

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

<b>DBN:</b>	11X418
<b>District Name:</b>	District 11
<b>School Name:</b>	Bronx High School for Visual Arts
<b>School Address:</b>	50 Mercy College Place, Bronx, New York City, 10462
<b>Principal:</b>	Gwendolyn Jones
<b>Accountability Phase/Category:</b>	Improvement (year-1) - Comprehensive English Language Arts - All Students and Economically Disadvantaged Students
<b>Areas of Identification:</b>	Mathematics - All Students and Economically Disadvantaged Students
<b>Dates of On-site Review:</b>	April 3 - 4, 2012

**PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT**

“The mission of the Bronx High School for the Visual Arts is to provide a quality education program in and through the arts that emphasizes critical thinking, student engagement and deep curricular knowledge necessary for authentic student achievement and for meeting state standards.

Our school is based on the belief that an arts curriculum, developed in conjunction with the major disciplines, will develop lifelong learners who are informed, responsible and productive citizens and empower them with the skills and knowledge to respond creatively to the individual and collective changes they will face in their lifetimes.

Our mission will be accomplished by working together with parents and the community to provide students with challenging programs that reflect high expectations and promote excellence in a safe, nurturing environment.”

**PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS**

- Teachers, parents and students report that the school is a clean, well-maintained, safe, pleasant and welcoming learning environment. There are high-quality displays of artwork throughout the building.

- The arts program is highly valued and successfully promotes student talent in the visual arts through displays of student work in the school, exhibits in galleries, and by securing student scholarships to prestigious art and design colleges.
- Parents and students state that teachers are caring and willingly give up extra time to provide additional support for students.
- Parents and students stated that the school leaders have an open door policy.

### **PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA**

##### **FINDINGS:**

- Based on a review of documents, the review team determined that the school collects substantial amounts of data, including reports that detail passing rates for individual teachers by class. However, a review of documentation and interviews indicate limited evidence that the school leaders have developed a system to analyze data or to implement strategies to improve instruction.
- Interviews and school documents, reviewed by the review team, showed that teachers collect data from multiple sources, including the Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS), individual teacher-created assessments, grades and an analysis of Regents scores; however, there is limited evidence that the school has established specific expectations for how this data is used. Teachers reported that they are unsure of how to use data to measure student progress or to identify trends in the performance of students as a whole or by subgroup. The use of data by teachers to inform instruction varies greatly from teacher to teacher and has had a limited impact on the ability of teachers to identify the academic needs of individual students to differentiate instruction.

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school leaders, with the support of the Network, should seek professional development (PD) on how to use data to support school improvement. School leaders should develop a common system for maintaining the results of student assessment data to identify trends and make comparisons to monitor student progress. The PD should focus on using data to develop and monitor instructional improvement in ELA and mathematics in the school's Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP).
- School leaders should work with the Network to provide PD for teachers of English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, regarding how to analyze and use data to identify and meet the academic needs of students. The school leadership, in collaboration with teachers, should use this information to plan student interventions and lesson plans that target instruction to the needs of students.

## II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

### FINDINGS:

- Curriculum maps are used in some ELA and mathematics classes. There is limited evidence of written strategies within these curriculum maps that provide guidance for teachers to support students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs). In addition there is limited evidence that teachers consistently align instruction with the curriculum maps. Observations by the review team indicated that, in some cases, teachers of the same courses were teaching different topics.
- Although there was some evidence that a few teachers differentiate instruction through effective questioning, grouping and scaffolding learning to match students' needs., differentiated instruction was limited. A review of lesson plans showed limited evidence of strategies to address the needs of students with disabilities or ELLs. Observations also found limited evidence of enrichment activities for students. As a result, student progress was impacted and advanced students were not always appropriately challenged.
- Based on evidence reviewed by the review team, there was limited evidence that teachers employed a range of instructional strategies to support students in mastering lesson objectives, as most observed lessons were teacher-directed, whole group instruction with little opportunity for students to engage in independent learning, group work or actively participate in the lesson. Additionally, there was limited evidence of regular checks for understanding by teachers to ensure student progress towards the lesson objectives.
- Interviews with school leaders and teachers by the review team, indicated that the school provides a double period of instruction in ELA for ninth grade students which was established by the previous school leadership to improve ELA skills of incoming students. There is limited evidence of school wide guidelines or instructional expectations for the optimal use of the increased class time.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders, with Network support, should provide PD for ELA and mathematic teachers to review their curriculum maps and to develop a school wide ELA and mathematics curriculum that is aligned to the P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). School leaders should provide PD opportunities for all teachers on curriculum mapping and lesson planning that includes specific instructional strategies to address the individual learning needs of students with disabilities and ELLs. Formal and informal classroom observations and walkthroughs should be used to monitor the consistent use of the curriculum maps to ensure that lessons are aligned to the curriculum maps.
- School leaders should put guidelines into place that ensure that all teachers are responsive to the individual academic needs of all students including students with disabilities and ELLs. Teachers should use IEP data, as well as formative assessments, to plan student-centered lessons that differentiate based on student needs and to group students. School leaders should work with the

Network to provide PD to enable teachers to use differentiated strategies and follow up the PD by monitoring implementation and evaluating the impact on instruction.

