



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2015-2016**

**Bushwick School for Social Justice**

**High School K549**

**400 Irving Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11237**

**Principal: Ana Marsh**

**Date of review: April 19, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Michele Ashley**

## The School Context

Bushwick School for Social Justice is a high school with 394 students from grade 9 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 20% Black, 77% Hispanic, and 2% White students. The student body includes 25% English Language Learners and 20% students with disabilities. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 79.9%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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 <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work.

### Impact

Teacher team collaboration has strengthened instructional capacity and resulted in progress for groups of students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams include advisory, inquiry, and grade level teams. Each team supports a school wide goal and the school wide instructional focus on writing across the curriculum. Team leaders follow a pre-determined agenda and guide members in analyzing student data to develop and implement new strategies for improvement. Leadership of inquiry meetings rotates to build the capacity of each team member. Teams collectively adopt new strategies, develop assessments to assess student progress, and create common rubrics aligned to Common Core Learning Standards. During the grade 10 inquiry team meeting one teacher shared a TIED (Topic, Transition, Introduce, Evidence and Discussion) writing strategy that has shown promise with students. Team members analyzed student use of the strategy and practiced the strategy from a student’s perspective. Teachers then shared how the strategy could support each content area and any perceived challenges.
- Teacher teams established a baseline of student writing performance using a writing assessment administered in September 2015. Analysis of the baseline data identified six writing “traits” in need of improvement school-wide. Each team then selected 20 target students for inquiry. During each inquiry cycle, teams focus on one trait, implement strategies, and then use formal assessments, rubrics, and exit tickets, to assess student progress. Progress for all six traits is also assessed using a Measures of Student Learning, (MOSL), benchmark. The first MOSL benchmark revealed that target students improved in trait three, use of evidence, which was the focus of cycle one. During the grade 10 meeting, teachers reviewed the “rationale and overview” for grade-wide implementation of the TIED strategy in cycle two to address low performance on the fifth trait, organization and coherence. (b)
- One teacher shared that the use of lesson plan protocols has improved his practice and allows him to open up his lessons for adjustments and improvements. Through the lesson plan protocol, he has learned new ways to differentiate for students using leveled tasks, visuals, and graphic organizers. Another teacher shared that he works closely with colleagues to share common vocabulary and purposefully align the English and social studies curricula to support student learning.

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

### Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use and create assessments and rubrics that are aligned to the schools curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals.

### Impact

Teachers do not yet use assessment data sufficiently to monitor student progress, provide actionable feedback, and adjust curriculum and instruction, across all content areas.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across grades and subjects, teachers and teacher teams create and use common rubrics aligned to the *Spring Board* English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum and the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, to assess student progress in writing. Teachers use these rubrics to assess student progress on the six-schoolwide areas of improvement in writing or “traits”. The six traits include text-dependent questions, argument, and command of evidence, counterclaims, organization and coherence and conventions. Rubrics measure student progress across a six-point scale, which ranges from needs support to mastery, and rubrics are usually accompanied by written feedback from teachers. An argumentative essay rubric includes the following teacher feedback, “After each claim, explain why someone might think his way before citing evidence and presenting analysis.” (a)
- The majority of students interviewed stated that they receive written or verbal feedback on their work all or most of the time. Students clearly articulated their next steps based on teacher feedback and often linked the feedback to one of the six traits. One student stated that her teacher’s feedback on drafts helps her improve her grades. She added that she has learned to explain why someone would make a claim and always follow up with evidence. The clarity of the feedback provided on written assignments provides a clear picture of student progress toward goals in writing, however, the level of detail provided on written assignments is not evident in some of the feedback for math and science. Some of the math and science assessments reviewed included only scores and indications of incorrect responses.
- All teachers began this year with a focus on two priority traits, “developing counter-claim” and “analyzing and use of evidence”. Across content areas, teachers adjusted units and lesson plans to include opportunities for students to practice the use of evidence, making claims, and counter-claims. A science lesson plan requires students to answer the question, “In your opinion, is human experimentation ever truly necessary?”, and to give two reasons that support their answer. For inquiry cycle two, teachers made adjustments to include lessons that focus on organization and coherence and include the use of the TIED strategy. A math lesson plans to use the TIED strategy to support extended responses to math problems. Across grades and content areas, teachers have identified specific writing skills for improvement and tracked student progress toward those skills; however, teachers have yet to track progress of identified targeted skills in other content areas.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

