

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Sheepshead Bay High School

High School K495

**3000 Avenue X
Brooklyn, NY 11235**

Principal: John O'Mahoney

Dates of review: December 10th, 11th & 12th, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Carolyn Yaffe

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Sheepshead Bay High School is a High school with 1690 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 58% Black, 17% Hispanic, 12% White, and 12% Asian students. The student body includes 25% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 79.32%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders have revised a variety of overarching organizational structures in order to provide the foundation for the work towards the school's instructional goals. (1.3)
 - There have been some key changes to the school's organizational structure in the current school year that include creating small learning communities, dedicating daily time for teacher teams to meet and adjusting guidance support explicitly through the small learning community structures. School leaders have also identified key partners to support teachers in developing towards the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Thus far, this work has provided structural elements that allow some groups of teachers to take ownership over some groups of students. The creation of time for teachers to meet has allowed for pockets of targeted professional development to take place that are organized towards the expectations of CCLS and, in some classrooms, is beginning to yield rigorous and engaging tasks.
- The school community is working to establish consistently high expectations for faculty and students and is also working to create a system of support and accountability to help constituents meet those expectations. (3.4)
 - Faculty is able to articulate that high expectations for their work are conveyed through the definition of rigorous instruction that has been defined and shared by school leaders, which includes CCLS aligned tasks and instruction. Teachers articulated the supports they are receiving this year to help them move, as a group, towards those expectations; these supports included the time dedicated to teacher collaboration and external vendors supporting them in understanding the demands of the CCLS. The school also has some structures in place to support exposure to post-secondary paths and has a dedicated college counselor who works primarily with the 12th grade class to guide students through the college application process. A school-wide grading system was implemented this year to push grading across the school to reflect mastery. A system for unified, interim progress reports is also currently being developed. Once these systems and structures are solidified and made more robust, they will have a broader impact on all students.
- School leaders and faculty have introduced structures and initiatives to impact the quality of school culture and to foster the development of all constituents. (1.4)
 - School leaders strategically revised safety personnel expectations and discipline procedures to reduce suspension data and build buy-in and accountability among all constituents. As part of this revision of practice, school leaders regularly look at referral, counseling and suspension data to take proactive steps. These actions have resulted in a shift of tone in the school community to one that is generally respectful and conducive to student and adult learning.

- The school community has developing structures to ensure that students are known well. The academy structure provides a foundation for groups of teachers to have ownership over groups of students and several teacher team meetings a week are dedicated to identifying students in need of support and planning actionable next steps to support either their academic or social emotional needs. In addition, guidance counselors are attached to each academy so that referrals and interventions for any given student over time can be tracked by one counselor. The result of these decisions is that there are groups of students in the school, most notably in the 9th grade academy, where knowledge of and tracking of students needs is taking place.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a long term plan to both design and vet units of study and culminating tasks to ensure that there is coherent sequence of content and skills planned for within each subject area and across all grade levels so that all students are prepared for the next level. (1.1)
 - Although the school community holds a shared definition of rigor as it relates to both the Common Core Learning Standards and the Depth of Knowledge matrix, the school does not currently have uniform procedures in place across departments to develop and vet curricula against this standard. As a result, department teams are at various places in terms of the adoption, adaptation or design of units of study that culminate in rigorous tasks. As a result, tasks observed during classroom visits and in reviews of student work unevenly ask students to demonstrate critical thinking. There were also tasks in place that were identified as CCLS aligned that did not meet the standards of rigor called for by the CCLS. In addition, there are no formal structures for review of student work to inform adjustments to planning and instruction. As a result, the quality of work products is highly uneven across classrooms, particularly in classes that serve students with disabilities.
- Focus the school's professional collaborations on the systematic analysis of student work as the entry point for revisions and refinements to curricula and pedagogy. (4.2)
 - Although the school has carved out time for teachers to meet on a daily basis and teacher leaders are facilitating this work, the time is not currently used in collaborations that are focused primarily on instructional and pedagogical improvements. Two of the four formal teacher meetings a week are dedicated to a process called Early Warnings Indicators (EWI) where teachers nominate students who are struggling in their classes and interventions are brainstormed and teachers are nominated to "champion" the interventions. Although this structure serves to identify students who may otherwise not be attended to, there is no formal role that teacher work- either planning or pedagogy – is highlighted or examined in this process. In the other two teacher team meetings a week, there are some emerging structures that may serve to ultimately help teachers understand how to refine work to improve student outcomes, however these structures do not yet contain refined protocols connected to examining student work against tasks to yield actionable next steps.

- Continue to hone in on and provide support for the key instructional practices that will yield student work products and student discussions that demonstrate higher order thinking. (1.2)
 - Although there is a school-wide focus on the three Danielson competencies outlined in the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) and there is a consistent focus on these competencies during observations, the questioning that takes place through tasks, during classroom instruction and the student work products do not yet consistently demonstrate the quality of planning required to elicit critical thinking, either in discussion or in student work products. For example, although there was an emphasis on the use of evidence to support claims across many classrooms, the claims and/or the texts used to support the claims were not complex enough to require or sustain critical thinking.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Sheepshead Bay 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