

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Murry Bergtraum High School for Business Careers

High school 02M520

**411 Pearl Street
Manhattan
NY 10038**

Principal: Naima Cook

**Dates of review: February 11, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Marisol Bradbury**

The School Context

Murry Bergtraum High School for Business Careers is a High School with 971 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 44% Black, 43% Hispanic, 2.5% White, and 9.5% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013 - 2014 was 68.30%.

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.	Focus	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	Additional Findings	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	Developing

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

3.4 High Expectations

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The school communicates high expectations and elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching for all teachers and students.

Impact

The structures to communicate expectations aligned to roles, responsibilities, and the Framework for Teaching provide training and have a system of accountability. Administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers, consistently communicate high expectations for all students via guidance, programming, and teacher teams.

Supporting Evidence

- The Principal implements a culture of high expectations by meeting every morning and afternoon with members of the cabinet to review the administrative duties and responsibilities for the day. The principal conducts individual meetings with assistant principals to ensure they are working towards their goals and meeting her expectations. In turn, administrators set expectations for the staff they oversee. Additionally, administrators meet with teachers, who have generated a low passing percentage to ensure they receive the necessary supports to improve instructional practices.
- The Professional Development Committee meets with teachers from across departments to identify professional development opportunities related to the ADVANCE system and the Framework for Teaching. Workshops include norming practices based on trends, unit and curriculum pacing, academic vocabulary, analysis and revision of assessment, and Depth of Knowledge. During a teacher meeting, teachers shared that the professional support received this year helps them understand the expectations of the Framework for Teaching in a meaningful manner.
- The College Office is located on the second floor near the cafeteria. Posters and bulletin boards list college related events, including acceptance letters to colleges. Guidance counselors mandate students, who fail one or more classes, to a one on one meeting to identify areas for improvement and implement interventions. Guidance Counselors conduct classroom visits to inform students of the college admissions process, financial aid workshops, and scholarship opportunities. Guidance counselors shared the process to monitor student progress in order to ensure students are programmed accurately and take advantage of the academic programs offered during and after school.
- The school implemented the Achieve Now Program for all students who are almost on track for graduation. The program offers academic courses during 4 cycles throughout the year, including Presidents' Week, Spring Break, and Saturday Academy. Students, who are on track to graduate and have demonstrated academic success register for College Now and Advanced Placement courses. The Syracuse University Project Advance Courses targets students in the ninth grade and also offers college level courses to the rest of the student body.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Developing

Findings

The school is in the process of aligning curricula to Common Core Learning Standards CCLS and integrating the instructional shifts. The development and planning of rigorous curricula and academic tasks vary across subjects.

Impact

While the school offers college level courses and curriculum maps list CCLS, units, lesson plans and tasks do not consistently emphasize higher order skills so that all students can engage in high level discussion and intellectual work.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers received the Common Core Aligned Curricula in Mathematics, ELA, Science, and Social Studies in September. In addition, the math department uses Engage NY and the social studies curriculum is aligned to the NYS Social Studies Framework. However, a review of units of study and lesson plans indicate limited opportunities for engaging students in higher order skills and embedding the instructional shifts as outlined in the documents given to teachers.
- The instructional focus of the school consists of students using text based evidence to develop skills to coherently articulate ideas and arguments when speaking and writing across all content areas. While there is an emphasis on the use of text based evidence, the tasks asked of students vary in rigor. For example, in an English class, the objective was to read informational texts to connect to major themes in a poem. Students were given two days to analyze two poems and a two page article. Students were asked to annotate and to explain in 3 to 5 sentences the theme of economic disparity. While students develop effective skills to annotate and close read, they were unable to determine a central idea, analyze its development, complex analysis, and provide an objective summary.
- In an ICT Global 4 class, the objective was to analyze and explain the importance and impact of the international tribunals in future conflicts around the world. While the lesson explicitly listed the World History standard to write arguments focused on discipline specific content and to write routinely over extended time frames for reflection and revision, the task consisted of watching a 5 minute clip segment from the docudrama Nuremberg, which tells the story of the Nuremberg trials following the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II. While the powerful video aims to inform and to remind audiences of man's potential for such crimes and the need to confront it, the task asked students to write one sentence about their understanding on how the audience, defendants, and judge reacted to the video, followed by a short discussion on these questions. Thus, students had limited opportunities to write arguments and to engage in rich conversation about history and human rights, and to make connections to international tribunals, and the responsibility to confront such crimes.
- A student in the 12th grade shared a 7 page report from an advanced writing course. The self-selected topic: "The 9/11 Memorial: A Destined- to -Become Pubic Space" included the history of the attack on 9/11, data analysis about the social and economic impact, the right to the city, and the public sector. The student was able to articulate her firm stance on the memorial based on the research conducted to write this report. However, across grades, this type of student learning share out was limited to few students in Advanced Placement and college level courses.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Teaching strategies, including questioning and discussion techniques inconsistently provide multiple entry points. Student work and discussions reflect uneven levels of thinking

