

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Arturo A. Schomburg Satellite Academy

**Transfer High School X446
1010 Rev. James Polite Avenue
Bronx
NY 10459**

Principal: Marsha Vernon

Dates of review: February 4-5, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Holly Reichert

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Arturo A. Schomburg Satellite Academy is a transfer school with 246 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 43% Black and 57% Hispanic students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 33% of the students enrolled and girls account for 67%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 65%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school aligns resources to instructional goals leveraging staff and programming to provide for collaboration and professional development that leads to higher levels of student participation and engagement. (1.3)
 - Focused on developing teacher pedagogy in questioning and research methods as well as aligning curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), the school utilizes programming and budget resources to provide more time for teacher collaboration and inquiry with the continued support of in-house and external professional developers. Teacher inquiry teams have an additional fifteen minutes per week to meet compared to last year. Additionally, teachers meet in house teams weekly and department teams bimonthly. During this collaborative time and weekly professional development, teachers work together on implementing new teaching strategies to support CCLS curricular changes and using student data to refine assessments and course outlines. Teachers stated that questioning and annotating strategies have led to increases in student participation and cognitive engagement with text. The number of students taking the school's Performance Based Assessment Tasks (PBAT) has increased since January 2012. The school attributes this shift in student work outcomes to collaboration on instructional practices aimed at deepening student thinking and engagement in learning.
 - The school makes hiring and teacher assignment decisions based on the analysis of school data. These decisions support the school's goals of raising student performance on the PBATs and Comprehensive English Regents Exam as well as supporting the collaboration and growth of teachers. Data showed the need to support academic language development among the English language learners and students struggling with literacy. An English as a second language teacher was hired to support identified students in co-taught classes. To support the additional need serving student with disabilities, the school hired a new assistant principal with special education expertise to oversee this area and provide professional development related to pedagogy and documentation of services for students with disabilities. Since June 2012, scholarship records show increased student performance by cycle and across courses in the three houses. Continuing to build distributed leadership in the school, teachers were selected for committees to support vital growth areas including intake, attendance and technology. Recent intake records show an increase in the number of English language learners and an increase in overall student attendance.
- Built on mutual respect and focused on the needs of the individual, the school promotes a culture where students take responsibility and ownership for their high school, college and career path. (1.4)
 - Students and staff authentically engage with one another in a respectful and caring manner. Students voice their needs and frustrations openly with staff during daily advisory and class periods, and staff is available

and responsive to student needs throughout the day. Students stated emphatically that their lives have changed as a result of attending this school. One student said, "It is worth waking up to come to school." Another added, "The school showed me how much I can do and I've grown...I can actually be something now." Teachers and staff provide a comfortable and caring environment that is goals-driven for each student. Students are on a defined trajectory to graduate and continue with post secondary education or career choices. Students and parents commented on the availability of staff for individual support. The school's focus on individual needs and being a caring community has led to overall increased student scholarship from June 2012 to January 2013 as measured by increased portfolio and class cycle pass rates.

- Advisory and the school's house structure provide an integrated support system for students. Students meet with advisory teachers four mornings a week and receive instruction in two content courses daily, one of which is taught by their advisor. Small class size and individualized programming allow staff to monitor and adjust support. The attendance committee, comprised of the social worker, attendance teacher, attendance coordinator and a staff member of each house, support communication, tracking, and follow up for students who struggle with attendance. Students and parents mentioned how this support system provides much-needed social-emotional assistance at the same time defining next steps on students' learning path to college and career. One parent stated, in reference to these supports, "I think they saved my daughter." Another parent added that the step-by-step approach helped her daughter get on track to graduation, while another stated that the school's curriculum suits the learning needs of his son. Summed up by a parent, "If a child needs a different way, they find a way."
- Valuing the power of collaboration and inquiry, the school provides multiple opportunities for teachers to collaborate across houses and disciplines so that they may reflect on practice, revise materials, and learn together. (4.2)
 - The school's schedule provides teachers with multiple opportunities to collaborate on different teams, including house, department, and interdisciplinary inquiry teams. Teachers teach cohorts of students grouped in houses. For example, the core house has four content teachers who support new students to the school. These teachers meet together as a house, with their department colleagues as well as with an interdisciplinary and inter-house inquiry team. The use of diagnostic literacy assessment data supports school-wide professional development on specific literacy strategies as well as regular communication about how students are progressing through the curricula and what changes may need to be made. Focused on student learning outcomes, teachers discuss student progress and individually make changes to curricula that better align with student needs during weekly house and inquiry team meetings. Each student has advisory goals for learning and graduation, and house teams surface gaps through sharing weekly attendance and class progress data that instruction and other support can address. The school's inquiry leadership team oversees inquiry team work to ensure it is aligned to instructional goals as well as student data from diagnostic, formative and summative assessments. Teachers commented that what they discuss and learn about in inquiry teams has impacted their instructional practices. Teachers noted how their resulting shift in

practice has led to positive changes in student learning behaviors. One example, the addition of the triple entry journal, has led to observed improvement in paraphrasing and inferring skills. After implementing this strategy and studying student work, one teacher is leading work around additional assessments to track progress and rubrics to clearly identify criteria for effective paraphrasing. Another teacher explained how his use of an annotating structure learned in the inquiry team led to student writing evidencing deeper analysis.

