

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

Final Report



BEDS Code	321000011351
School Name	Bronx Collaborative High School
School Address	100 West Mosholu Parkway South, Bronx, NY 10468
District Name	NYCDOE CSD 10
Principal	Brett Schneider
Dates of Visit	April 30, May 1, May 3, 2019



Purpose Of The Visit

This school was identified as needing additional support by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Because of this identification, NYSED arranged for an Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) to visit the school. The visit is intended to help the school identify areas of need that are making long-term success a challenge and provide several visible Quick Wins that can be accomplished and demonstrate the school’s commitment to improvement.

The report provides a critical lens to help the school best focus its efforts.

School Performance

New York State uses multiple indicators to determine the identification status of schools across the state. For each of these indicators, schools receive a number of 1 (lowest), 2, 3, or 4 (highest) that corresponds with how the school performed in relation to either other schools and/or performance targets. More information about how these levels are determined can be found at: <http://www.nysed.gov/accountability/essa-accountability-designation-materials>

The most recent results for the “All Students” group at the school are as follows:

4 Yr. Grad. Rate <67%	Composite Performance Achievement Level	Average of 4-, 5-, and 6-year Graduation Rate Levels	Combined Composite Performance Achievement and Graduation Rate Level	English Language Proficiency Level	Average ELA and Math Academic Progress Level	Chronic Absenteeism Level	College, Career, Civic, Readiness (CCCR) Level
No	1	1	1	2	2	1	1

Bronx Collaborative High School serves 912 students in grades nine to twelve.

Information About The Visit

- The visit was led by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from NYSED. The team also included a district representative and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).
- The team visited a total of 33 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited six classrooms with the principal during the visit.
- Team members conducted interviews with students, staff, and parents.
- Team members examined documents provided by the school, including curriculum maps, lesson plans, schoolwide data, teacher feedback, and student work.
- In advance of the visit, the school provided results of a student survey that 309 students (58 percent) completed.
- In advance of the visit, the school provided results of a staff survey that 37 staff members (84 percent) completed.
- In advance of the visit, the school provided results of a parent survey that 98 parents (19 percent) completed.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. In discussions with the principal and staff, the Integrated Intervention team (IIT) learned that the school needed to adopt a more coherent curriculum and improve the continuity of instruction. In the fall of 2018, the principal introduced a standards-based College Board Pre-Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum in English, math, science, and history for all students in grade nine. In addition, the College Board AP Capstone curriculum for English was adopted for grade ten. The new Capstone course is focused on developing students' critical thinking, collaboration, time management, and presentation skills in an effort to better prepare students for the Performance Based Assessment Tasks (PBATs) students must pass to meet graduation requirements. Interviewed teachers stated that they are pleased with the structure and consistency provided by the new courses.
2. The principal told the IIT that he has expanded college and career supports for students by hiring a College Access Counselor to augment the services provided by the four guidance counselors previously on staff. This position was developed to provide students with an early understanding of the college process and enhance students' understanding of post-graduation opportunities. This school year, all students in grade nine participated in a new College Discovery course in which they began to explore the college process. Students in grades ten through twelve continue to prepare by exploring college and career options, researching schools that align to their interests, and learning about the application process and financial aid options. In addition, all students participate in a number of tours to private and public colleges provided by the school. Further, this year, the school has established partnerships with 23 businesses that are providing internships for 43 percent of the senior class. These efforts have resulted in a 33 percent increase in the number of colleges offering admission to Bronx Collaborative seniors.
3. The principal has created a caring and nurturing environment that ensures all students feel safe and respected. Students and parents reported that teachers demonstrate knowledge and care about individual students and make connections to students' experiences. The school has an advisory program that typically matches each student with the same advisor for all four years. Students reported that the process enables them to develop strong, trusting relationships with adults at the school. The school has been using the Restorative Justice model and employs both a consultant from Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility and a Restorative Justice Coordinator to support the process. While the principal acknowledged that there are some behavior incidents at the school, the team's review of Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) data revealed relatively few physical altercations or high-level offenses.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **The principal will need to develop systems to monitor the implementation of the measurable goals, action plans, and benchmarks outlined in the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP).** The team learned that the school was not on track to attain a number of the 2018-19 CEP goals. For example, while the CEP outlined the house structure as a mechanism to improve attendance, this was not implemented. A school attendance team was created in mid-April 2019. A review of data demonstrated chronic absenteeism levels continue to need to be addressed. Similarly, the CEP states that 75 percent of the staff would engage in student inquiry work

