

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**EBC High School for Public Service**

**32K545**

**1155 Dekalb Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11221**

**Principal: Shawn Brown**

**Dates of review: January 7 – 8, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Catherine M. Powis**

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

### **Information about the school**

EBC High School for Public Service is a high school with 521 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 8% Black, 90% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 84.4%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is an analytical thinker who collaborates with staff to make informed and strategic organizational decisions that empower teachers and support the school's instructional goals. (1.3)
  - The principal places high priority on collaborative leadership with an effective team structure. The weekly schedule is designed so that all teachers have daily structured common planning time in their programs. Grade level inquiry teams meet Mondays and Fridays while advisory teams meet on Wednesdays and content area teams on the other days. During this time teachers develop curriculum facilitated by the instructional lead teacher, look at student work, or plan for advisory. A core team, the Instructional Cabinet Team, is comprised of the principal, the head of each department: guidance, physical education, computer science, the arts, and technology. This team drives decision-making regarding overarching expectations for teamwork. In turn, the school's teams engage in tasks to improve instruction and create academic tasks that elevate the cognitive demand as seen, for example, in an English language arts classroom where students were self- and peer-assessing their essay drafts against a rigorous task-specific rubric to determine their next editing steps. As a result of this team structure, the school is making progress toward its instructional goal "to develop professional learning communities that use an inquiry approach, encourage collaborative leadership, and focuses on student achievement."
  - Reduced teacher-student ratios in several grade-level integrated co-teaching classes support general education students as well as English language learners and students with disabilities in order to facilitate more meaningful student work products, such as argumentative claims backed by textual evidence in extended responses. Some co-teaching classes are supported by teachers of English as a second language while others are supported by teachers licensed in special education. Furthermore, a strong collaboration between teachers and administrators is responsible for a half-day on Wednesdays that allows faculty and school leaders to participate in ongoing professional development. Consequently, these structures enable teachers to share responsibility for student learning, as evidenced by improved marking period grades from the first semester to the second this year.
- Teacher development and leadership, supported by a tiered approach to professional development that is informed by observation and student data, results in improved instruction. (4.1)
  - This year the school is participating in the Teacher Effectiveness Program. Faculty and school leaders focus on specific competencies of the Danielson Framework for Teaching that include, but are not limited to, designing coherent instruction and using questioning and discussion techniques. In turn, both principal and assistant principal conduct

frequent, formative classroom observations using the ARIS observation tracker to document low-inference observation data. Effective, actionable feedback to teachers, both oral and written, creates a feedback loop that leads to individualized professional development in teachers' own identified growth areas. This is coupled with a review of student work and scholarship data with teachers. This process results in coherence of expectations for good teacher practice around a shared language among school leaders and teachers, thus teachers receive consistent feedback that effectively captures their strengths and identifies next steps to improve their practice, such as elevating the levels of student engagement.

- School leaders place high priority on professional growth that leads to improved pedagogy and student outcomes. School leaders share teacher observation data that reveal patterns and individual needs with the instructional lead teacher who, in turn, plans professional development for individual, groups of teachers, and/or the whole school. In her new assignment this year the instructional lead teacher is supported by network and Department of Education collaboratives for professional development and participates in leadership programs. In turn, she is able to provide timely and relevant support in areas in need of growth through hands-on coaching, workshops, and team discussions. As a result, this structure is leading to improved teacher development as evidenced by improved classroom pedagogy of new teachers that were visited, and informed tenure decisions.
- All stakeholders work as a unified team to create a respectful, calm, and inclusive environment that provides academic and social-emotional supports for both students and adults. (1.4)
  - For this year's newly revised focus on Advisory, teachers volunteer to have two advisory periods per week to meet with small student groups as their Circular 6 period. Grade level advisory teams, the guidance counselor, and the family worker meet every Wednesday to discuss the implementation of an advisory curriculum that encompasses student goal-setting, college and career readiness, and social-emotional growth. Advisors monitor attendance, scholarship and grade level academic expectations to provide individualized support to students. Students use advisory as a forum in which to set academic goals, take personal inventories to assess needs, demystify their transcripts, and work as teams on public service projects. Seniors work on completing college applications and meeting deadlines. Additionally, students value the opportunity for their voices to be heard. Town Hall meetings are an EBC tradition and are held periodically throughout the school year. During these meetings advisory teams of students bring concerns and ideas to be shared with the principal and the student population in an open forum. For example, changing dress code colors and assisting victims of Hurricane Sandy were two topics that were recently discussed. Consequently, the school culture exhibits a positive attitude toward learning that improves academic progress and social well-being. As a result, students report feeling supported and inspired to work diligently to achieve academic as well as personal growth.

