



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

**Bushwick Leaders' High School for Academic
Excellence**

High School K556

**797 Bushwick Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11221**

Principal: Catherine Reilly

**Date of review: April 28, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Steven Strull**

The School Context

Bushwick Leaders' High School for Academic Excellence is a high school with 279 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 28% Black, 69% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 29% English language learners and 28% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 79.0%.

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	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	Focus	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	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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The vast majority of teachers regularly meet in a series of interconnected meeting structures utilizing an inquiry approach to their work and ensuring the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts.

Impact

Teachers feel empowered to create knowledge about their practice and are able to discuss students they share in common across content areas leading to increased achievement and mastery of goals for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Daily grade team meetings are facilitated by a grade team leader to analyze student work, specifically writing, using a New York State Common Core Learning Standards rubric toward developing a common understanding of student writing expectations across content areas. Additionally, grade teams plan curriculum, give each other feedback, and share best practices based on samples of student work. Teachers routinely use the Tuning Protocol to discuss student work in teacher team meetings.
- Each week, department teams meet with coaches from the Institute for Student Achievement. During the meetings, coaches provided feedback on lessons and instruction based on classroom visits. Teachers indicated that the feedback was useful for future planning purposes. The 10th grade team received feedback on students' ability to pull textual evidence from text. They discussed this feedback at their team meeting, decided to include this skill as part of future planning, and assigned Teacher Mundy to be the accountable person on the team to monitor the students' skill development in this area.
- There is a well-articulated teacher inquiry team cycle resulting in a cycle of inquiry where teams select a focus train based on data and develop a strategy to address the focus train. Teams then implement strategy across the grade, and participate in intervisitation, to assess the strategy by looking at student work, and adjust strategy. The inquiry cycle leads to teachers sharing their findings with the school community.
- Guidance counselors and advisory teachers meet as part of an advisory team and follow student progress across their 4 years in high school, analyze student data, and share college and career readiness supports. At advisory team meetings, guidance counselors update advisors on each student's progress toward completion of high school requirements and college and career readiness.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

School has implemented school-wide common assessment systems. A common writing rubric is used across all content area. Online grading systems are used to record and report student progress across four marking periods.

Impact

There is a common language for assessment that is practiced by teachers across content areas and grade levels. Students are provided with actionable feedback regarding their achievement. Student assessment data are easily accessed by students and parents.

Supporting Evidence

- The teachers on a grade level teacher team spoke to the consistency of the common language used for assessments across content areas. Teachers across content areas use a Common Core Learning Standards aligned writing rubric as students work through multiple drafts in the writing process. In an English language arts classroom, students were observed using this Common Core Learning Standards aligned rubric to provide peer to peer feedback. However, it was not evident that teachers were adjusting future lessons based on the feedback students were receiving.
- During the student interviews, students indicated that teachers provide daily feedback during their lessons. During Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) English as a second language (ESL) Global 10 observation on understanding the impacts of events of World War II, the ICT teacher provided the following specific feedback to the students: "Many of you are saying that it is an emotional and social issue, remember you have to explain why." It was unclear, though, how students with disabilities and English language learners were receiving differentiated support.
- In both lesson plans collected and observations of classrooms, teachers used exit tickets as a form of lesson summative assessment. In an English as a second language class on *The Code of Hammurabi*, students were asked to provide an exit ticket that asked "Which of the cases you listened to (not your own) did you prefer? What did you like about it?" The principal and assistant principal indicated this is an expected school-wide practice.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school's curricula are continuously being aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts in both unit and daily lesson planning. Academic tasks consistently emphasized rigorous habits and higher order thinking.

