



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

W.E.B. Du Bois High School

High School K489

**402 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn
NY 11225**

Principal: Catherine Costa

**Date of review: April 15, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Shenean N. Lindsay**

The School Context

W.E. B. Du Bois is a transfer high school with 109 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 88% Black, 8% Hispanic, 3% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 13% special education students. Boys account for 44% of the students enrolled and girls account for 56%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 62%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	Additional Findings	Proficient
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	Additional Findings	Proficient
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	Celebration	Proficient
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Focus	Proficient
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the schools curricula. Teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Across the school, students and teachers are provided with actionable feedback regarding student achievement. Thus, teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- School-wide students understand how to use rubrics. During student interviews, one student stated, "Rubrics tell us standard, how we are graded, and what we need to do to pass on our assignments." Another student said, "I like using rubrics because it gives me clear expectations."
- The teacher team reviewed Instructional Focus Assessments to adjust instructional practices and supports for students. For example, during a teacher team meeting, teachers reviewed samples of student writing on the topic of neuroplasticity and observed the Note-Taking Tool given to students did not aid with collection of evidence to support a claim. As a result, the teacher team decided to edit the Note-Taking Tool and Quick Write rubric.
- During classroom visits, there was evidence of question and discussion as well as student led discussions which are assessed by the teacher and students. For example, in a Global History class the teacher facilitated a discussion about the bombing of Japan. Each group was told to take a position on the bombing and share it aloud with the class through a group leader. While each group presented, another group scored using a rubric then shared the ratings aloud along with evidence from the rubric. The teacher also scored the groups. During the share out, one student stated, "I gave the group a "4" because they took time to read the article, watch the film, and gave accurate information."

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations that are connected to a path of college and career readiness.

Impact

The principal and staff provide ongoing feedback and guidance which prepares students for the next level. However, families are unclear of Common Core Learning Standards and the schools vision for successful students.

Supporting Evidence

- High expectations are communicated through the guidance counselor who conducts a College and Career Interest Inventory and Future Interest Inventory with students, then uses the results to plan college and career awareness events which are meaningful to the students. For example, a college and career fair was held at the school. Representatives from colleges, technical schools, and the armed forces met with students to share information about various career paths. The guidance counselor also followed up by planning trips for students to many of the colleges along with support completing college and financial aid applications.
- Students receive ongoing feedback and advisement supports through meetings and attending courses with teachers and the guidance counselor. During student meetings, several shared the impact of school-based supports. One student stated, "The guidance counselor helped me create my resume and told me I should wear a suit. I went for the interview and got the job." Another student said, "I had to go to a class that taught me how to get a job, how to make a resume, how to dress. I just got a phone call for a second interview."
- School leaders and teachers consistently communicate with parents and students through weekly outreach apprising them of progress. Parents are also able to track student progress through the school website. Additionally, students lead Parent Teacher Conferences giving them ownership of their educational experience. However, students and parents are unable to articulate the expectations of Common Core Learning Standards. Information is given to families, however during the interview with parents, several stated, "The Common Core Standards are very new. The work is harder."

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that the curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards. It is evident curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills across grades, subjects, and all students.

Impact

An array of learning experiences support rigorous student learning, promote critical thinking, college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of lesson plans indicate grouping of students based on reading ability and learning accommodations noted in Individualized Education Plans. For example, lesson plans from a Living Environment class provided multiple entry points such as global warming information presented in pictures and text, vocabulary is pre-defined for the reader, and the teacher engaged the class in a read aloud for a short period during the lesson. As a result, students were prepared to complete a Quick Write with a graphic organizer, notes, and a rubric.
- The school has aligned curricula in English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies to Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts by creating units of study based on close reading of complex texts, readings of primary source documents, scientific articles, performance tasks which require students to identify mathematical misconceptions and appropriate solutions. For example, students who participate in the *Mindfulness* class are expected to interpret text based on the lesson, make a claim, and argument during a Socratic Seminar moderated by the teacher.
- Unit plans across subjects and grades revealed that teachers use the same unit plan template which includes Unit Overview, Depth of Knowledge areas which will be taught, Common Core Learning standards, Final Performance Tasks, expectations for students, overview of activities, vocabulary and multiple-entry points which will be used throughout the unit. For example, unit plans in The Science of Mindfulness, Living Environment, and English shared many common standards which are listed as Focus Common Core Standards in Literacy and/or Foundational Common Core Standards in Literacy. Consequently, literacy is embedded across all content areas.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School-wide teaching practices were evident across classrooms and reflect the schools beliefs of how students learn best.

Impact

There are consistent classroom practices which result in high levels of student thinking and participation which is demonstrated in work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching strategies include questioning and discussion, multiple entry points, and think/pair/share. For example, in Living Environment class, students read text and reviewed photos related to global warming. The teachers asked the students questions: “Do you see any changes to what is happening in the picture of a flower?”, “What does it mean?” The teacher encouraged students to pay attention to the diagram and use their vocabulary words to describe what was happening in the diagram. As a result, students were able to explain the stages of the flower which changed as a result of global warming.
- During a one to one lesson in Resource Room, a teacher and student viewed a video from iLearn on a laptop. Then, the student was told to read the text. Afterwards, the teacher asked the student several questions such as, “What is the author saying?”, “What do you feel the punishment should be?” The teacher encouraged the student to cite evidence from the text. Consequently, the student highlighted various parts of the text to support her claim. As the student responded, the teacher took notes.
- During a Mindfulness lesson, students watched a video about the brain for five minutes. Afterwards, the teacher asked the entire class, “What part of the brain can go through neurogenesis? The teacher encouraged students to use evidence from the video and text to support the response. At the end of the lesson, the teacher told the class she was going to check for understanding by distributing an Exit Slip which should be submitted prior to exiting.
- In an English class, students were given a text, “Spiritual vs. Material Fulfillment: Who Says You Can’t Have Both?” The class was given a think/pair/share protocol to discuss the essential question from the text and compare it to their novel *Siddhartha* while in a group. Some groups were given graphic organizers to compare and contrast the two texts. Other groups were able to compare and contrast using chart paper. The teacher walked around to all groups asking questions and assisting students as needed. By the end of the activity, all students were ready to participate in the share-out discussion.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured and inquiry based professional collaborations. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work.

Impact

The instructional capacity of teachers has been strengthened and groups of students are making progress towards goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly and have developed structures including agendas, tuning protocols, minutes, and supplemental materials to support student progress toward goals. The focus has been meeting school goals set on the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) and inquiry focused on the performance of students with disabilities. As a result of this focus, performance data indicates most students who took regents and RCT exams last semester earned a passing grade.
- Teacher teams consistently analyze student work using a *Looking at Student Work* protocol. During interviews, several teachers noted there was a need to refine the curriculum based on student performance on exams. Thus, teachers had to provide several students with lower level text and higher supports until students were approaching mastery within several units. Another teacher said as a result of inquiry work on the teacher team, he realized he had to reteach a math lesson because most of the students did not get it. However, his colleagues provided ideas for alternate strategies he could use which resulted in higher levels of student mastery.
- During the teacher team meeting observed, one teacher shared concerns about a sample of student writing which had gaps of evidence provided. Using the Looking at Student Work Protocol, the team was able to identify next steps to help the student succeed on his/her next writing task such as a student friendly rubric, giving the student a dictionary to define words which are unclear, and differentiation of the task according to student levels. Therefore, the teacher began planning an entry point to reteaching the lesson for greater student success on the task.