and use the KidTalk protocol to establish effective academic and behavioral interventions. Teacher interviews revealed that while the program was briefly introduced, it was not fully implemented. Although initiatives are introduced, teachers stated that they need clearer expectations, oversight, and accountability to support implementation.

- **To promote sustainable school improvement, the principal will need to develop systems to strategically assess the impact of initiatives and use collected data to make informed adjustments.** The school implemented new standards-based curriculum for students in grades nine and ten in September 2018; however, the IIT found that the implementation and pacing have not been monitored to ensure the curriculum is presented consistently across all classrooms. For example, during visits to two grade nine math classes, the IIT found that one class had completed three units and was working on unit four of the new curriculum, while the second class was still working on unit one. In addition, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) were created to improve instructional practices. Teacher leaders were assigned to head each group, and the principal reported that teachers would participate in four inter-visitations to observe and reflect on the best practices of colleagues. Some interviewed teachers told the team that they could not recall which PLC they were assigned to and that they needed clearer guidelines, timelines for completion, and reflection tools. In the future, school leaders will need to develop systems to collect and review data to evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **To ensure that designated advisory time is achieving all of its intended outcomes, the school leaders need to communicate clear expectations and establish effective accountability structures to monitor teachers' use of advisory time.** In discussions with the school leaders, the IIT learned that the school created small group advisories to ensure that all students have an adult who knows them well. Advisors monitor their students' academic progress and social-emotional well-being and are responsible for maintaining open dialogue with families. Over the years, the school has had several iterations of its advisory model. Students reported that the process has been very helpful, but changes in this year's schedule has made it more difficult to meet with their advisor. In the past students met with their advisor every day, but this year, due to scheduling limitations in students' programs, the meeting time was reduced to one period a week. Advisories are professional period assignments, and although student contact time has been curtailed, teachers still have additional periods that have been designated for parent outreach. Staff reported that home contacts are supposed to be logged into the school's Google Drive, but the team's review of the system revealed few entries. The IIT learned during parent and student interviews that advisors are the primary point of contact with families, but contact is infrequent unless students are having a problem. Although the principal identified increasing parent engagement as a priority, accountability structures need to be implemented to ensure designated outreach time is used in service of this goal.
- **To maximize parent and student access to accurate and timely student achievement data, the principal needs to communicate clear expectations and timelines for teachers' entry of data into the school's JumpRope platform.** JumpRope, an online data reporting system, was purchased to enable parents and students to have in the moment access to student assignments, grades, and attendance information. The IIT found that while the school uses the online system, teachers need to update the data in a timely manner. During interviews, the IIT learned that recitation period attendance data are typically not entered daily, and parents stated that they have difficulty locating student assignments. Students stated it can frequently take

weeks before they see their grades online, and sometimes their grades are not entered. Counselors shared that sometimes they have used JumpRope data in meetings with parents that were inaccurate. Parents stated that these issues leave them feeling like they have limited knowledge of their children’s progress until report cards are issued.

- **To build upon the culture of distributive leadership the school is developing, school leaders will need to create structures that enable, support, and sustain the work of distributive leader teams.** The principal has created teacher leaders and a professional development (PD) committee who spearhead professional learning and drive instructional improvement at the school. While tasks and responsibilities have been divided, teacher leaders reported that the effectiveness of their efforts is at times minimized due to autonomy and the challenge of pulling all staff together to work collaboratively. The principal confirmed that teachers are accustomed to working independently and that a common purpose, or expectations for collaboration, is not universally known and understood by all staff. As a result, not all teachers participate in common planning or in their assigned PLC. Frequent schedule changes also interfere with scheduled meetings.

