



**Department of
Education**

Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

**Quality Review: Quality Review Report
Division of Academics, Performance, and Support
2012-13**

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Murry Bergtraum High School for Business Careers

High school 02M520

**411 PEARL STREET
MANHATTAN
NY, 10038**

Principal: Lottie Almonte

Dates of review: Feb 12 – 13, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Marisol Bradbury

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Murry Bergtraum High School for Business Careers is a/an High school with 2073 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 40.0% Black, 47.0% Hispanic, 2.0% White, and 11.0% Asian students. The student body includes 10.0% English language learners and 14.0% special education students. Boys account for 49.0% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51.0%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 83.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's strategic hiring, programming and scheduling decisions support the school's goals to meet the needs of students and teachers. (1.3)
 - The principal focuses on the instructional and leadership capacity of teachers and assistant principals, therefore she purchased the services of a Cambridge University consultant, who works directly with each assistant principal in strengthening their instructional capacity while systematizing supervision and support around teacher effectiveness. The school also partners with Syracuse University to provide students with an intellectually challenging curriculum that earns them college credits, while preparing them for post secondary education. The program has recently expanded to ninth graders, thus providing them with early participation and preparedness to college. The partnerships and services to pedagogues have resulted in more effective lesson planning and an increased student passing percentage for those students attending the Syracuse program. As a result a total \$4,000,000 worth of scholarship endorsements were awarded to students for the year 2012.
 - Scheduling at the school is carefully structured to provide teachers frequent opportunities to collaborate with colleagues within their small learning communities and respective departments on a daily basis. Common planning within the ninth grade academy is scheduled every day during period three to look at student work. Teachers meet in their subject area teams once a month and plan tasks aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The Guidance department meets weekly to discuss case studies and develop intervention plans to share and follow up with fellow teachers. Assistant Principals have been freed of their teaching period so that they can focus on developing the capacity of their teachers and staff. For example, they provide "in class" modeling on using text based evidence to support argumentative writing. As a result of these efforts, teachers and staff are spending more time and effort on understanding students' strengths and weaknesses, so that students have access to conditions that include a better understanding of their academic, social and emotional needs.
- The school is beginning to coordinate a student support system that addresses attendance, guidance and advisement, in order to promote effective academic and personal behaviors. (1.4)
 - The school's approach to culture building includes empowering students to lead, express their opinion, and become active participants of the school community. Students form committees and meet weekly in a formal forum to voice their opinion and exchange ideas. Members of the student government meet with various clubs to hear their opinion, in turn; they share these views with the principal during their bi-weekly meetings. In addition, the peer mediation program provides students with an opportunity to mediate, listen and reason with their peers. A partnership with Princeton Achievement provides teachers an opportunity to mentor "at risk" students. As a result, students have access to leadership opportunities in the school to build their own leadership skills while empowering them to support the improvement of the school. Concurrently, attendance to after school programs and extra curricular activities is showing a steady increase.

- The principal and her cabinet are beginning to implement implemented various systems and programs to improve academic, social and emotional learning. The implementation of the small learning communities, including the Ninth Grade Institute of Entrepreneurial Studies, The Institute of Justice, and Emerging Technologies Institute, offer students within each community a focused academic sequential program and attention to their social and emotional learning. In addition, each academy has a guidance counselor, advisors, and an attendance teacher who form the Professional Learning Community (PLC) of Guidance. Each one of these members is responsible for the academic, social, and emotional progress of a specific number of students and meets weekly in their PLC to share best practices, conduct case studies, and college support. These efforts have resulted in student intervention plans and a graduation-tracking path for each student. Consequently, students are known by all teachers in the academy who provide support aligned to students' academic, social and emotional needs.
- The school has structured professional collaboration on teams that promote the development of teacher capacity and distributed leadership. (4.2)
 - Structures are in place so that teachers meet every day during their common planning time. The ninth grade academy meets daily to engage in a protocol to look at student work. Together, teachers assess the work of individual students in relation to the task; identify areas for improvement, and strategies to implement in their lesson plans, in order to support students' individual learning needs. The result of these efforts is beginning to show improvement in pedagogy, greater student support, and regular attempts to scaffold learning for a subgroup of students who have similar needs as those examined by teachers during these meetings.
 - Through the Small Learning Communities (SLC) teacher teams, teacher leaders coordinate the work and effort of their colleagues towards the improvement of student outcomes and their respective academies. These teacher leaders work collaboratively with their direct supervisors to support programming, scheduling and collaborative practice of the academies. Each of these academies and their teacher leaders focus on different goals, including the transition from middle school into high school, the alignment of curriculum to Career and Technical Education (CTE), partnering with colleges and universities, and emerging technology. Teacher leaders support their colleagues to identify effective strategies, and improve pedagogy. Through these practices, teacher leaders are taking on more leadership roles pertaining to instruction and administration, and learning from their direct supervisors. As a result, there are teacher leaders for each academy who are being empowered to own the work and success of the school and they are beginning to have a voice in the decisions impacting the work of each academy, resulting in positive and improved student outcomes.

