



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Sheepshead Bay

High School K495

**3000 Avenue X
Brooklyn
NY 11235**

Principal: John O'Mahoney

Date of review: November 14, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Michael Prayor

The School Context

Sheepshead Bay is a high school with 586 students from grades 11 through grade 12. The school population comprises 50% Black, 20% Hispanic, 14% White, and 14% Asian students. The student body includes 25% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 60% of the students enrolled and girls account for 40%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 73.0%.

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	Developing
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	Focus	Developing
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	Additional Findings	Developing
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	Celebration	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:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations consistently to staff, and form structures for advisement and support to students.

Impact

Structures and systems that hold staff accountable to the school's high expectations are in place and feedback to parents communicates a path towards college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Weekly memos are sent to the entire staff from the school principal titled "Ensuring Success for All" detailing specific strategies to achieve the school's instructional focus. For example, instructional memo 4, "How to write a Learning Target", focused on two key questions, "Who will predominantly be doing the thinking, the teacher or the students? How many students? How will this be evident?" and "Who will predominantly be doing the talking the teacher or the students? How many students? How will this be evident?" Feedback is provided via observations based on teachers' responses to these expectations in the classroom.
- The school developed a partnership with "College Confident", a program that supports, advises and guides students, parents, and staff through the college application process. Students receive fee waivers for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Test (ACT) registrations for October and November 2014. Seniors are provided assistance with college essays and resumes to meet submission deadlines for 2014.
- Teacher teams and staff communicate with students via Skedula. The program provides students with immediate feedback on assignments, progress towards earning high school credits, and allows students to communicate with their teachers online.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Pedagogical practices provide inconsistent instructional supports, including entry points, and other strategies to engage all learners in rigorous tasks and discussions.

Impact

Students demonstrate uneven rigor in work products, engagement and discussion resulting from limited opportunities to engage at high levels of critical thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- During a science lesson, the teacher prompted students to complete a lab report based on a previous experiment. Questions to support student thinking were limited to low level Depth of Knowledge questions which left students limited to one to two word responses. For example, some questions were “What state of matter was the water in?”, “Did it work for us?”, and “How long?” Furthermore, for the majority of the time spent in the classroom, the teacher directed lesson did not provide an opportunity for student to student responses and at times, the teacher answered her own questions.
- Although some teachers provided different tasks with scaffolds for groups of students, trends across classrooms demonstrated limited use of efficient strategies. For example, in many classes, students were given graphic organizers as whole class participation tools rather than used as scaffolds targeted to support specific student needs.
- During a self-contained math lesson, students were asked to recognize and add polynomial expressions. Students were not engaged in productive talk or when the task was completed, just sat there waiting for direction for a long period of time without re-direction from the teacher or being provided further tasks to challenge them.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Although school leaders and faculty ensure that curricula is aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), refinement of planning that provides students' access to rigorous tasks to engage in higher order thinking was inconsistent across the school.

Impact

Limited access to curricula and rigorous academic tasks for all learners across grades and classrooms impedes college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of lesson plans across classrooms indicates learning activities were moderately challenging, inconsistently emphasizing higher order thinking. During the math lesson, polynomials and factoring, the activity asked that students solve routine problems by adding polynomials without providing opportunities for further challenge.
- Across classrooms and grades, lesson plans and tasks provided limited access opportunities for English language learners and students with disabilities. During a social studies lesson, all students were given the same worksheet and asked to complete the same tasks with some support provided by the teacher.
- After a thorough review of the curricula and student work products in classrooms, appropriate scaffolds and language objectives to support the engagement of English language learners and at risk students were limited, indicating the need for further curricula refinement. For example, a Science lesson plan collected asked that all students cite textual evidence to support the analysis of science texts and write informative or explanatory responses. There were no language objectives to guide students through the writing process, no access to vocabulary, and no evidence of individualized planning.

Findings

Although there are school wide assessments, including rubrics, conferences as ongoing checks for understanding, and some student self-assessment practices, all related to the curricula, students' understanding of actionable feedback and next steps is uneven.

Impact

Adjustments of teacher pedagogical practices limit student progress on assessments and learning tasks. Work products in folders reflect only some progress in student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of student folders and work products showed inconsistent use of rubrics and feedback with next steps for students. For example, in the economics class, student work sheets in notebooks and work folders revealed little feedback and actionable, concise next steps to improve.
- Across classrooms, teachers' ongoing checks for understanding and adjustments to meet the needs of all learners were limited. For example, during an economics lesson, the teacher repeatedly asked students if they understood how to calculate the tax during the lesson. Although students didn't understand, the teacher proceeded. The teacher did not adjust the lesson before moving on to the next component, leaving many students unsure how to solve the problems on the worksheet.
- Teacher lesson plans had a form of assessment. Additionally, across classrooms, practices provided only some opportunities for students to self-assess themselves.

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

Teachers consistently engage in professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach, assessing student goals and work products, and promoting the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards.

Impact

Teacher teams are collaborating, engaged and strengthening their pedagogical practice towards the improvement in the academic progress of all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The majority of departments and grade teams have a teacher leader who sets an agenda and meets weekly with the administrative team to discuss professional development and student inquiry. For example, as indicated in a team meeting agenda on October 31, 2014, the 12th grade inquiry team met to discuss student transitions from paragraph to paragraph as an area of focus for students.
- Inquiry teams analyzed June and August Regents results this year. Teams of teachers developed next steps for refining the curricula, assessments and professional development. For example, with in the English language arts curriculum, revisions were made based on the June 2014 NYS English Regents exam results. Teachers determined that developing a critical lens was an issue for students resulting in adjustments made to the 11th grade curricula in order to increase their performance on the 2015 NYS English Regents exam.
- The math team was observed using a protocol for looking at student work. As a result, they determined that the English language learners had difficulty answering some questions and needed language support. Teachers discussed the need to modify their teaching practice to meet their student needs by adding language objectives to the curricula and will communicate their findings to all staff members. The principal stated during our interview that curricula refinements for English language learners were based on English and social studies Regent's results. During a teacher team meeting observed, the math inquiry team worked together and identified that the majority of English language learners could write out their responses. The teacher team identified the problem and immediately discussed curricula refinements to include language objectives within the next math unit.