

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Boys and Girls High School

K455

**1700 Fulton Street
Brooklyn
NY 11213**

Principal: Bernard Gassaway

**Dates of review: May 29-30, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Elena Papaliberios**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Boys and Girls High School is a school with 1,631 students from grade nine through grade 12. The school population comprises 90% Black, 8% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 62% of the students enrolled and girls account for 38%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011-2012 was 72.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school community collaborates effectively to create a safe and nurturing environment that provides students with social-emotional experiences which positively impact their academic and social development. (1.4)
 - The school leader has developed strong links in the community that support the social-emotional development of students. This includes an Advisory Board comprised of business and community leaders who contribute resources and facilitate support programs such as the Adelaide Sanford workshops for families. Agencies, such as Good Shepherd and Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration team up with counselors, social workers, and deans, as part of the Children Are Reason Enough (CARE) Center, which provides counseling, mental and reproductive health services, job readiness training, conflict mediation, attendance outreach, and career development programs for students and their families. Students take part in the student council and the safety committee where their voices are welcome. For example they have been instrumental in organizing after school events such as the “Pretty in Pink” night. As a result, the school has created an environment of caring that provides multiple forms of support for learning by children and adults.
 - Several structures are in place to fuel social and emotional learning for students. For example, counselor caseloads are arranged so that students have the same counselor from grade 10 through grade 12, giving counselors opportunities to connect with students, know them well and offer supports that meet their personal and academic needs. The school is divided into five academies, with dedicated teams of teachers and counselors, a coordinator and an assistant principal in charge, creating smaller learning communities for students and staff. Some of the academies target specific groups of students, such as the Tuskegee Academy, which supports the development of 50 under credited at risk students, in order to increase attendance and credit accumulation. The Early Scholars Academy services 150 students in grades nine through twelve, in partnership with Long Island University. Staff members in these academies meet regularly to address issues aligned to the needs of students in their academy. These structures provide youth development services that enhance students’ academic performance, as evidenced by improvement in credit accumulation for many students.
- School leaders effectively involve and communicate with the school community, establishing a clear set of goals aimed at increasing student achievement and promoting overall improvement of the school. (3.1)
 - The school has a clear, short list of goals that are widely communicated to the school community. These include, improving student attendance from 72% to 80%, increasing credit accumulation, increasing Regents passing rates, and raising graduation rate from 38.6% to 50%. Teachers and guidance staff focus on attendance outreach in order to raise student attendance and academic achievement. Attendance is monitored daily and the year-to-date data reflects a 77.4% attendance rate. Staff

members of each Academy track student attendance and reviews students' transcripts to monitor performance on Regents assessments and insure students attend tutoring sessions as needed. During meetings held with parents, students and staff, it was clear that all constituencies are aware and supportive of the school's goals. The principal communicates with parents weekly, by telephone, to inform them of the programs that are in place to support students. Information and data are also shared at School Leadership team meetings and during Advisory Board meetings. These efforts have helped to increase the number of students attending tutoring sessions, as well as improve attendance, especially for the most at risk students.

- The school community has established a culture for learning that communicates high expectations and provides supports that help prepare students for the next level. (3.4)
 - School leaders, teachers, and guidance personnel share expectations such as regular attendance, passing all courses and Regents exams that are connected to a path for college and career readiness, with students and their families. Teams of counselors, who stay with the same students for three years, meet with them regularly and track their progress in credit accumulation and Regents passing. Other efforts to support college and career readiness include collaborations with colleges and universities, including partnerships with Long Island University Scholars Program and the College Now Program which provide post-secondary courses and credits. Currently, the school uses Skedula, an online communication system, which allows students and their families to view students' progress on-line. The Adelaide Sanford Institute provided workshops for parents on the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), in order for the parent community to be abreast of the new expectations and the school recently purchased a computerized program that will allow counselors to track and communicate with students and parents regarding the college application process. Parents interviewed spoke of teachers focusing their efforts on their children to prepare them for college. As a result, all members of the school community regularly share information about students' progress in meeting the high expectations set for them and collaborate effectively in providing students with services that improve their readiness for college and careers.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine the development of curricula to strengthen alignment to the CCLS across content areas and provide all students with tasks that lead to increasingly higher levels of engagement in learning. (1.1)
 - Some teachers are developing units of study that are aligned to the CCLS, as evidenced by the English language arts curriculum that was created by the assistant principal and two teachers. However, a social studies curriculum map viewed did not show alignment to the CCLS and there is minimal evidence of use of student work and data to inform the design of curricula and tasks. Further, some units of study reviewed, including a 9th grade unit on the "Reconstruction" and an eleventh grade unit on the "Great Depression to WW2", did not reflect a deep focus on tasks or extensions to cognitively engage students who are at different

levels of proficiency, including students with disabilities and English language learners. In addition, students' work samples on bulletin boards and in students' binders showed little evidence of tasks linked to the instructional shifts. As a result, students' have limited exposure to curricula and in-depth learning experiences linked to the CCLS and the Citywide Instructional shifts, which hampers acceleration of their learning across content areas.

- Strengthen teacher pedagogy to incorporate effective questioning and challenging tasks that foster deep thinking and active participation in order to accelerate student learning across grades and content areas. (1.2)
 - Some teachers use strategies that encourage students' participation in challenging learning tasks. In a math class, students engaged in assessing each other's teamwork and provided feedback as to why a group's solution to the problem was correct or incorrect. However, there is inconsistency in teacher use of questioning and routines to provide multiple entry points into curricula, and some teachers are struggling with the facilitation of discourse that leads to high order thinking. For example, in a discussion of why competition is important for economic growth, the teacher asked a series of rapid-fire questions but did not give students an opportunity to engage in a meaningful discussion of their responses with classmates. Lessons were also teacher-centered, as evidenced in a class where students were asked to write five sentences and state their opinion of the death penalty but were not given an opportunity to present their opinion. Thus a lack of effective strategies to actively and consistently engage all students in learning, leads to student work that illustrates uneven levels of higher order thinking and participation in learning by students, including special education students and English language learners.
- Enhance the use of common assessments to adjust curriculum and instruction in order to accelerate improvement in student outcomes. (2.2)
 - In some classrooms, teachers are using checks for understanding, including exit slips, in order to adjust their plans to meet the needs of students. The principal shares data, such as scholarship reports and Regents results with teachers in order to assist them in refining their understanding of the academic levels of students and improve instruction. However, there is little evidence that teachers use the results of common assessments, such as the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) in math and English, to adjust curriculum and inform instruction that targets students' learning needs. There was also little evidence that teachers of core subjects use data from New York State English as a Second Language Assessment Test to inform instruction for English language learners whom they teach. Regents' data, specifically item analysis of students' exams in social studies, is also ineffectively used to provide individualized supports for students. This inconsistent use of data to inform instruction and interventions limits growth in student achievement, as evidenced by low graduation rates and low regents passing rates in several key subject areas.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Boys and Girls High School	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score		X					
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?		X					
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?		X					
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?			X				
Systems for Improvement							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?		X					
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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					
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?		X					
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed