



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Business of Sports School (BOSS)

High School M393

**439 West 49th Street
Manhattan
NY 10019**

Principal: Joshua Solomon

**Date of review: January 22, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Marjory Matthieu-Kodjovi**

The School Context

Business of Sports School (BOSS) is a high school with 440 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 36% Black, 60% Hispanic, 1 % White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 25% special education students. Boys account for 72% of the students enrolled and girls account for 28%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 84.0%.

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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	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	Additional Findings	Well Developed
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	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and faculty systematically ensure that curricula and content standards are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

This careful curriculum design has resulted in coherence across grades and subject areas, promoting college and career readiness for all students, and ensuring that individual and groups of students, including the lowest- and highest-achieving students, English language learners (ELLs), and students with disabilities, have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- The school decided to revise the curriculum to make evidence-based argument writing the school's major instructional focus. As such, every major content course in English, history, science, and business was designed and implemented including a Common Core-aligned unit each semester that culminates in an argumentative writing task based on nonfiction texts. The school developed a common reading/writing rubric to score each task, and teachers have used this assessment data to create action plans.
- Across every content area, courses implement one unit every semester that culminates in a Socratic Seminar aligned to Common Core speaking and listening standards, scored with a common speaking/listening rubric. In every classroom visited, teachers videotaped all seminars allowing them to assess individual student progress, and teachers have created action plans over the past four years to boost student achievement. As evident during the 9th and 10th grade visit, English as a second language (ESL) and special education teachers often conduct parallel Socratic Seminars to foster increased participation from ELLs and students with disabilities.

Ongoing and systematic teacher team collaborations across four departments has led to increases in Common Core-aligned work and in common best practices and school-wide instructional consistency. Teachers work together to create shared Common Core-aligned rubrics. Similarly, co-planning between general education, special education and ESL teachers has resulted in instructional scaffolds and small group instruction that ensures all students have access to rigorous curriculum.

- Students leverage numerous partnerships in the sports and business world and teachers give students multiple opportunities to create real-world products and to present their ideas for feedback from authentic audiences in business settings. The principal reported that these experiences continuously challenge students to develop sophisticated work products while also advancing communication and presentation skills. Many of the 11th and 12th grade students have won business plan writing and presentation competitions hosted by authentic institutions including Ernst & Young and Morgan Stanley, and several students have received investor funding for their new ventures.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. While teaching strategies, including questioning, discussions, scaffolds, engagement, assessment, exit slips and routines are in place, many teachers were still developing their skills to elicit high order thinking in students.

Impact

Curricula are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts, leading teachers to consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula so that all learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the classrooms practices include “Think, Talk, Exchange”, “Claim, Evidence, Reasoning” paragraphs, and evidence-based constructed responses. Other strategies included: Marzano’s 6-Step Process for Teaching Academic Vocabulary, close reading text annotation with targeted “stop and thinks”, text-based dependent questions, and graphic organizers. The school uses evidence-gathering station activities focused on essential questions and on students generating Level 3-4 questions. While there was evidence of students engaging in high order questioning, in many classes teachers were still developing their skills to elicit this thinking in students. The principal also shared that “special education teachers work to scaffold down the high order questioning to make it accessible to all students - they are still getting to the big question and may have to go down in incremental steps - when we look at our data it is one of the challenges that our students may have in the interim assessment- looking at the big question.”
- The three main principles of the school are: communication, collaboration and critical thinking. This, according to faculty and staff, came out of surveys asking employers to discuss what high school students need when they graduate. The school believes that students need to know how to communicate professionally by discussing authentic work products. This practice was evident across classrooms. Students could be seen actively discussing and writing in opening activities, mini-lessons and exit tickets, which are common structures across classes.
- The 12th grade classes were working in teams to create a business or business products, which involved critical thinking and problem solving. To ensure that all students have access to the curriculum, learning specialists provided scaffolds so that all students could build their argument. The administration shared that students worked in stations to prepare them to work in teams. This was common across Integrated Co-Teaching classes and content area classes.
- Across classrooms, teachers’ lesson plans showed specific differentiation strategies, some teacher-created and some based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Teachers tracked student progress and checked how the majority of students were doing with their objectives. Special education teachers tracked the understanding of the goals that are in students’ individual education plans.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The school uses common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress toward goals across grades and subjects, track progress, and adjust curricular and instructional decisions. Teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

