

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**Murry Bergtraum High School for Business Careers
High School 520**

**411 PEARL STREET
MANHATTAN
NY 10038**

Principal: ANDREA LEWIS

Dates of review: April 24 - 26, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Yvette Donald

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Murry Bergtraum High School for Business Careers is a high school with 2,508 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 36% Black, 49% Hispanic, 3% White, and 11% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 81.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Thoughtful organizational decisions support the instructional focus with the goal of increasing student work effort and outcomes. (1.3)
 - In response to school and student performance data such a Regents' exam results, credit accumulation, and periodic assessment results, administration, through the School Based Options vote, has reorganized the school schedule. Extended class periods four days a week allow for a truncated day, 'Skinny Wednesday.' Students are dismissed early, providing staff with the afternoon to meet in department teams. Teachers and staff use this time to review student work products and data to determine strengths and weaknesses in academic, youth development performance, and share strategies to address areas of concern. In addition, to support the focus of building writing skills across the disciplines, the administration is working closely with noted experts in the field. As a result, most teachers' lesson plans and academic tasks now reflect the infusion of a writing component. Thus, work products of some students throughout the school demonstrate increasing levels of proficiency in presenting their ideas in writing.
- The school's systems and partnerships work to support students and their families in continual learning and promote students' personal growth and development. (4.4)
 - In response to the school's Learning Environment Survey, as well as informal teacher surveys at the school level, administration provided Department of Education and network training sessions for staff related to student-adult interactions, including trainings related to strengthening respect for diversity, and building a positive culture and climate. In addition, teacher leaders participated in leadership training through the Association of Supervisors and Curriculum Development (ASCD) to develop the skills and dispositions needed to lead grade level and department teams. Furthermore, teachers that work with the ninth grade academy receive additional training thorough the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program to leverage the integration of students' personal strengths in support of them meeting academic expectations and moving on to post-secondary opportunities. AVID counselors and teachers meet on a weekly basis to discuss challenges and are beginning to monitor progress towards these youth development goals. These trainings have increased teachers' ability to address the personal needs of students and adults, in order to create a path towards higher outcomes for all.
- The principal is strengthening the practice of collaboratively developing a list of focused instructional goals that is grounded in data and known by members of the school community. (3.1)
 - Analysis of school summative results, including attendance statistics, Regents', and credit accumulation, is conducted by administration and staff. The school's strengths and needs are discussed at various meetings including grade and department teams, the instructional cabinet and school leadership team to build a consensus of next steps allowing the school community to set instructional and organizational goals. This process ensures that all community members have input into their development as stakeholders of the goal-setting process, thus setting a collaborative vision towards moving the school forward.

- Administration’s instructional and organizational decisions regarding teachers and students are a result of tools that are organizing data and making performance trends more accessible. (2.3)
 - o The school collects a variety of data on student performance via in-class tests, classwork, homework, and alternative assessments such as projects that are coupled with credit accumulation data, Regents’ pass rate, student attendance, and social/emotional outreaches. Using an on-line tool data is organized and aggregated, enabling school staff to identify trends in student performance to make instructional decisions. Administration uses this information to inform class offerings, student schedules, teacher assignments, and after-school supports, while teachers use the information to inform student grades.
- The principal and staff work more collaboratively and coherently to create a calm and respectful environment for learning to take place. (1.4)
 - o The principal has reinstated a ladder of referral process whereby teachers and staff are provided with guidelines and actionable steps that are intended to create and maintain safety and respect throughout the school. In addition, the school is structured into four small learning communities (SLCs), each with dedicated staff that includes an academy leader, a dean and guidance supports. Thus, students and staff have a greater sense of accountability to each other. Students know that academic and behavioral decisions will be noted and addressed by staff. Teachers and support staff work more intimately with each other and students to “hear students’ concerns” regarding how they are treated in and out of class. In turn, a recently hired assistant principal of security works closely with the youth development team, including deans, guidance, attendance teacher, and the after-school program staff to develop and coordinate supports in place to address school-wide safety measures . These practices and hiring decisions have resulted in a drastic reduction in the number of level four and above infractions from 318 during the 2010-11 school year to 76 incidents to-date this year.