## What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen assessment practices so that leaders and faculty can develop a deeper understanding of the performance and progress of individuals, by group and subject, to inform curriculum and instruction. (2.2)
  - The school is working toward its goal of establishing school-wide assessment practices and systemizing data analysis, while utilizing a school-wide grading policy that is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). The CCLS-aligned grading policy is specifically tailored to academic expectations in each subject department. However, student work folders, when available, lack coherence in identification of a common language and understanding of standard proficiency and next steps for students. Additionally, although the data specialist shares data results, most teachers do not consistently take advantage of Acuity data or Ed Performance data to identify strengths and challenges of all learners. Furthermore, common assessments such as performance tasks are developing and are not yet consistently tracked as a progress monitoring measure across content areas for subgroups. Consequently, teams and individual teachers do not gather and analyze sufficient and reliable data streams to differentiate instructional strategies that lift student comprehension levels across classrooms. As a result, students in relevant subgroups are hindered from making significant progress in college and career readiness.
  - Across classrooms teachers frequently circulate to check for understanding during individual and group work. Questioning, collecting a written summary or exit slips are some examples of how teachers assess whether the intended outcome of the lesson was achieved. However, while some lessons provide structures for students to engage in self- and peer-assessment, not all students can articulate a deep understanding of what they should know and be able to do, nor can they reflect on their next learning steps. In turn, teachers cannot always make accurate adjustments to instruction to meet students' needs. This hampers their progress toward independence and success beyond high school, especially for English language learners and special education students.
- Establish rigorous teaching practices school-wide and ensure that there are multiple entry points into the curriculum so that all students, especially English language learners and special education students, make progress. (1.2)
  - In some classrooms student work and conversations, particularly in an 11<sup>th</sup> grade English class and an Algebra/Trigonometry class, are rigorous in terms of demand for accuracy and evidence. However, in other classrooms, i.e., Earth Science and 9<sup>th</sup> grade English, teachers dominate the lesson with lower level questions and tasks that are not cognitively demanding, leaving little or no time for students to discuss what they are learning through thoughtful dialogue that fosters high levels of thinking. Additionally, although there is a school-wide emphasis on academic vocabulary development, its inconsistent use by

students further hampers student discussion. As a result, levels of student engagement and participation are uneven, and student work products do not consistently reflect critical thinking and understanding of content concepts and skill sets.

- The use of data to inform lesson planning that takes into account the academic diversity of students is not uniformly practiced. Lessons are planned to include a “Do Now” assignment in the form of a question and a mini-lesson followed by guided practice. In one English class students were grouped by skill levels. During guided practice the teacher worked with two small student groups of students while other groups were reviewing and interpreting the feedback and next steps from the teacher using a critical lens essay rubric. Two other students were working on computers writing their final draft. However, most lessons include the same or similar activities for all groups and individual students. In turn, not all teaching strategies enable students to approach new content without being hampered by their skill deficits, and therefore students do not always understand the intended outcomes of the work. Consequently, some students do not make sufficient progress in acquiring new knowledge, skills, and understanding as evidenced in their work products.
- Deepen instructional coherence across grades and subject areas that is reflected in standards-aligned curricula that consistently emphasize higher order thinking and rigorous tasks to cognitively engage all learners. (1.1)
  - In response to citywide instructional expectations, each teacher has developed a curriculum map for each course aligned to the CCLS. Teams are making some purposeful choices about emphasizing academic vocabulary and process words as seen in some curriculum maps such as math. This is coupled with teachers developing culminating performance tasks and sharing them at the team level. Nevertheless, teacher teams have not fully developed or established a process for how to align academic tasks to the cognitive demands of the CCLS. Assessing and norming the rigor of academic tasks against research-based measures and unit of study rubrics is not yet purposeful and consistent. In turn, in classrooms tasks usually require lower level recall or compare and contrast, etc. and do not adequately engage students in higher-order thinking. Therefore, resulting student work does not always match the intended outcomes of the grade/subject level standards. As a result of this misalignment, student work, especially for English language learners and special education students, does not demonstrate evidence of extended thinking and work that pushes them to their next level, thus hampering student progress in grade level credit accumulation.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

| School name: EBC High School for Public Service   | UD                    | D        | P                 | WD       |                   |           |                       |
|---|-----------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| <b>Overall QR Score</b>   |                       | X        |                   |          |                   |           |                       |
| <b>Instructional Core</b>   |                       |          |                   |          |                   |           |                       |
| <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        |                   |          |                   |           |                       |
| <b>School Culture</b>   |                       |          |                   |          |                   |           |                       |
| <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                 |          |                   |           |                       |
| <b>Systems for Improvement</b>  |                       |          |                   |          |                   |           |                       |
| <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 <b>inquiry approach</b> 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        |                   |          |                   |           |                       |
| <b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>   |                       |          |                   |          |                   |           |                       |
| <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> |