



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Bushwick Community High School

High School 564

**231 Palmetto Street
Brooklyn
NY 11221**

Principal: Tira Randall

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Reviewer: Stuart Satinet

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bushwick Community High School was set up in 2004 to meet the needs of students who have been unsuccessful in graduating at other schools. It is located in Brooklyn and has approximately 400 students in grade 10. It shares some facilities with a middle school and has developed from an outreach program. About 57% of students are Hispanic, 41% Black and less than 2% are from other ethnic groups. Approximately 5% of students are English language learners and about 10% are special education students. About 80% of students are Title 1 eligible which is a higher figure than similar or City schools. The attendance figure of 65% is lower than that of similar schools and City schools. The school has strong links with its local community. It is the only high school that accepts students with zero credits.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The leadership of the school has a clear mission to improve expectations and achievement in its community which provides a consistent focus for their work.
- The school has focused well on the needs of students who have had difficulty in graduating in other schools and has successfully raised levels of achievement.
- A committed staff works successfully with students to create a positive learning environment where individuals feel valued.
- Priorities for the further development of the school have been arrived at collaboratively and support progress on key issues.
- Strong guidance and social work teams provide well structured support to students which contribute to improving levels of engagement.
- Teachers respond to student learning needs through effective realignments of the curriculum.
- Strong links with outside bodies have been used to raise expectations.
- Attendance is a high priority and there are well-targeted interventions.

What the school needs to improve

- Coordinate the gathering of data so that it can be used effectively and consistently by all members of the school community to improve learning.
- Build the capacity of staff to interpret and make use of data in their teaching.
- Develop the target setting process to increase the use of specific, measurable and time-referenced goals.
- Extend the process of identifying, targeting and monitoring the progress of particular groups of students to support the evaluation of teaching strategies.
- Develop departmental planning to encourage greater consistency in approaches to instruction and assessment.
- Increase the range of inter-disciplinary work to share best practice across subject areas.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is an undeveloped school with proficient features.

The school caters for students who have not graduated at other high schools and have had difficulty in finding a school placement to continue their education. It has been successful in re-engaging students in the education process and supporting them in reaching their academic goals. Twenty eight students graduated in January 2007 and 103 are expected to graduate in June 2007. Students and teachers take pride in these achievements and there is a strong bond between the school and its community which has contributed to a positive learning environment. The expectations of students have been raised and this has led to an increasing number of students gaining college places.

Despite this evident success in its first three years as a high school, processes are not yet fully in place to analyze the learning needs of students. The school does not use data consistently to differentiate instruction and meet the needs of students. The use of specific, measurable targets in planning has been identified as an area for further development. These issues are starting to be addressed by a committed team.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is undeveloped.

Although the school gathers a range of data on students to understand individual needs, systems are not yet in place to coordinate the overall use of this information across the school. There are attendance, social and welfare records which are used effectively to support students. Guidance counselors also use academic records and reports to track the progress of students in the curriculum. Progress reports are produced twice yearly and relate to participation and academics on a four point 'always' to 'rarely' scale but do not refer to specific subject skills. A student portfolio has been introduced which is starting to be used to involve students in celebrating their own achievements. Individual progress of students is considered regularly at meetings but the understanding of trends and patterns in relation to particular groups of students is undeveloped. Teachers grade work and keep individual records but there is not a common grading policy and there is no system in place to bring data on skill development together in a consistent way. The records currently held on individual students are not yet sufficiently developed to allow for easy tracking over time as many are recorded in a number of different places and formats. Although the progress of English language learners and special education students is tracked, data linked to ethnic groups or gender is not systematically reviewed.

The leadership of the school recognises the importance of developing common expectations and goals for students linked to teacher grading policies and has put in place development plans to establish proficient practice. The school has begun to work with North-West Evaluation Association (NWEA) materials to develop approaches to the assessment of skills and differentiation with the aim of achieving a more accurate alignment of instructional planning to students needs. Given the specific focus of the school, it is difficult to make meaningful comparisons between its performance and that of other schools.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school has chosen to establish its goals through an alternative Comprehensive Education Plan in which it has identified four key areas of development. These have been established collaboratively and are well understood in the school community. They represent a well-focused attempt to agree significant areas for development in the year ahead which include tasks and indicators of progress. Progress is monitored by the school achievement team. Subject areas align their activities with these plans and this has effectively established a shared sense of direction. At departmental level, mission statements have been agreed but planning linked to measurable criteria is less developed.

