

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

EBC High School for Public Service - Bushwick

High School K545

**1155 Dekalb Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11221**

Principal: Shawn Brown

**Dates of review: May 5, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Carolyn Yaffe**

The School Context

EBC High School for Public Service - Bushwick is a high school with 514 students from grades 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 8% Black, 91% Hispanic, 0% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 21% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled, and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-14 was 84.4%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core

<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</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.	Additional Findings	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.	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development

Rating: Proficient

Findings

The school leader has established various collaborative structures across the school community that engage all teachers in the improvement of curriculum and instruction, and the school relies on distributed leadership so that teachers have a voice in key decisions.

Impact

As a result of how collaborative work is structured and defined across the school community, departments are engaged in refining curricular documents to reflect scaffolds and multiple entry points to ensure access for students with disabilities and English language learners; rigor is becoming more clearly defined in assessment tasks, and there is a strong demonstration of investment and leadership from the group of teachers from each department who lead and facilitate the professional development for the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Collaborative structures include department meetings, grade-level advisor meetings and PD Committee planning meetings; frequency of meetings ranges from daily for the PD Committee planning meetings to several times a month for the department meetings. Goals for the various collaborative structures are clearly defined and evolve throughout the school year. As one result of this, all members of PD planning committee are able to articulate what has informed the trajectory of professional development opportunities over the course of the school year.
- In department teams, there has been a heavy focus on working backwards from performance tasks to drive the design of units and lesson plans. Department teams have utilized the collaborative structures to "tune" performance tasks through protocols and to develop common unit assessments. From this work, a foundation for systematic analysis of assessment data is forming.
- The school has a strong belief in and a clear definition regarding the most effective structures for team teaching and utilizes professional collaboration time to provide the appropriate planning towards this "tag team" model. As a result of this, the tag team model of teaching was in evidence across the majority of classroom visits conducted.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Implementation of the school leaders' stated beliefs about effective classroom instruction is inconsistently evident across classrooms, and student work products reflect uneven levels of thinking and participation.

Impact

As a result, students are not consistently required to make thinking visible, wrestle with questions that have high levels of cognitive demand or demonstrate their thinking through extended writing or authentic discussion.

Supporting Evidence

- In some classrooms, teachers posed questions that asked students to justify their thinking. For example, in one of the 9th grade math classrooms observed, the teacher asked several different student pairs to explain why they chose a particular method to solve an equation and how they knew the answer they were providing was correct. However, many of questions observed across classrooms were closed questions that required minimal student response. In addition, many teachers relied heavily on a small number of students to respond to questions and did not have structures in place to hold individual students or groups of students accountable for the thinking required in the questions posed. In addition, a review of lesson plans of the classrooms visited revealed that questions were neither deliberately constructed nor explicitly included in many of the lesson plans.
- In alignment with the school's instructional focus, teachers require use of annotation in many of the classrooms visited. For example, in a 10th grade Global History class students were asked to annotate an informational handout defining democracy and communism and use that to create a T-chart. In a 9th grade ESL class, the teacher modeled annotation of a diagram of DNA and then asked students to circle unfamiliar vocabulary and to look up words. Although students were asked to annotate texts, diagrams or equations, in many of the classrooms observed, there was inconsistency in the structures used to hold students accountable for the task and for the use of annotation as a springboard or lever for a task that requires critical thinking. While the use of annotation was in evidence across many classrooms, what was not in evidence was checking for completion of the task or the use of the product of the annotation as a lever for discussion or critical thinking.
- Although in some classrooms students were purposefully grouped and structures were in place to hold students accountable for high level conversations, in the majority of classrooms, even those where students were purposefully grouped, conversation between students often remained at a low level and/or fostered little to no student interaction. For example, in an English classroom where identifying the use of literary elements in a short story was the objective and students were tasked with discussing this in small groups, the majority of groups in the class were not interacting with one another. During a turn and talk in a 9th grade Algebra classroom, many pairs of students did not interact with one another and were not required to share or justify their thinking.
- Although there was consistent evidence of the school's instructional focus of annotation across classrooms and some evidence of purposeful groupings, the presence of provocative questioning, use of academic language and demonstration of thinking through extended writing was inconsistently evident across most classrooms

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Although collaborative teacher structures are supporting the strengthening of curriculum in the school community, consistent rigor of tasks across classrooms and the building of coherence in order to consistently promote college and career readiness is in development is lacking.

