- High-quality supports and extensions were evident in some classes. However, not all showed scaffolding for those who need strategic access to their learning. As in a grade-twelve class where the learning objective was to practice for a math placement test, the teacher had few questions that went beyond recall and next-step procedures. All were given the same task, with same time frame. In another observed lesson, there were questions at the engagement part of the lesson that were recall questions with this format: "Which gland regulates....? Or produces...?" and stated six times after the whole class viewed a video clip about the endocrine system. Students answered questions in one-word answers with little explanation or description. This was done to assess what students already knew about the system. Entry points were offered, but not strategic and there was limited demonstration of higher-order thinking skills.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts including a balance of fiction and non-fiction texts, real-world application and student discourse. Curricula and tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

### Impact

Purposeful decisions build coherence across grades and content areas and promote college and career readiness for all students. Adjustments to material and the tools students use during instruction ensure access and engagement for diverse learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across grades and content areas, Common-Core aligned curricular documents consistently integrate a focus on a balance of fiction and non-fiction texts evident in multiple lesson plans. For example, a grade-six English lesson plan indicates that students will gather, use, and interpret evidence in support of the point of view of the main characters in *Home of the Brave*, a novel. In this same lesson, various students will read *I am Malala*, an autobiography and *Malcom X*, a biography, as examples of non-fiction, all seeking evidence of point of view. In a grade-ten honors Geometry lesson plan, students are to utilize rules and properties in order to create transformations found in real-life examples. Similarly, a grade-seven science lesson plan uses a real-world application in studying the endocrine system in the human body to explore why this system is critical for survival.
- School leaders and staff make purposeful decisions to build coherence in the instructional focus and alignment with the Common Core leading to promoting college and career readiness. In literacy, from middle-school level through high-school level, a vertical literacy teacher team was developed. In addition, lesson studies were introduced to refine lesson development along with a focus on reading, writing and discussing to strengthen these connections throughout the grade levels. This is exemplified in a grade-eight science lesson plan that directs students to use accountable talk cards in explorations of paraphrasing in order to gather and highlight important information. Students focus on reading comprehension and building discussion skills. Students also use a group rubric that they periodically check to ensure they are on task and working as effectively as a group as they can. Although the text is the same for all students, they are assigned passages to read based on their levels within the group. In this way, students can help each other and gain access to the same curricula. The impact is seen in the College Ready rate that was 62 percent in 2017-2018, far exceeding other schools in the Bronx and comparison group schools.
- Curricula and academic tasks reflect planning so that diverse learners could have access. A grade-eleven AP English lesson plan focuses on comparing two poems and indicates that a Spanish translation is available. Extensions are offered for those who need more stretch as writing their own poem using extended metaphor and repetition to convey a specific theme. In addition, in a grade-ten Global History lesson plan, adapted text, concept mapping, partner reading with peer editing and visual cue cards are among the strategies for access. Teachers reported that several reasons influence the adjustments made to curricula. In one case, the political environment inspired a teacher to add more critical thinking and analysis to units in history that dealt with the development of democracy. Other teachers added more time for new English Language Learners (ELLs) to process English Language Arts (ELA) requirements, in some cases a realignment of the order of units to be taught. As a result of looking at student work, Living Environment curriculum needed to focus on vocabulary to improve composition questions.

## Additional Finding

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

Teachers use common assessments such as mock Regents exams and performance tasks to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas. Across classrooms, teacher assessment practices reflect the use of checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

### Impact

School leadership and teachers design courses to include ongoing common assessment practices, providing consistent data to inform the college and career readiness. Across classrooms, assessment practices and effective adjustments meet the learning needs of all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers create common assessments such as quizzes, midterms, lab reports and finals to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas. Their Data Handbook helps teachers better organize and analyze their summative assessment data to enhance their planning and groupings. At strategic checkpoints, students take exam simulations to determine their strengths and weaknesses. Included in the collection of assessments are: mock Regents in middle and high school, end-of-year in writing, and performance tasks in math. Analysis of this data is used to adjust curricula and instruction. After students take a simulation, teachers organize and analyze the performance data, identify high-leverage topics and skills, determine topics/skills to reteach and then reassess. Students are able to reflect on progress toward their goals of achieving proficiency benchmarks or passing Regents exams. Teachers seek to have students analyze their own data and then provide students with feedback so that the student knows what their next learning steps should be, as shared by school leaders and teachers. This data cycle is repeated several times throughout the school year.
- Formative assessment enables teachers to consistently know how students are performing in their classes, where students are struggling and succeeding, and what adjustments must be made to curriculum and instruction. Teachers conduct formative assessments daily in the classroom through questioning, exit slips, Plickers, Kahoot, Quizlet, Google Forms, and checks on their clipboards to take the “pulse” of their classes. These checks for understanding enable teachers to make meaningful adjustments to their lessons, often during the class period. As demonstrated, during a lesson that involved preparing for a college-level placement test, grade-twelve students were practicing multiplying and dividing with exponent rules and answering questions correctly. They used individual whiteboards as a practice space with external supports including teachers. They showed answers and work and those who had incorrect answers were quickly either partnered with another student or a teacher who walked through the problem identifying where misunderstandings occurred.
- Students used self-assessments as both a reflection on work completed and next steps needed. Observed self-assessment templates in a math class were focused on a peer-assessment, a tutor, or a four-point scale in which categories are specifically behavior and classwork with a total of eight points. In a grade-ten Global History lesson, students used the “3W” protocol as a self-reflection: What did we learn today? So what” (relevance) and Now what? (Next steps based on today’s learning). A grade-nine Living Environment lesson had a reflection at the end of the lesson with these prompts: What worked well? What changes need to be made? What resources are helpful? Teachers shared that they use student self-assessments to adjust next lessons. Referring to self-reflection, a student stated that it is all about “Letting your voice be heard, letting you open up.”