All students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, demonstrate increased mastery, and teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's instructional goal is to ensure that students are ready for college level work. The school conducts interim assessments three times a year and students complete two to three hour assessments in all courses. The school analyzes the data in each department using the *Leverage Leadership Protocol* and *Driven by Data* by Santoyo.
- At the beginning of every year, teachers collect data, identify skills that students need to improve, and develop action plans for addressing these areas. They reflect again and review examples of student work in the spring to see if the instructional adjustments they made had impact. For example, teachers identified students struggling with counterclaims and developed specific lessons around counterclaims and citing evidence; later teachers were able to point to student work that shows counterclaim use improving. Teachers create impact statements and, in turn, administrators conduct observations to make sure that these strategies are being implemented.
- As teachers create action plans, departments create analyses of trends across classrooms. Teachers explained that this process helps to drive some of the classroom practices, including the use of academic vocabulary, and an increase the use of Castle Learning, which gives teachers access to Regents questions on a daily basis. Teachers and administrators reported an increased awareness on areas of need that has bolstered student performance as students monitor their own understanding of content.
- As part of their action plans, teachers highlight specific standards that need to be re-taught for the whole class and identify particular student groups that need assistance in key target areas. For example, in Living Environment they have identified cellular respiration as a challenge for some of the 9th grade students. Teachers are now working with co-teachers to pull small groups and provide small group instruction and parallel teaching as necessary. The department chairs are synthesizing this information as well. Working with the professional development committee, they present findings to teachers to guide shifts in strategies geared toward helping teachers improve instruction. The administration conducts weekly observations with teachers to see how those trends are being implemented in daily lessons.
- Staff members use a spreadsheet that shows how students' progress toward their individual goals are tracked, what their goals are and how they are progressing. Using Castle Learning, many teachers have set up plans to address student needs; at least 80% of the Castle Learning assignments have self-guided tracking systems where students retake certain assessments until they achieve proficiency or mastery.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff, provide training and have a system of accountability for those expectations. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness and offer ongoing feedback to students and families.

Impact

Parents monitor student progress and to maintain frequent contact with their child's advisor and teachers. According to the principal, students have a greater understanding of the need to work hard all four years in order to receive good grades and ultimately gain admission to college.

Supporting Evidence

- Parents, students and teachers shared that school has communicated expectations through the BOSS Staff Handbook, the Student Handbook, Staff Links through the Pupil Path website or iPhone app, and Student Links to implement consistent, professional processes for students and staff around instruction and operations. For example, teachers shared expectations are very clear through the staff handbook regarding curriculum development, assessment and lesson expectations, and it also provides lesson plan templates, the school grading policy and information on operational issues.
- All teachers meet with at least one of the administrators at the beginning of each year to set annual goals. The administration shared, "We revisit mid-year and we are very clear on our expectations. Teachers are aware that we are delving deeper into Danielson Domain 3: using discussion and questioning, and student engagement and using data." These are the school leverage points for this year - actively focusing feedbacks specifically around next steps." In these areas the school partners with their instructional coach who provides additional support.
- In the Career and Technical Education Sequence, 9th graders begin taking career and financial management classes that focus on resume writing and career readiness. In 10th grade, the school provides technology application skills in Microsoft Office programs. In 11th grade, students take entrepreneurship courses that introduce them to business plans. The school has partnerships with Ernst and Young, Morgan Stanley and PENCIL and is involved in sending students to participate in international enterprises. In 12th grade, students create a firm and compete nationally and internationally through the Virtual Enterprise business management program.
- The school ensures that teachers provide ongoing feedback to parents and students by using the Pupil Path website. Teachers post grades, attendance and assignments. The school also uses email, progress reports and parent-teacher conferences with students' advisors to provide information on student performance.
- As part of the school-wide culture to develop discussion skills, teachers video all Socratic Seminars, allowing them to give specific feedback to students. According to the principal, teachers are able to look at those scores and come up with particular strategies to help different groups of students. Teachers and administration shared that, "We have been doing this for a couple of years now...curriculum process that shows steps that help teachers do that ...we have time during the year where we stop to look at our data and create action plans."

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards, and teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share and on whom they are focused.

Impact

The inquiry work teachers are engaged in results in progress toward goals for groups of students, while also strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers.

Supporting Evidence

- The Director of College Counseling from the College Bound Initiative sets up college fairs and college trips. They begin working with 9th graders on early college lessons and college trips. The school also looks at SAT data, and has seen that while students are being admitted to good colleges, SAT results were a weak link. This year the school added SAT prep to the school day so that every student has at least two periods per week of SAT prep. The school has partnered with College Spring to work with teachers to implement SAT prep into the entire 11th grade year, including taking four Saturdays of mock SATs.
- The administration and teachers shared that all teachers participate in department and grade team meetings each week. The five department teams are comprised of both content teachers and special needs teachers. The departments meet during Monday professional development time and implement protocols to review curriculum and assessments, look at student work, and review student performance data. The five department chairs are trained in meeting facilitation, data analysis, and protocols. In each meeting, teachers follow a data analysis or norming protocol.
- The grade teams, comprised of grade advisors, meet to review attendance and credit accumulation data and plan advisory periods and community-building events. For example, the 9th grade team planned an August Summer Bridge program attended by the whole grade team, upper class interns, and over 90 incoming 9th graders to train students on BOSS academic and classroom routines such as, “Sit up. Lean Forward. Ask Questions. Nod yes and no. Talk with teachers” (SLANT), an acronym used in many classrooms that identifies appropriate classroom behavior).
- Teachers lead workshops and can select from a menu of workshops. Teachers shared that the School Implementation Team (SIT) meets regularly to set goals and drive initiatives supporting students with disabilities. The team is comprised of the head dean, guidance counselor, a general education teacher, special education chair, and an assistant principal. Each member is identified as a point person for the following areas: Behavior, Transition, 504/Response To Intervention (RTI) and Individual Education Program (IEP)/program analysis and assists in the implementation of the SIT Action Plan.