What the school needs to improve

- Implement more rigorous curricula across subjects so that all students demonstrate high levels of thinking, questioning, and cognitive engagement leading to accelerated student performance. (1.1)
 - Teachers create course outlines for each five-week cycle. These outlines include key State and Consortium standards, essential questions, and an outline of what will be covered. At the end of most four-cycle programs, students take a culminating PBAT. In response to student data, college and career readiness skills, and the CCLS, the school is focused on improving high-level questioning skills and is implementing a curriculum-based research methodology with an articulated roll-out of the eight components across the house structure. These skills are being embedded in the revision of PBATs as the work is developed in the school. While the school has curricular outlines and PBATs for each course and is working hard to continue aligning curricula to CCLS, deepen questioning practices, and implement research skills, these course outlines and PBATs do not consistently highlight rigorous content and performance skills grounded in challenging tasks over time that culminate in complex performance-based assessments equivalent to grade and commencement level content State standards. As a result, the school's curricula and tasks do not consistently emphasize key standards and skills across subjects, thereby hindering the school's capacity to accelerate student learning.
 - Planning of curricula and tasks aligns to student needs and interests. Teachers develop curricula to involve a diversity of learners. With the challenge of new students entering the school every semester, teachers revise curricula based on student entry and diagnostic data as well as student performance data over time. The individual learner is at the heart of the school's focus and many teachers develop student-centered learning activities. However, on-going data is not used across subjects in all houses to continually refine curricula and tasks to ensure that all learners are cognitively engaged at increasing levels of rigor. Consequently, the planning and revision of course materials, activities, and tasks does not consistently engage all students in rigorous tasks, thus limiting the school's capacity to accelerate learning.
- Strengthen common teaching practices across the school so that they focus on providing challenging tasks for all students, resulting in work products that demonstrate mastery of State standards. (1.2)
 - Teachers include questions, student interaction activities and elements of research in lesson plans. Teachers develop questions for collaborative

and partner work with the aim that students analyze, think, discuss, and question. Some teachers record student participation during class discussions. In classes visited, there was uneven access for all learners through the questioning and talk strategies used. In many classes, the same materials were used for the whole class; multiple entry points and extensions were not apparent. Students were involved in teacher directed activities and collaborative tasks that led to uneven access and varying levels of cognitive engagement as evidenced by oral and written responses. In some classes, teachers asked individual students questions while the rest of the class listened, limiting opportunities for peers to follow up, add on, or question each other. A lack of consistency across classes in providing multiple entry points into challenging tasks limits the development of critical thinking skills as evidenced by uneven student work products. While the planning of questioning and group work is intentional, high levels of student participation, peer-to-peer talk and discussion that demonstrates internalized habits and higher order skills is not apparent across all classrooms. When student groups were asked to explain what they were doing, some students could easily offer an answer that described the task, how they were completing it and why, while others expressed some confusion and misunderstandings. Student work samples show a range of responses with some showing thinking and understanding of content and others that evidenced a lack of understanding of content. These uneven teaching practices across the school do not ensure high levels of student participation and thinking, and lead to student work that demonstrates inconsistent levels of rigor.

- Extend common assessment practices to track skill and mastery of content so that teachers make appropriate adjustments to lesson and unit planning in order to address changing student needs. (2.2)
 - Teachers use a variety of assessments to track student progress. The school has a grading policy and Consortium rubrics are used for core subjects. Additionally, each teacher is responsible for pre-assessments, interim assessments and final assessments as well as PBATs that are given during the fourth cycle of instruction during the semester. Checks for understanding such as entry/exit tickets, observations during individual and group work, and whole class pulse checks are used by many teachers. While there are a plethora of assessments used, opportunities to track specific skills and mastery of content through the use of these assessment practices is not a school wide focus. Teachers discuss student progress and needs during team meetings; however, there are no systematic tracking and accountability measures that follow student progress across courses and through each house. During classes observed, teachers used formative assessment practices; however, it was unclear how the data collected is used to systematically track progress of skill and content across a house and to uniformly adjust instruction. In some classes, students reflected on their learning; however, when speaking with students this practice was not connected to assessment criteria or goal tracking. Addressing student misconception or passive involvement in class was not consistently addressed across classrooms and across houses. As a result, assessment practices utilized by teachers is unevenly employed and data gained from assessment was not used to clearly show informed adjustments across all classrooms, thus limiting the school's ability to track student skill and mastery progress by teacher, house, and across the school.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Arturo A. Schaumburg Satellite Academy	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