Impact

Teachers actively plan and refine their lessons making decision about how to use the instructional shifts to ensure all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities, have access to rigorous curricula and tasks thus promoting college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Planning for students to do their best, including English language learners and students with disabilities, teachers plan for an academic atmosphere that promotes questioning and discussion between and among children and teachers. Content and language objectives are based on the Sheltered Instructional Operation Protocol (SIOP) requiring teachers to develop content foci aligned to academic language acquisition. A professional development committee has been established to support teachers in development of units and lessons.
- Teachers submit curricular materials to administrators and peers for review making certain the lessons are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards specifically related to standards of literacy including reading, writing, language, and speaking standards. Each lesson plan reviewed included both content objectives and language objectives consistent with the Common Core Learning Standards for reading, writing, language, and speaking. An example of an observed language objective includes: 1. speak and share do now; 2. make observations from a photo; 3., read and annotate sources; 4., write a paragraph based on evidence. Another example of a language objective from a 9th grade English language arts class is students should be able to read poems from different time periods, write a follow up activity to the poem, and then speak/listen in a discussion of poem in their group.
- Unit and lesson plans indicate higher-order questions for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities. For example, in a Global History lesson plan, higher-order questions include: "How can a dictator be both a good and bad choice as your leader?" and "How can a war impact more than just the soldiers fighting in it?" Additionally, in an English language arts lesson plan, the teacher specifically planned for depth of knowledge level 4 by asking students to analyze the poem they read and make a textual connection to the poem.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, there is a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best is reflected in teaching practices that consistently provide multiple entry points as well as being aligned to written curricula.

Impact

Teacher pedagogy, aligned to the curricula and guided by the Danielson Framework for teaching, is consistent across classroom and students know what to expect from daily lessons. Supports are in place to provide multiple entry points for a variety of learners as demonstrate in discussions and work products.

Supporting Evidence

- In an English language arts classroom, students were observed working collaboratively by using a writing rubric to evaluate each other's work and provide feedback aligned to the rubric and next steps for improvement of work. Similarly, in a beginner English as a second language class, students were working collaboratively in groups of three using pictures to predict what the short story *Thank You Ma'am* would be about. Student collaboration was evident across classrooms showing an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Further, questioning and discussion techniques, aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, were evident across classrooms as teachers encouraged students to review class content materials with each other with the teacher providing questioning prompts.
- In a 9th grade Global History class, the teacher acted as a facilitator promoting student to student conversation by offering prompts such as "Anyone want to respond to that," "I want someone to add to that. Many people died so then..." This is an example of providing scaffolds to promote conversation while making it accessible for a variety of learners by giving a sentence starter. Students that were reluctant at first to offer an answer were able to pick up on the teacher's prompting and speak directly to each other than through a hub and spoke model of student to teacher, teacher to student, student to teacher.
- In multiple classroom observations, students were provided with specific roles with which to work in collaborative groups ensuring that the students in the groups were each responsible for a specific task. In a social studies lesson, students were asked to assign the following roles to one another: group leader, supplies manager, time keeper, and reader. In a 9th grade English language arts class, students were working in groups to identify figurative language with the following group roles: leader, communication keeper, tracker, and time-keeper. This is a common practice across classrooms and since the roles switch from classroom to classroom multiple entry points are provided for both students with disabilities and English language learners.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, to faculty and students. Teachers promote a culture of learning and an atmosphere of ongoing feedback leading to a path for college and career readiness.

Impact

Teachers understand the expectations of administrators and convey those expectations in meaningful ways to students and families. A positive school tone has been established with an articulated college going culture.

Supporting Evidence

- During the student interview, when asked what is the goal after high school, the students responded with the following: one girl said “Not a [City University of New York] CUNY college,” one boy said “Starting at [a local college] and then to John Jay,” a boy in 9th grade referred to attending New York University, and another boy identified that he would attend college on an athletic scholarship. An additional girl provided four possible college choices and indicated her choice would be based on the scholarships provided.
- Teachers report a warm professional culture with access to high quality professional development and an ongoing relationship with a community based organization. Institute for Student Achievement coaches are a regular part of the school community and teachers respond that they benefit in both planning and coaching support improving the overall academic culture of the school. In collaboration with Good Shepherd Services, the school is in its second year of a community schools grant. There is ongoing planning in development to bring health care providers to the school.
- Parents indicate that they are informed of how their child is progressing through the academic program via e-mails, letters, texts, and phone calls. Parents feel as though they have access to their children’s teachers at all times and were effusive in their praise for how teachers take an individual interest in both the academic and social/emotional progress of each child. When parents were asked if their children were being appropriately challenged, one parent answered, “Work is just right, my son understands.” Another parent answered, “For my son it is challenging. They have resources to help, they have peer to peer tutoring, the teachers volunteer to stay late and tutor.” Another parent answered, “Whenever my daughter has difficult homework, there is always someone here to help.”
- Parents report accessibility to student assessment data and feel they are given ample opportunity to understand how their children are being assessed.