Learning at the School

- **Teacher-designed curricula should follow grade-level scope and sequence that is horizontally and vertically aligned across the school.** The school has historically endeavored to offer students a choice of unique courses, such as Modern Genocide and Racism, and has adapted curricula for courses such as Global History Two and Geometry to have a thematic focus. In interviews with teachers, the IIT learned that while curriculum has been designed by teachers, it does not always align to grade-specific standards. Teachers reported that they have flexibility in what they teach because their students are not required to take Regents exams in math, science, and history. New standards-based curricula in all major subject areas were introduced this year for incoming grade nine students. Grade nine teachers reported that this is beginning to improve the coherence of content and standards being taught. A review of student work in other grades demonstrated a lack of student development of course concepts and standards over time. Teachers stated that students are entering classes from prior grades lacking prerequisite knowledge and foundational skills that then impedes their ability to produce high-level projects and meet PBAT requirements.
- **Teachers should design scaffolds that enable all students to actively participate in lessons and take ownership of learning.** Instruction in many classrooms visited was often teacher-directed with students completing worksheets. Students were not typically provided with alternative ways to approach concepts being taught. Although many classes had a second teacher to support students with special needs or English language learners (ELLs), all students typically were assigned the same materials and tasks with few modifications. During interviews with the IIT, students explained that when they cannot answer questions or do not want to complete an assignment, they are typically provided with the answers. In many observed classes, student participation was limited to a small number of students who understood the lesson. During classroom visits, students were rarely required to engage in productive struggle or challenged to defend their thinking. High-performing students reported that work is generally easy and stated that they are rarely assigned alternative activities to extend their thinking.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Teachers reported that the professional development (PD) offered this year has not been impactful.** Teachers stated that school leaders have relied on teacher leaders to design and deliver most PD but did not provide clear expectations for implementation and do not monitor or assess initiatives. While a PD committee was created, teachers reported that participation was not open to most staff members. Teachers shared that they would like more opportunities to voice their professional needs and provide feedback on their experiences.
- **Teachers reported that common planning time is limited.** Teachers expressed the belief that regularly scheduled time to meet in grade-level teams, as departments, and with teachers assigned to co-teach their classes would improve instructional coherence and their ability to better meet the needs of their students.
- **While parents said they are generally pleased with the school because it is safe and nurturing, they shared that they have little understanding of the grading system, grade-level standards, graduation requirements, or the PBAT structure.** Interviewed parents stated that they would like the school to plan more events where this information can be presented and explained in parent-friendly terms. Since many families are unable to attend events, parents suggested that presentations be videotaped and made available to parents online.
- **Parent shared that they would like their children to have access to clubs and other extra-curricular activities.** Parents reported that while chess is available at lunchtime, their children have few other options. Parents said they would like the school to consider adding more arts programs such as music and drama. While parents recognized that resources may be limited, they suggested that the principal work with the leaders of co-located schools to explore the option of shared programs.
- **Students reported that although they typically enjoy attending school outings and class trips, when too many trips are scheduled, they miss valuable class time.** For example, students stated that some classes have had multiple field trips this year and that when college visits are also factored in, students are out of the building too often, which makes it difficult to make up missed work.
- **Students shared that they were unclear about the academic support services available to them.** While the principal stated that there is after-school English Regents tutoring, Saturday School, PBAT coaching, and access to Max Scholar and Reading Plus for all students, students could not articulate what supports are available to them. Some stated that their teachers provide help after school or at lunch time, but there are no posted schedules of availability. Three seniors who had failed the English Regents exam were unaware of Regents tutoring. Students said that advisories used to be places where information was disseminated but they no longer occur every day.