

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**Boys and Girls High School  
High school K455**

**1700 Fulton Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11213**

**Principal: Bernard Gassaway**

**Dates of review: March 22-24, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Carolyn Yaffe**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Boys and Girls High School is a high school with 2028 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 88% Black, 8% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian students and 2% other students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 24% special education students. Boys account for 63% of the students enrolled and girls account for 37%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 73.4%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders analyze feedback gathered from the use of a school-wide observation tool to design and facilitate support for teachers that has yielded movement on school-wide instructional practices. (4.1)
  - o School leaders established a school-wide focus on several elements of the Danielson framework (1e, 3b) that align most closely with the school-wide emphasis on rigor, engagement and differentiation. This lens is applied during frequent observations and school leaders come together to analyze data from these observations. This cycle of feedback and analysis informs the content of the year-long professional development calendar and has yielded movement for specific teachers in connection with elements of the Danielson framework, as evidenced by progression in feedback and observations of classroom practices for a number of teachers since the beginning of the year. As a result, more students are having classroom experiences grounded in detailed planning and questions that require synthesis, rather than regurgitation, of knowledge. In addition, the data from these observations informs conversations connected to tenure, extension of probation and teacher assignments.
- The school adeptly gathers and analyzes a variety of summative data that effectively illustrates progress of various sub-groups against school-wide goals of credit accumulation and appropriate movement towards graduation. (2.1)
  - o School leaders consistently collect and examine data such as admissions, discharges, attendance, suspensions, credit accumulation and Regents' Exam pass rates in order to broadly understand the school's needs. As a result of this analysis, the school identifies particular cohorts of students inside the lowest third for whom they are aggressively tracking attendance, referral information, credit accumulation and testing data. The information collected is further analyzed and used to inform organizational decisions such as programming, academic and social-emotional intervention structures in order to move higher numbers of students towards graduation.
  - o Through the use of a unified lens for classroom instruction at the planning and observation level, school leaders are able to gather useful information on where teachers need support in implementation of the Madeleine Hunter planning model used by the school. In addition, the regular examination of classroom observation has informed the school's focus on particular aspects of the Danielson model and the accompanying professional development.
- A clear vision for the school's trajectory of growth has been established, planned for and has secured the investment of the school community. (3.1)
  - o The school has a clear, short list of data-based goals in their Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) that center around success in credit accumulation and Regents examinations to affect graduation rates. The school, in concert with the community (including parents, students and Community Based Organizations with whom they partner), has also identified clear action plans to simultaneously boost the quality of instruction and the social-emotional supports that facilitate academic engagement. As a result of the brevity and clarity of the goals, and the

work the principal does to garner community investment, all school constituents speak fluidly of the goals and action plans to move towards success.

- A robust system of youth development supports has been integrated into the school to provide a foundation for students' academic and personal growth. (4.4)
  - The guidance department has been reorganized to have two guidance counselors loop a class of students from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In addition, the school invests in a college counselor and an additional guidance counselor to run the Care Center, a newly established comprehensive center that brings social-emotional and practical supports from the community into the school to more effectively facilitate student engagement with instruction. The philosophy that drives relationships between adults and students, that all adults are competent and caring, is modeled by the principal and his cabinet and drives professional development connected to social-emotional supports. As a result of both this stance and the allocation of resources, students and parents express satisfaction with the level of information conveyed and supports received regarding social-emotional health, academic intervention and college and career planning.
- Families are active and invested in school decision-making and feel appraised of their child's progress towards meeting school expectations. (2.4)
  - Families report that the school provides both formal and informal avenues to understand their children's performance and that the principal has clearly imparted his vision for improvement while creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for decision-making. Parents speak enthusiastically about the accessibility of teachers and the increased rigor of class and homework assignments over the past several years. Additionally, one initiative that parents spoke of involvement with, in terms of its inception and its impact, is the athlete academic policy, which has pushed academics to the forefront for the large number of students in the school who participate in organized sports.