Impact

As a result, students are inconsistently engaged in critical thinking tasks across grades and disciplines; this hinders their ability to graduate college or career ready.

Supporting Evidence

- There is a common planning template used for curriculum maps that requires teachers to ground content and skills in big ideas and guiding essential questions. Some departments utilize formal protocols for examining tasks, unit plans and curriculum maps from various lenses, including multiple entry points to ensure access for all learners, and in other departments teachers are working individually to update curriculum maps to memorialize modifications and adjustments used this year.
- Tasks across classrooms were not consistent in terms of providing students with clear, rigorous objectives that require critical thinking. In several of the classrooms visited, there was not a clear objective stated in the lesson plan nor on view to drive student understanding of the work of the day. There were also no clear picture provided of how the daily work observed connected to an overarching unit objective or long term project that required extensive writing or thinking. For example, in an 11th grade US History classroom, where the focus question was about the success of the Montgomery bus boycott, the only task that students were asked to engage in was to read a portion of a secondary text about the bus boycott. There were no attendant task or questions for students to consider as they read, and the questions posed after the reading were rooted in providing a summary of the passage. In an ESL class, students were asked to evaluate the quality of a letter without a rubric and without structures in place to assess or hold them accountable for the task.
- The professional development committee shared work that has been done to envision the “ideal EBC student” and this includes academic experiences and skills gained over the course of four years at EBC. This work is still in development and does not yet drive planning across grades and subject areas. Some departments, such as English, are in the midst of identifying a four-year scope and sequence that provides a coherent experience for students across grades in ELA, but other departments have not begun that level of planning.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

While the school has done strong work to shift grading policies to promote mastery of content and standards, the systematic use and analysis of performance based assessment data is still emerging in the school community. Effective practices such as on-going checks for understanding were not observed across the majority of classrooms visited.

Impact

Because there are no embedded practices regarding the analysis and tracking of performance assessment data, neither school leaders nor teachers have access to a clear view of how groups of students are moving towards goals.

Supporting Evidence

- By asking departments to generate a grading policy that requires that 75% of a students' grade is standards-based, the school has shifted from "a grading policy about students doing things to a grading policy of standards met." Students reported that they usually receive rubrics to guide their major writing assignments and that there is often a process of drafting, peer feedback and revision rooted in the rubric. In classrooms visited, each writing assignment that was posted on bulletin boards had an accompanying rubric; in most cases, areas of the rubric were circled to indicate the quality of work and there was limited additional feedback in writing to outline next steps.
- Departments use some of their time together to plan common assessments, and the grading of those assessments happens individually. There is currently no common structure across departments to analyze assessment data and no system to track how students are progressing in the skills required for those assessments. While departments do use protocols to analyze pieces of student work and analyze results to inform instructional revisions, this work is not embedded in a larger, overarching structure of analysis and tracking.
- While in some classrooms there were effective structures in place for assessing student understanding such as conversations between the teacher and group of students while s/he circulates, most classrooms did not utilize structures to understand whether or not students had completed tasks or had the understandings required for the next portion of the lesson.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations to staff, and staff, in turn, consistently communicate with families regarding student progress in the context of the larger goal of college and career readiness.

Impact

As a result of the work connected to expectations, staff have a clear understanding of what the expectations are for instruction across classrooms, and students and parents in understand progress and areas of strength and improvement.

Supporting Evidence

- Students articulated an understanding of the expectations connected to the school's instructional focus of annotation and articulated that this work, in the words of one student, "asks us to look closely at the problem or question and understand what it is asking us to solve or think about." Students also shared that they receive rubrics with each extended writing assignment that outline the assessment criteria. Students also explained how the school community creates a college-going culture through a college readiness club, College Now and AP classes, college trips based on majors and college madness week.
- Teachers shared the work that has been done to envision the "ideal EBC student." This includes a set of criteria that includes both the academic and social emotional realms. They also shared understanding of the school's instructional beliefs and what a classroom aligned to those beliefs would look like.
- Parents reported the various ways they feel the community sets high expectations for their children and supports them towards those expectations. They cited numerous college trips, sophisticated academic work, Advanced Placement courses, a co-op program and the community service focus of the school as examples. They also cited college workshops for parents to provide support in the college admissions and financial aid processes.