What the school needs to improve

- Promote consistency in providing targeted instruction to students based on data so that teachers group students purposefully, and effectively challenge them to demonstrate and extend their thinking. (1.2)
 - Teachers use a variety of questions and activities to deliver content during lessons. Some teachers are developing the practice of using data to inform instructional decisions, such as class groupings. However, observations and conversations with teachers indicate that outdated student information such as middle school summative results, is often used as baseline information to inform groupings. In addition, questions and activity prompts do not build on the knowledge of what students know and can do in order to maximize learning. This results in varied levels of student engagement and participation, as learning opportunities inconsistently meet learners at their ability levels or promote student-to-student discussions, thereby limiting higher levels of thinking.
- Ensure that the curricula implemented within all subject areas reflects academic tasks and learning experiences that challenges and engages all learners in order to improve their outcomes. (1.1)
 - o The school staff has begun the journey of developing coherent units of study, especially in English language arts, with an emphasis on building writing skills.

All subject areas have implemented a common core aligned task. Units of study for Regents based English classes include core concepts and skills, assessments, and activities, to meet the higher expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards. This writing emphasis is evident across subject areas and there is an emerging practice of assuring the writing process is a routine component of instruction. Nonetheless, student performance tasks, across all subjects, are not designed to engage all learners, as there is little evidence of accommodations to assignments or tasks within curricular documents to ensure engagement by all learners. Therefore, not all students are engaged in rigorous learning experiences that appropriately support their learning needs, or extend their thinking, thereby hindering accelerated outcomes for all students.

- Use the school's chosen research-based framework to target specific pedagogical practices in order to assure higher levels of teacher practice and increased student outcomes. (4.1)
 - The school has chosen to use the Danielson framework to guide teacher development. Administrators visit classrooms and provide teachers with feedback noting various competencies relative to the document. Few administrators ground this feedback to student work products, or articulate strengths and weaknesses in instructional practices, and identify pedagogical next steps. Others, by contrast, provide comments to teachers on management structures, such as room configuration and the use of tools including technology devices. In addition, feedback offered from one visit to the next does not reference prior observations in support of helping teachers meet expected teaching practices. This hampers teachers' ability to fully understand expectations and progressively take steps to improve their practice. Furthermore, administration does not yet use the analysis of these observations to guide professional learning experiences for staff. In turn, professional development is not fully aligned to articulated pedagogical expectations, thus preventing accelerated growth in teacher practice and impacting improvements in student achievement.
- Ensure that teachers use summative and interim data to inform instructional decisions and make necessary revisions in order to meet the learning needs of all students. (2.2)
 - Teachers use a variety of assessment tools such as teacher-made tests, projects, and rubrics, giving them information on student performance during a unit of study. However, these results are not deeply analyzed so that there is a clear understanding of what individual or groups of students know and the challenges that continue to prevent them from successfully meeting the expectations of the course work. In addition, teachers do not engage student in self- and peer- assessments within the learning process. Furthermore, there is a very limited understanding of how to check for student understanding of learning during the instructional period, thereby missing opportunities to make mid-lesson or mid-unit modifications to address the needs of all learners. Consequently, teachers are unable to plan and implement future instruction based on identified academic needs, preventing targeted instruction in order to accelerate learning for all students.
- Establish a practice for evaluating the effectiveness of the school's data gathering and dissemination process to ensure understanding of student performance in order to support improvements in student outcomes. (5.2)

- o Administration and staff gather and organize a variety of information on student performance and share this information with various members of the school community using their online data system. However, administration has not assessed the effectiveness of the process to ascertain whether this data gathering and sharing practice provides teachers and families with actionable information in the most effective manner. This limited attention to information sharing prevents school leaders from determining whether adjustments to practices are needed, thus limiting family engagement in moving their children to higher levels of achievement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Murry Bergtraum High School for Business Careers	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score		X		
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		X		
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?		X		
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?		X		
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X	
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.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?		X		
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?	X			
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?		X		
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?		X		
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.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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?		X		
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?		X		
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?		X		
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?		X		

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

UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed
-----------	-----------------------	----------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	-----------	-----------------------