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

- Identify clear criteria for curriculum and unit maps and key standards across all subject areas and integrate those standards into rigorous tasks that foster higher order thinking and student engagement (1.1)
  - Although school leaders have identified different types of writing as a key standard across the school, those standards have not been coherently integrated into the planning and assessment practices of teachers, nor have they been fully informed by the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). As a result, students across a grade or subject area are not experiencing any consistent emphasis to build capacity towards identified weaknesses and there is a lack of cohesion among teachers' planning practices to support those identified skills.
  - Although there is a school-wide focus on planning for rigor, differentiation and engagement, there is uneven design and implementation of daily or culminating tasks that require high levels of thought from all students. As a result, students are not able to consistently build or demonstrate knowledge of content or demonstration of skill that will result in postsecondary readiness.
- Focus on a defined set of high-leverage teaching strategies that lead to strong levels of student engagement and meaningful student work products. (1.2)

- o Although there is a unified use of the Madeleine Hunter model for lesson planning and school leaders can articulate clear expectations of what students' daily classroom experience should include, across classrooms there is varying effectiveness of teaching strategies to meet these expectations and to generate critical thinking and meaningful work products from students. For example, although in one English language arts class students were presenting arguments that used rhetorical devices and giving peers useful feedback on the construction of the argument and the use of emotional appeals, in other classes students were copying information directly from a textbook or working independently on a set of math problems without clear objectives or helpful scaffolding. As a result, there are varying levels of student engagement, particularly in self-contained special education classes, and generally students are not producing work products or having discussions that demonstrate critical thinking.
- Develop high quality common assessments that provide a clear picture of student needs and facilitate a cycle of analysis that yields effective curricular and instructional adjustments. (2.2)
  - o Although departments use common assessments for courses, the majority of those assessments measure discrete skills through multiple choice questions and do not ask students to synthesize knowledge, write extended arguments or demonstrate high levels of thought. As a result of the narrowness and level of what is tested, assessment data does not provide a robust picture of student needs, especially against the demands of the CCLS. Additionally, the school does not have a unified or strategic process in place to analyze findings from those assessments to inform revision or refinement of curricula and tasks. As a result, assessment data is not providing a clear picture of how students are able to synthesize content and skills towards proficiency in a subject area and there is uneven use of data to inform and adjust curricula and tasks.
- Define clearer goals for professional collaborations so that this work consistently focuses on adjustments of instructional strategies to push student achievement. (4.2)
  - o Although teachers teams meet regularly and are able to articulate broad goals for their work connected to increasing differentiation and credit accumulation to impact graduation, teachers are inconsistently able to articulate the cycle of work that informs those broad goals or how the work is moving their own practice or student work towards those goals. As a result, the impact that teacher team work has had on classroom practice is unclear. In addition, although some teachers have emerged as informal leaders in meetings, teacher meetings are primarily facilitated by assistant principals and, as such, there are limited opportunities for teachers to inform decisions and take ownership of key instructional practices in the school.
- Further structure time for teachers so that maximum impact on student tasks, teacher pedagogy and meaningful student work products can be achieved (1.3)
  - o Although school leaders have effectively organized a wide variety of resources, including reorganizing the guidance department, allocating resources for the Care Center and finding regular time for teachers to meet on a weekly basis, the teacher meeting are not yet fully structured around the development of meaningful student tasks or yielding high quality student work products. In addition, although the school is organized into academies to foster smaller, more intimate environments for students, many teachers continue to teach across academies and are therefore not dedicated solely to a particular group of

teachers or students. This hinders the ability for teacher teams to fully impact a cohort of students through planning and reflection.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

<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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?		<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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>		
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?		<b>X</b>		
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?			<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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			<b>X</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.**

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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?			X	
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?		X		
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?		X		
1..4 Integrate child/youth development, guidance/advisement support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X	

**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.**

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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, with particular attention to the CCLS?		X		
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?			X	
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?		X		
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		X		

**Quality Review Scoring Key**

<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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