- School leaders should provide PD for teachers on how to plan and deliver student-centered lessons using varied instructional strategies and activities. PD should also include strategies that teachers can use to check for student learning and understanding during and at the end of each lesson.
- School leaders should develop clear expectations for the ninth grade double period ELA class, and provide PD to help teachers maximize the additional instructional time. School leaders should regularly monitor instruction during the double periods and provide teachers with additional support as needed.

### **III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

#### **FINDINGS:**

- In a review of the CEP by the review team, three goals were listed that directly relate to improving student performance. Two of the goals focus on increasing the graduation rate and one goal referred to increasing the Regents pass rate in ELA. The ELA goal did not address a plan to improve student performance on State tests in ELA or mathematics. There was limited evidence that the school community, including the School Leadership Team (SLT), was knowledgeable regarding the school goals.
- Interviews with school leaders by the review team, indicates that school leaders collaborate with a District 75 program, where District 75 students are taught in inclusion classes alongside students from the Bronx High School for Visual Arts (BHSVA). Many of these classrooms are staffed with general education teachers from BHSVA and an Integrated Co-Teacher from the District 75 program and a paraprofessional. There is limited evidence that school leaders provide opportunities for teachers from BHSVA and District 75, to work collaboratively to develop the curriculum, plan lessons, or to determine the responsibilities of paraprofessionals in the inclusion classrooms. Consequently, supports to students are not maximized.
- Currently, the school has an external ELA consultant who visits the school once a week, but school leaders report that there is currently no in-house specialist that supervises and provides curriculum and instructional leadership to the ELA department.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The Principal should work with the Network to provide PD for the members of the SLT, to enable them to understand their roles in developing and monitoring CEP goals. The school leader should ensure that the CEP is a working document and that all staff know and understand the school goals for raising student achievement. PD should be focused on helping teachers and staff understand their roles and responsibilities in achieving these goals. SLT should share this information with the school community.

- School leaders should work with the leadership of the District 75 program to ensure that BHSVA teachers and District 75 teachers plan and work collaboratively on a regular basis. This would ensure that the expertise of the special education teachers and paraprofessionals are used to support the skills of the general education teachers in meeting the needs of all learners within the classroom.
- The Principal should ensure that the school's ELA and mathematics teachers are supported by highly qualified in-house subject area specialists to ensure improvements in teacher practice and student achievement in the school's areas of identification.

#### **IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**

##### **FINDINGS:**

- Observations, by the review team, indicate that the Academic Intervention Services (AIS) program takes place for 50 minutes after school twice a week, and a 90 minutes P.M. school open to juniors and seniors (from 3:30 to 5:00) for credit recovery in ELA, history and science, however these programs are not evaluated for effectiveness by school leaders. Interviews conducted by the review team indicated a varied understanding between school leaders, teachers and parents about the purpose of both programs. In addition, observations of the AIS program showed that attendance was low.
- The school leader indicated that attendance is a challenge and students are frequently late to school. Document review and interviews conducted by the review team indicated that the school has a routine for collecting attendance and lateness data. Observations of the morning student arrivals confirmed that many students arrive late and many did not follow the sign-in procedures. There is limited evidence that the school's current system for documenting lateness is effective in monitoring or improving student tardiness.

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- School leaders should evaluate the effectiveness of the school's AIS program and "P.M." school, and develop guidelines and expectations regarding who should attend, why they should attend and the expected outcomes. The guidelines and expectations for each program should be clearly communicated to the staffs of each program. Both programs should be supervised and monitored to ensure that students are receiving the support services needed to improve their academic achievement. Student attendance should be closely monitored and a plan to improve attendance should be developed.
- The school leaders with the support of the Network, SLT and student support services staff should develop a plan to increase student attendance and decrease student tardiness. Existing systems for monitoring attendance and lateness should be evaluated and changed to support students.

Developing the plan should engage the support of all members of the community in raising student attendance, including students, parents and representatives from Community Based Organizations (CBOs). School leaders should ensure that information collected on student attendance and lateness are used to hold students accountable and provide additional supports to students, as needed.