What the school needs to improve

- Create more consistency in the development of rigorous, engaging curricula and academic tasks that emphasize higher order critical thinking skills to improve academic performance for all students. (1.1)
 - The school has identified and implemented key school wide literacy standards, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Some of

the curriculum maps for Social Studies, English language arts (ELA), and English as a second language (ESL), include a CCSS component that delineates the alignment of the units of study to State standards, according to grade levels. Some of the standards include the infusion of analysis of author's choices concerning how to structure a text, writing arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence, demonstration of conversation command, and participation in collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grades 9-12 topics, texts, and issues building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. However, this planning practice is not yet systemized, across the school, thus limiting students' access to a rigorous curriculum across grades and subjects, in order to provide all students with supports for college and career readiness skills.

- Students in some of the Social Studies, ELA and ESL classes, are asked to write argumentative essays by reading and selecting nonfiction articles, choosing a side, and in some cases they have to create displays to present the work and share with their peers. In one business class, students were asked to develop a business model, in which they had to describe, explain the model innovation, and articulate the effectiveness and potential flaws of the model, as well as the concepts learned along with their application. However, these types of activities were not consistent across subjects and grades, thus limiting opportunities for students to practice articulating their thinking, learning and defending their perspectives.
- Create more effective teaching strategies that generate high levels of student thinking, and provide multiple entry points into the curricula for all students to support higher order thinking skills in student work. (1.2)
 - In many subjects and grades, teachers asked questions of a factual and procedural nature. Some students responded directly to the teacher with the correct or incorrect answer. In addition, across subjects and grades, students were given the same tasks to be completed either individually or in groups. Students who understood the directions and the tasks, engaged in the activities until completed, while other students waited quietly for the teachers to come to them, or were engaged in other activities. In an Earth Science class, the teacher taught students how to observe the level of progression in elevation from sea level to the peak of a hill or mountain and required students to apply vocabulary and knowledge to point out the contour interval. The teacher showed 3 dimensional maps in contrast with 2 dimensional maps, asked students to work individually and in groups to construct contour lines from a given model, he asked students to calculate gradient and to use evidence from various sources to develop descriptions, explanations, and models. He assigned and reviewed the homework aligned to the lesson. He scaffolded the lesson by showing videos and graphic organizers and asked students to explain their work as they worked with their peers. However, this teaching strategy was not consistent across most grades and subjects, thus preventing all students' including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs), access to engaging lessons across grades, and subjects to promote critical thinking and support closing the achievement gap.
 - Across classrooms, student participation varied. In some classes, students were assigned to groups and the tasks usually consisted of the completion of activity sheets, graphic organizers, and the creation of

posters. In other classes, students were asked to write essays citing textual evidence, however there was little evidence of students analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, and collaboratively participating in discussions at high cognitive levels. While in a few classes, students cited textual evidence, wrote multiple essays, applied new terms, and presented the learning to their peers, nonetheless, there was minimal evidence of students articulating their analysis, findings, thinking and engaging in a discourse with their peers. Consequently, across classes and grades there were inconsistent opportunities for students to demonstrate high cognitive levels and language acquisition, through classroom participation, to support post secondary readiness.

- Strengthen the use of common assessment and assessment practices in order to consistently make effective adjustments to meet the academic needs of all students. (2.2)
 - Across grades and subjects, teachers are developing and using the tracker, a common assessment tool that evaluates students' performance against the CCSS. As students work on their tasks, teachers walk around entering their informal assessment of students' skills related to the use of language, claim, counterclaim, textual evidence, and conclusion. This compilation of data provides teachers with an informal evaluation of students' performance, however it does not provide specific information on students' academic skills and there is little evidence that this is being used to adjust curriculum and instruction. Thus, the lack of common assessments, limits opportunities to modify curriculum and lesson plans, so that all students, including ELL's and SDW's demonstrate increased performance learning and performance.
 - Teachers' assessment practices included walking around the classroom, unit exam, tests, and asking questions to the entire class. In a few instances, teachers collected exit slips and students' reflection. However, there was little evidence of teachers checking for individual students' understanding throughout the lesson. Although some teachers asked questions at the end of the mini lesson, which were answered by individual students, this was not a consistent assessment practice across classes. As a result, teachers have little written feedback on students' learning for the lesson in order to guide effective decision making for immediate instructional adjustments, aligned to meet the identified academic needs of all students, including ELL's and SWD's.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Murry Bergtraum High School for Business Careers	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