Impact

While teaching practices are aligned to helping students use text based evidence; scaffolds, routines, and questioning techniques inconsistently provide multiple entry points to Students with Disabilities SWD as well as challenging tasks that promote rigorous student work product and student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers post charts, pictures, and checklists to remind students of the various strategies to make claims based on evidence, annotate, and close read. Throughout the lesson, teachers remind students of the effective strategies to close read a text by circling unfamiliar vocabulary, writing questioning, highlight points of fact, and read and re-reading
- In a social studies class, students were given a graphic organizer that helped them form evidence based claims on the Platt Amendment, which outlines the American Cuban relations after the Spanish American War. Throughout the duration of the class, students annotated the one and half page document and used the graphic organizer to identify evidence. In an English class, students were asked to annotate, paraphrase, and draw facts from three sets of readings and a short video. However, across classrooms there were limited opportunities for students to engage in dialogue, question each other's ideas, and write essays of their own analysis of multiple data sources and personal perspectives.
- In a ninth grade English class, students were given choice of text. However, across classrooms, including ICT courses, students were engaged in the same graphic organizers, activity sheets, and reading materials. For example, in one Integrated Algebra class students were given an activity sheet that included fill in the blank questions, completion of a table, and identification of the mean, median, and mode of a set of numbers. In an ICT social studies class, students watched a video and were asked to independently answer the same three questions about the video. In an ICT science class, all students were asked to complete a T-Chart as the major activity.
- During conversations with a few students in Advanced Placement and upper level courses, they indicated that there was choice of task and extensive writing on demand, however the work product of students across classrooms reflected uneven levels of student thinking, such as identifying the median, mode, and creating a plot using five number summary, completing a T-Chart to identify the advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction, using text based evidence to complete a graphic organizer, and fill in the blank when solving mathematical and science problems.

Findings

The use of checks for understanding, common assessments, rubrics, and grading policies vary across classrooms

Impact

While the school uses common assessments to provide support systems, grading policies and assessment practices vary across classrooms and inconsistently reflect the use of checks for understanding in order to create multiple entry points for students, including SWDs.

Supporting Evidence

- After a detailed analysis of students' transcripts, course and Regents passing percentages, the principal created and implemented the Achieve Now Program. The program is available to support students, who are credit deficient by retaking academic courses during one of four cycles throughout the year, including Presidents' Week, Spring Break, and Saturday Academy.
- Members of the cabinet revised the 2015 Grading policy to ensure a greater range of assessments to include demonstration of presentations and habits of student learning. Formative assessments include quizzes, drafts, revision process, peer assessments, and reflections. Summative assessments include exam grades, presentations, reports, and essays. Habits of Student Learning include being an active listener, contributor, problem solver, collaborative, and reflective learner. However, across classrooms there were different types of grading policies posted, some of which included test average, homework average, participation, and projects. In addition, students stated that the grading policy varied across classrooms and while there were some teachers who implement the drafting process, some do not. Additionally, the reflection process is used by a few teachers at the end of the term.
- Across classrooms, teachers use do now activities to elicit prior knowledge, large group questions, medial and final summaries, however, they inconsistently adjust the curricula to meet the learning needs for all students as evident by the lack of individualized graphic organizers, guided group practice, and independent practice for forthcoming lessons and units.
- A review of lesson plans for observed classes indicates that while teachers plan lessons aligned to the instructional focus, there is inconsistent evidence that teachers refine lessons based on the formative assessments and analysis of daily student performance as it relates to mastering the content and Common Core State Standards.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Developing
---------------------------	---	----------------	-------------------

Findings

Teachers are engaged in professional collaborations connected to school goals. Distributive leadership structures are developing.

Impact

While there are structured professional collaborations and teacher teams analyze student work; the use of an effective inquiry approach is in its initial phase and the work is beginning to connect to the implementation of CCLS. Distributed leadership structures among staff are also emerging.

Supporting Evidence

- The school implemented professional collaborations through the Circular 6 Assignment, thus teachers are involved in common planning time, hallway sweep teams, student activities, IEP committee, and professional development committee among other activities. Through these meetings, teachers collaborate on how to support students and teachers. For example, the purpose of the Instructional Support Team (IST) is to use resources and implement supports for Students with Disabilities. The Professional Development Committee plans the professional development activities and workshops aligned to the Framework for Teaching for teachers.
- Teachers serve in various roles, including content trainers for Regents' exam scoring, ninth grade assembly team coordinators, facilitators of professional development, coordinators of IEP meetings and ELL and ESL compliance mandates. While these roles promote leadership abilities, the structures have not yet created a venue for teachers to have a voice in key decisions that impact the school.
- The social studies teacher team uses protocols to examine student work. For example, after analyzing an excerpt written by a student, teachers identified that while the student possessed good writing skills, she needed to develop her analytical skills and list more content when citing evidence. Teachers discussed strategies such as asking the student to cite more evidence from the text and make connections to other thematic texts. While the work of this team is beginning to promote improved teaching practice, the limited resources and guidance across the school to design an inquiry based approach hinders the progress of teacher teams.
- The Professional Development Committee is comprised of two ELA teachers, two assistant principals, and the principal. They survey and meet with teachers in order to identify relevant topics. During a teacher team, a teacher shared that the support received this year has been very helpful in understanding and implementing the instructional shifts. The principal stated that the team will be taking on more leadership responsibilities.