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

### Impact

Purposeful decisions build coherence across curricula and provide access for all learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty have conducted retreats to align curricula to Common Core and content standards. Faculty selected the ELA curriculum, *Spring Board*, at the end of last year to more closely align with Common Core reading and writing standards. The school also uses *EngageNY* for math, and teacher created science and social studies curricula aligned to New York State science standards and the New York City Scope and Sequence for social studies. Teachers have integrated the ELA instructional shifts across content areas with a focus on text-based answers and writing from sources. Unit and lesson plans follow a coherent format and include Common Core Learning Standards, essential questions, learning objectives, skills, and assessments. Lessons and plans clearly articulate what students will learn and be able to do. An April social studies unit states that students will understand and use Socratic Seminar discussion terms and use multiple resources to participate in meaningful discussions sharing their arguments and counterclaims.
- Unit plans include differentiated strategies based on student performance levels, scaffolded assignments, graphic organizers with varying levels of support, visual aids, as well as, vocabulary practice activities to introduce and clarify difficult vocabulary words. A science unit includes vocabulary cards, a food chain video, and photos of ecosystems, in the list of materials to support visual learners. Plans evidence the use of leveled texts to support literature circles, and texts and prompts translated into Spanish for English Language Learners (ELLs). Lesson plans collected include translated prompts, identified texts, and lists of students assigned to literature groups based on ability, language, and student choice. A social studies lesson plan includes historical documents in English and Spanish and a list of key vocabulary and terms in Spanish. A science lesson plan states that all assessments and longer texts are translated and/or chunked to support comprehension for ELLs and students with disabilities.
- Lesson plans reviewed include thoughtful grouping and seating plans to support ELL's and students with disabilities. Across classrooms, teachers' planning includes the pairing of bilingual students with ELLs to support translation and comprehension. An English lesson assigns students to groups based on their readiness levels and learning styles and states "Students are grouped in this way to allow them to engage with and learn from each other. Roles are differentiated so there are appropriate levels of rigor for all." This lesson also includes models for targeted groups of students to support them in creating their own graphic organizer. A science lesson includes one or two higher performing bilingual students in each small group to support their peers. (b)

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices, student work products, and discussions, are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best.

### Impact

Alignment to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and instructional shifts result in high levels of student thinking and participation.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leadership articulated that students learn best when they are engaged in discussion with one another, involved in writing as a way of processing learning, using academic vocabulary, and given allotted time for reading. Across classrooms visited, students were engaged in discussion with their peers, had opportunities to express their thinking in writing, and engaged with learning materials at high levels. In a math classroom, the teacher asked students to explain question prompts and answers to their classmates. Students responded freely with one another and reached out to each other when they were unable to respond. When a student had difficulty explaining why an angle measured 40 degrees, a classmate responded, “If you need help I got you” and explained that the corresponding angle was 140 degrees and together they would equal 180 degrees. This lesson closed with an opportunity for all students to respond in writing and explain their thinking.
- Across classrooms, student discussions and written work reflects high levels of thinking and students are asked to develop evidence-based claims and present counterclaims. In a social studies classroom students analyzed case studies to develop an argument that answers the question “Is the American Dream attainable?” Students completed graphic organizers and selected quotes, statistics, and facts, to support their claims. In an ELA classroom, students worked in pairs to create an argument regarding the external factors that led to the downfall of Pecola in *The Bluest Eye*. Students developed claims and supported them with cite-based evidence and then switched papers to provide a counter-claim for their partner. Students used their partner’s statements to strengthen their claims and found evidence to dispute the counter-claim presented.
- Across classrooms visited, participation levels were high and students demonstrated their thinking through discussions and writing. In a math classroom, the teacher monitored student participation levels on the SMARTboard during group work. Student groups could gauge their performance by looking up at the board where the teacher noted groups’ use of calculators, graph analysis, recognizing patterns, writing, engagement in conversation and translation. In this classroom, math materials were translated into Spanish and ELL students engaged in discussions and wrote their responses in English and Spanish. In a social studies classroom, all students engaged in rich discussions on the impact economics and self-image plays on social mobility and shared their opinions. One student stated, “I disagree with the statement that people in poverty should always put their pride aside. This should never happen; she should just make better decisions with her money.”

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and staff consistently communicate with families and offer ongoing support. Teacher teams and staff create a culture for learning that communicates high expectations for all students.

### Impact

Feedback and guidance helps families understand their children’s progress and prepare students for the next level of learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders, staff, and families, consistently communicate via monthly Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, School Leadership Team meetings, parent workshops, emails, letters, and text messages. Parents receive academic progress reports between marking periods and parents shared that communication is seamless. Parent members of the SLT conduct two classroom walkthroughs each year. Parents share walkthrough feedback with school administration, teachers, and staff. One parent stated that school staff always answer her questions and listen to parents’ opinions. Staff conducts workshops for parents that address academic topics including the instructional shifts, grade level expectations, and targeted college readiness workshops for parents of juniors, seniors, English as a New Language (ENL) students and students with disabilities.
- Parents shared that school staff have high expectations for students and are willing to do more to support their children. One parent noted that the school provides translation so she always knows what is going on. Parents of senior students shared that they received support in completing the college application process and staff helped them to understand and complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Another parent noted that even the coach pushes her child to be more focused on her grades and helped her with her college application.
- The advisory curriculum for grades 9 to 12 includes college and career readiness lessons. Each grade has targeted lessons that incorporate grade specific concerns and shares expectations for all students to attend college and plan for a career. Ninth grade advisory focuses on the transition from middle to high school and students participate in an overnight trip to get to know their new classmates. Grade 10 participates in college trips to introduce and share the college experience. Grades 11 and 12 advisory prepares students for life after high school including the college application process, model interviews, and resume writing. A college research paper prompt asks students to select one college of interest and research it in depth. In the research paper, students explain why the selected college would or would not be an appropriate choice. Essays discuss the academic programs, location, size, cost, and possible financial assistance that can be receive.
- Students shared that the school attempts to prepare them for the college experience by focusing on writing, teaching advanced placement classes, and teaching the Socratic Seminar techniques. High performing students volunteer to be youth leaders and support peers by providing tutoring and help with college applications. School leaders and staff monitor students passing rates and performance data to identify students who are “off track” to graduate in four years and provide extra support to get and keep them “on track”. Ninety four percent of students who enter at Level 2 in grade 9 graduate in four years.