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The school leaders and faculty consistently communicate high expectations to families and successfully partner with them. A culture for learning sustains a unified set of high expectations communicated across the school community supported by a college-bound partnership.

### Impact

Systems of accountability ensure that all students and their families are aware of their progress toward graduation and college and career readiness. Effective feedback and guidance support ensure that students own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level in this school and beyond.

### Supporting Evidence

- Communication to parents about high expectations takes many forms including the handbook, the school website, social networking, communication via Kinvoled, an online attendance monitoring and communication platform, access to PupilPath, and letters and bulletins from the principal, and home visits. As of April 2019, over 30,000 messages have been sent to parents, with two-way communication occurring via Kinvoled regarding classwork with home support, if needed, and attendance. A family worker communicates with parents on a daily basis regarding attendance along with guidance staff who is in frequent contact about academic and social issues. Bilingual teachers and counselors and Kinvoled translate all messages to ensure communication is free of any language barriers. The school offers programs for most of the year, for six days a week, offering Saturday Academy and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) prep on Saturdays to ensure student success on exams. These offerings are communicated with parents. Parents shared that their children are preparing for their next level of education through tutoring, counseling, college fairs and Parent Teacher Conferences. As one parent stated, "This school does not let students fall behind. Teachers push our students to do more. We are partners in our children's success."
- School leaders and staff offer a comprehensive college awareness and enrollment program. A partnership with College Bound Initiative (CBI) supports students with access to a full-time college counselor who helps them with every part of the college application process, communicates with families, and ensures that students are getting accepted to colleges that are the right fit for them. Through CBI, school staff begins hosting parents of juniors for financial aid nights and college application nights and holds sessions in spring and fall to ensure that parents are informed during this process. The partnership with CBI has meant that many students have been accepted to four-year universities, many of them with full scholarships or through Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) for first-generation college students and/or from low-income or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. Every October school staff host a College Fair for all high school students, followed by an Alumni Day every November where alumni who are currently in college visit and host workshops for current students, and every May students and parents are invited to College Draft Day in which students announce the college they have chosen to attend. These collective actions and activities result in 100 percent of seniors applying to college every year.
- Part of the college culture has also been a partnership with Lehman College, College Now program. Students attend classes for college credits starting at the end of their freshmen year once they attain college-ready English Regents scores. The principal and high school guidance counselor personally monitor student enrollment and grades with students able to participate in all three College Now terms - fall, spring and summer, in eight AP course offerings, including AP for All Program, and take part in the assessments and Saturday courses while communication and feedback about AP for All is sent to all parents of students enrolled in AP courses.



## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

All teachers are engaged in teams that consistently analyze student work in cycles of inquiry that reveal targeted areas of student needs and next steps. Teachers are empowered to positively affect student learning as grade-team leaders as well as professional development (PD) leaders to teachers.

### Impact

Collaborations within grade teams and the department inquiry team strengthen teachers' instructional capacity while data reveals an increase in student achievement. Across the school, teacher teams have built leadership capacity with a voice in key decisions that affect student learning through PD leadership.

### Supporting Evidence

- Several configurations of teacher teams are embedded in the school structure with strategic purposes and practices. Grade teams meet once a week as a forum to discuss student progress, disaggregate and analyze data through the grade reports and discuss internal strategies and curriculum. Through department team meetings, teachers refine curriculum through the use of lesson studies and inquiry work. The lesson study protocol is the vehicle for teachers to strengthen their pedagogy and meet the needs of all students. As part of the New Visions College Readiness Network for School Improvement, Bronx Latin has formed a Postsecondary Success Team that meets to explore and analyze their rates of college readiness and persistence. This team helped develop the *Current Grades Report routine* that takes place in grade teams and the *simulation data analysis* that takes place in department meetings. School leaders created a video library to train teachers how to use assessment data to track and measure student learning outcomes and to motivate students to acquire self-study skills. In January 2019, teachers evaluated the effectiveness of teacher teams and gave feedback resulting in 89 percent of teachers stating positively that teachers in the school are actively trying to improve their teaching, while 88 percent stated that their PD experiences this year have been sustained and coherently focused, rather than short term and unrelated.
- One of the embedded distributed leadership structures is the weekly cabinet team meetings in which administration and teacher leaders come together for an ongoing examination of what is happening at the school to ensure collaboration and mission-driven decision making are supported and enacted in the school community. According to teachers and school leaders, book studies are an integral part of co-learning in the leadership meetings where leaders have read *Rethinking Teacher Evaluation and Supervision* by Kim Marshall and the book *Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard* by Chip Heath and Dan Heath.
- In addition to these teams, part of the staff's work is through Learning Partners (LPP) in order to create a school-based team whose focus this year is the PD offered to the staff. The LPP team discussed the book *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* by Zaretta Hammond and developed ideas for how to incorporate a vision for equity in their own PD practices. In the fall Inquiry and Development teams were created in which teachers chose what they wanted to learn more about with teachers facilitating their own PD. Topics included: Socratic seminar Design, Implicit Bias, Work-Life Balance, Peer Mediation/ Youth Court, Building Classroom Culture and Learning Around Community, Culturally Responsive Texts, and Understanding by Design (UbD) Unit Planning. The LPP team provides a structure for distributed leadership that supports teacher leadership development.