The performance of English language learners and special education students is reviewed and given particular attention. However, the emphasis in the school is on trying to meet individual needs in recognition that all enrolled students have had difficulties graduating. There is a consistent effort to raise the expectations of students and to establish good working relationships. As a result, students are confident in expressing views and seeking support to achieve their goals. Strong links with outside bodies such as Manhattanville College have been used effectively to broaden the perspective of students and to encourage them to pursue college courses. There has been a clear impact on the motivation of many students who have responded to the approaches used. Both parents and the community have a clear understanding that the aim of the school is to give all students a final chance to graduate and it is this overall goal that is clearly recognised by all associated with the school. There is a strong commitment to this goal.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school has been imaginative in developing topics across the curriculum that have cultural and social relevance to the students in a range of courses such as history and health. Each department has drawn up curriculum maps which are effective in identifying the skills and concepts which are to be taught. These have encouraged discussion about differentiated teaching which is recognised by the leadership as an area for development. Professional development opportunities have been organized to develop differentiation and this is beginning to have an impact on teaching in some subjects. The teachers recognize their responsibility for the progress of the students in their care. Data analysis has been used to review the effectiveness of the curriculum and realignments have been made as a result.

Funding from the New Visions program is used flexibly for enhancing the curriculum and is appropriately focused on the school mission of using learning material which is relevant to the lives and interests of students. The particular needs of the students at the school are given a high profile when teachers are hired and scheduling decisions have been carefully based on reviews of performance data. An enthusiastic staff has been effective in

developing active learning opportunities and themed activity days which have achieved high levels of engagement among the students.

Many students come to the school with histories of poor attendance and truancy. The school has made attendance a key issue and has developed rigorous procedures to tackle this issue. There is an overall goal to increase attendance by 5% and that is linked to regular data review and systematic interventions which are beginning to make an impact. It is recognised that positive engagement of students in school activities will also impact on their attendance and a tone of good personal relations and mutual respect has been achieved. Students are encouraged to take a role in decision making and this has also increased their levels of involvement.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The principal provides strong leadership in this well-organized school. Actions taken to date and the impact that they have had, reflect her strong capacity to effect further change. She has taken a proactive approach to the hiring of staff using teacher fairs linked to the New Visions program and involving existing teachers in the hiring process at the school. This has enabled her to align new teachers to the needs of the school and there are peer support arrangements to reinforce this process.

The professional development program for all teachers is based on a clear assessment of needs. These are established effectively through a teacher survey, observations of classes and a review of school priorities for the further development of teaching. An annual program is drawn up which includes training on gathering and using data. Close links with the school's lead partner, Manhattanville College, have contributed to extending professional development opportunities and have enhanced the quality of instruction. Formal class observations are carried out with a clear focus on improving instruction and a pattern of peer observation is being developed through the curriculum mapping project which is leading to a useful exchange of ideas on teaching strategies. Although teachers share ideas about instruction in this way, systematic planning at subject team level is undeveloped in some areas. This is being addressed through the current school development plan. There have been successful inter-disciplinary groups which meet to look at development issues but opportunities for teachers to share ideas across subject teams are relatively limited.

Youth development issues are a significant part of the school's mission and the link with the local community based organisations has provided effective programs for developing students' personal, social and community skills involving such opportunities as learning to work internships and career exploration.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in

its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is undeveloped

The key goals established through the Comprehensive Education Plan are clear and measurable but planning at other levels is variable. Steps are being taken to link departmental planning to the overall goals and the school is moving towards proficient practice in this area. Although scrutiny of data takes place at some levels in the school, the systematic assessment of students' progress across the curriculum is undeveloped. The absence of a readily accessible system of bringing together data from a variety of sources inhibits the comparison of progress of students across the school. Teachers work well with students on an individual basis and curriculum maps have recently been developed which identify the skills and concepts to be mastered in courses across the curriculum. This is an important step towards more focused assessment and planning which has also been discussed through the North-West Evaluation Association (NWEA) data project.

Although goal setting procedures are undeveloped at a departmental level, useful work has taken place during the year which has laid the foundations for further development. Departments are aligning their work more closely to the overall goals of the school and are reviewing progress towards these goals. As a result, planning processes are being strengthened. The main planning cycle takes place on an annual basis and plans are not regularly realigned during the year. However, where targets are set which are linked to data, discussions take place regarding progress towards these goals which influence activity in the school and lead to realignment of programs where necessary. This school meets the needs of a particular group of students and comparisons across schools are not always easy to make. However, there has recently been more contact with similar small schools with a view to sharing good practice with others in the future.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Bushwick Community High School (PS 564)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score	X		

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> each student, classroom, grade level, 		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 	X		
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all other categories of interest to the school* 	X		
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.	X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1	X		

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.	X		
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.		X	
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.		X	
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.	X		
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.		X	
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.	X		
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.	X		
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.	X		
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.	X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5	X		