## **V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **FINDINGS:**

- Based on interviews with teachers, the review team confirmed that all teachers have worked with school leaders to identify personal PD needs for this school year. A review of documentation and interviews with the principal indicate that there is a school PD plan, which consists of a list of four PD goals. This PD plan contains limited evidence that administrators have identified any common skills or areas in need of improvement among teachers or that school leaders have used teachers' individual forms to inform the school-wide PD plan. Additionally, there is limited evidence that the school leaders have used information from data analysis or lesson observations to develop the school-wide PD plan.
- The school leaders indicated, during interviews with the review team, that about 25 percent of BHSVA students have IEPs and additional students with disabilities from District 75, are taught in an inclusion setting. Documents showed limited evidence that the school is providing PD for teachers on how to identify and utilize specific instructional strategies to support students with disabilities in classrooms.
- A document review and interviews with school staff revealed limited evidence of consistent schoolwide expectations for teacher planning. There is some evidence that teachers plan collaboratively, such as in tenth grade, where the ELA and global history teachers collaborate to develop curriculum and share teaching strategies, however, there is limited evidence that teachers are provided with scheduled periods during the week to meet for planning purposes by grade or department. As a result, successful instructional strategies are not consistently shared within and among all departments to provide the best possible learning experiences for students.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school leaders should build on the existing PD goals and develop a more comprehensive PD plan that addresses common needs. This should be done by first conducting a comprehensive needs assessment which should include an analysis of informal and formal lesson observation findings, student performance data and common trends among the teachers' self-identified PD needs. The school should then develop a schoolwide PD plan that addresses the identified needs of individual teachers as well as school-wide trends. The school leaders should also ensure that the PD plan aligns with identified school goals and to the new P – 12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). The school leaders should review the PD plan on a regular basis to evaluate its effectiveness in light of students' progress and teacher observations and revise if necessary.

- The school leaders should work collaboratively with the assistant principal of the District 75 program and the Network to provide PD to support general education teachers in using student IEPs to plan instruction. This PD should include strategies for effective Integrated Co-Teaching and engaging paraprofessionals meaningfully in daily lessons. School leaders should regularly monitor the implementation of this PD through formal and informal lesson observations and provide additional support for teachers as necessary.
- School leaders should organize teachers into teams by grades and by subject areas, and review and revise the current class schedule to ensure that teacher teams are able to meet together during the week. The school leaders should develop guidelines, set clear expectations for teacher meeting times, and monitor the effects of the instructional practices discussed and developed during these meetings. The school leaders could also consider using this meeting time as an opportunity to provide targeted PD to teacher teams.

## **VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES**

### **FINDINGS:**

- The school has a bright and inviting library, which is well stocked with a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books, magazines, and computers for student use. Observations by the review team indicated that students use the library as a social area during lunch periods. However, there is limited evidence that teachers or students use the library consistently as a resource for enrichment, extended reading or to support their academic work. There is limited evidence that teachers consistently incorporate the use of the library into their lesson planning or regularly direct students to use specific sections of the library to complete projects.
- SMART Boards were available in many classrooms observed by the review team, throughout the school and some teachers were observed integrating the use of the SMART Boards into daily instruction. However, there was limited evidence that teachers consistently use SMART Boards as interactive tools to support student learning or that the students use the computers available in the classrooms as part of daily instruction. In addition, many teachers indicated on their individualized PD plans that they needed additional PD in the use of technology.
- While the review team observed that the school library provides significant resources to students, there was limited evidence that classroom libraries are equipped to support and enhance ELA and other content area instruction.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- School leaders should work with teachers to develop expectations and guidelines for regular library use to support teaching and learning. School leaders should encourage teachers to utilize the skills of the librarian, by providing project resources in book, magazine, newspaper and internet form to enrich teachers' lessons. School leaders should provide opportunities for teachers to recommend books for purchase for the library to support their curriculum and enrichment in their subject.

- School leaders should develop clear expectations and guidelines for the use of SMART Boards and computer technology by teachers and students in daily lessons. School leaders should then provide PD for teachers on how to embed technology into instruction. School leaders should also consider choosing one or more model classrooms to highlight quality examples of how technology can be used. School leaders should also conduct regular classroom observations to assess how teachers and students are utilizing technology, assess whether or not the guidelines are being followed and provide additional PD, as necessary.
- School leaders should inventory classroom libraries and purchase supplemental materials to ensure that there are resources available to support independent reading, to engage student interest and understanding in ELA and to support the development of literacy skills in other content areas.

#### **PART 4: CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

The findings and recommendations noted in the report are intended to guide the school's inquiry, planning, and the development of the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) for school year 2012-13. The school should also continue its efforts in the implementation of the following Regents Reform Agenda initiatives: P-12 Common Core Learning Standards, Data Driven Instruction and the Annual Professional Performance Reviews for teacher effectiveness.