

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**Boys and Girls High School**

**K455**

**1700 Fulton Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11213**

**Principal: Bernard Gassaway**

**Dates of review: October 4-6, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Nancy Gannon**

## **Part 1: The school context**

### **Information about the school**

Boys and Girls is a high school with 2013 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 87% Black, 8% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 63% of the students enrolled and girls account for 37%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 73.4%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders strategically use observations and evaluations to develop coherent school wide expectations that improve opportunities for academic growth.
  - The principal and leadership team have created an exemplary structure for ensuring that every teacher is given detailed feedback that aligns with school wide goals. New teachers are observed at least eight times per year, and the school had already documented numerous informal and formal observations in the first month of school. Those observations go to support a chart that documents where teachers need various supports so that administrators can track growth and target interventions. The school has also documentation of changes of teachers and administrators in cases where student outcomes were low. By strategically supporting and evaluating teachers, the school improves classroom learning conditions for students.
  - Teachers throughout the school speak with enthusiasm about the changes in the school in the last year. Although full implementation of school goals varies widely throughout the building, teachers understand the direction and most are working toward meeting them.
- The dedicated principal has established a strong set of goals that align with student needs and push for better academic outcomes.
  - School leaders have worked with a wide array of stakeholders, including teachers, students, and parents, to develop strategic goals that align with critical data points around student need. For example, after administrators conducted extensive classroom visits, the school is focused on increasing rigor throughout the school. After looking at last year's data, the school is targeting differentiated instruction this year.
  - The school has expanded the number of venues for communicating with stakeholders in the school community. In addition to meeting with the school leadership team, the principal now meets with a group of student representatives and has reached out to various groups of parents and community members. Because of this work, the school community is engaged and articulates enthusiasm about the goals for student achievement.
- The school offers a wide range of opportunities and events that engage families and support their participation in school events.
  - The school offers parents a traditional role in school decisions via the School Leadership Team, which helped to carve out this year's goals. An active parent coordinator has developed a variety of other ways to bring parents to the school, including various parent workshops. In addition, parents receive emails regularly inviting them to participate in school events. By engaging parents through a range of activities and opportunities, the school encourages them to be a part of students' academic success.
- Teams of teachers, assistant principals, and the principal all take part in an

ongoing effort to monitor and adjust curriculum and pedagogy so that students' needs are better served.

- Across the school, groups of teachers currently meet regularly to craft and revise curriculum based on student need. This work has led to new curriculum in multiple departments. For example, some science teachers have used last year's items analysis to draft new curriculum for Living Environment class. By monitoring and revising curriculum in an ongoing fashion, the school is better able to serve student needs.
- The school's recent shift to small learning communities (SLCs) has included an ongoing tracking of student outcomes within each of the communities. For example, in one SLC, the administrator posted a chart of every child in his office. That chart included data about each child's progress and missing regents. By better monitoring this major shift in organization, the school can assess how to adjust this new structure to ensure that students are academically progressing.
- The school provides a calm, safe environment that supports student learning.
  - Throughout the school, a serious and positive atmosphere set the tone for an academic focus. Students were in classrooms, not in halls, and the conversations between students and adults were respectful and caring.
  - The school has started to roll out a plan to support students' social and emotional growth through their new Power of Ten initiative. Each member of the cabinet is mentoring ten students and those students meet with their mentor regularly. The school plans to increase the number of participating adults so that more students get regular support.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Develop a clear structure and set of tools to track progress of long term and interim goals in order to regularly reevaluate and revise strategies and ensure ongoing growth in student achievement.
  - Although the school has instructional goals for the year, they are lacking a clear system for measuring progress toward those goals. Without a specific plan for monitoring progress, the school cannot easily identify where they are off track toward meeting goals and make the necessary adjustments to ensure that they move back on track.
  - Currently, teachers do not set instructional goals for students. School leaders articulated a plan to work with teachers on setting specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and targeted (SMART) goals for students, but that work is planned for later this fall. Without a system to monitor progress toward goals, teachers cannot be sure that targeted groups are making adequate progress in targeted areas.
- Utilize teacher teams to analyze data and adjust pedagogy across classrooms so that all students receive rigorous and engaging instruction.
  - Teaching practices vary widely across the school. Some teachers use data strategically to inform pedagogy and differentiate instruction, but the practice

is inconsistent. In some classrooms, students were unchallenged and passive, and some teachers articulated little or no use of data. Because pedagogy is inconsistent, some students experience rigorous classes that push their thinking and other students do not.

- Strengthen vertical and horizontal alignment of curriculum to create a coherence that supports strong student outcomes.
  - Currently, teams of teachers across grades and departments are working on developing rigorous curriculum. However, the school has yet to make adequate progress on this work. Classes are not yet fully aligned vertically and horizontally, and consequently, a student might be assigned the same novel in two different grades. In addition, a new potentially-strong, engaging algebra curriculum is in its second year, but despite very weak results, efforts to more closely align the curriculum to State standards resulted in only very minor changes. Some classes offered higher-order tasks that challenged students, but that practice was not consistent across classes.
- Develop systems to ensure that all teachers regularly evaluate and analyze assessment results to understand and meet student learning needs.
  - Currently some teachers articulated that they do not regularly use data from Periodic Assessments. Other teachers use this data but do not analyze results from relevant subgroups. Without understanding this data, it is difficult to know strengths and weaknesses of the various students in a classroom.
  - Some teachers spoke of working in teams to look at class work as a means to understanding students' strengths and weaknesses. However, other teacher teams said they spend more of their time focusing on social and emotional struggles of their students. Without thoroughly and regularly analyzing student work as a critical source of data, teachers cannot appropriately adjust instruction to meet the needs of their students.
- Revise the allocation of resources, so that coherence between instructional choices and organizational decisions complement each other in support of student needs.
  - The school made a schedule change this fall in an attempt to impact student learning. However, students and parents spoke about significant problems. Many students, from ninth to twelfth grade, were assigned classes they had already completed. Staffing was insufficient to correct errors in a timely fashion, and students spoke of waiting for days to get schedules corrected. The school cannot meet goals around credit accumulation and graduation rates if students are not in the right classes by the sixth week of the year.
  - Technology is limited throughout the school. With a few exceptions like the music lab, there was little evidence that students were exposed to technology or that teachers were using it to better their practices. For example, a strong teacher had hand-written lesson plans that could not easily be shared. By not investing in technology, the school limits its efficiency and the important exposure that students need.

<b>School name: Boys and Girls High School</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		<b>X</b>		
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?		<b>X</b>		
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?		<b>X</b>		
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?		<b>X</b>		
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>		
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?		<b>X</b>		
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?		<b>X</b>		

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			<b>X</b>				
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?		<b>X</b>					
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>					
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>							
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?				<b>X</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>X</b>					
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?		<b>X</b>					
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			<b>X</b>				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?		<b>X</b>					
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?	<b>X</b>						
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		<b>X</b>					
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>							
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>△</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>