



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

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2014-2015**

**John Bowne High School**

**25Q425**

**63-25 Main Street  
Queens  
NY 11367**

**Principal: Howard Kwait**

**Date of review: April 20, 2015**

**Lead Reviewer: Jorge A. Estrella**

## The School Context

John Bowne High School is a High School with 3565 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 18% Black, 46% Hispanic, 5% White, Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander 1%, American Indian or Alaskan native 1% and 29% Asian students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 12.5% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 83.0%.

## 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 Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	<b>Focus</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>Additional Findings</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
---------------------------	------------------------------	----------------	-----------------------

### Findings

School leaders consistently emphasize a culture of learning that communicates high expectations to all constituents and provide support to meet those expectations.

### Impact

High expectations result in a culture of mutual accountability, collaboration, and buy-in on the part of teachers, leaders, and families, thus creating an atmosphere conducive to the developmental needs of all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal's Instructional Expectations Memorandum communicates to all staff instructional requirements, foci, and expectations. Observation reports address teachers' ability to honor and implement school-wide instructional expectations distributed in the Opening Day Packet on September 2, 2014 as well as throughout the year. Concerns and foci are reinforced at monthly department and faculty meetings. The memorandum is detailed and explicit about instructional expectations and accountability for all stakeholders. During the meeting with teachers, they revealed that the document provided guidance and transparency of what is expected to be done as individuals and as a team.
- Teachers push students to revise all incorrect answers on midterm examinations and mock state exam assessments so that they may understand how and why the correct answer was identified. In addition, the school requires an annual performance based writing assessment requiring each grade level to embark upon a college-level research paper using Modern Language Association format used in colleges across the United States.
- The school hosts a career day highlighting careers, trades and occupations in the state-certified Agriculture program. Students learn about the types of colleges, careers and potential future potential appointment trajectory. The school also leads multiple college trips to Yale, Harvard, Cornell, New York University, and Teachers College.
- In order to ensure college and career readiness, the school offers a nationally recognized agriculture program offering majors in the plant and animal sciences, science research, College Now, Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps, and the Academy for Creative Artists. In addition, students have the opportunity of taking one of the 14 advanced placement classes offered totaling 32 sections of advanced placement classes. The number of students who have received a 3 or higher has increased by 11% since 2010. Also, the school offers courses in Chinese, French, Italian, Latin, and Spanish.
- Content area teachers of English language learners (ELLs) receive professional development including best strategies for modeling and scaffolding academic language for ELLs. These sessions include presentations by teachers who have demonstrated best practices pertaining to the instruction of ELLs across content areas including explicit vocabulary instruction and activities that require higher-order thinking skills. Also the principal ensures that special education teachers have common planning sessions to strategically refine curriculum to meet the needs of students with disabilities. As a result, the school is meeting target in closing the achievement gap as reported in the 2013-2014 School Quality Guide.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

Across most classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best that includes instructional strategies providing multiple entry points into the curricula. However, these practices are not yet fully and strategically integrated across the vast majority of classrooms.

### Impact

In most classrooms, most students are motivated and actively engaged in classroom activities and discussions resulting in producing meaningful work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal reported that every teacher has a self-selected SMART goal for the school year that was developed through a self-assessment of one's practice as viewed through the lens of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. This goal focuses on the self-identified area in need of improvement. The progress toward the achievement of this goal is discussed at pre and post-observation conferences and referenced in written observation reports. In addition, the principal's Instructional Expectations Memorandum communicates to all staff instructional requirements, foci, and expectations.
- Most classrooms observed provided opportunities for students to engage in discussions with peers and explain their thinking with either a small group or the whole class. For example, an English class had students working in groups of five, discussing the poem "America". The group was purposely set to allow students to support each other based on their strengths and language needs. One of the students was facilitating the conversation by using the close reading annotation strategy. However, this practice is yet to be implemented across all classrooms and subjects.
- Across classrooms, teachers implement lessons that provide opportunities for hands-on learning, and that expect students to explain their mathematical reasoning. For example, in a geometry lesson students were exploring the locus of two parallel lines. The teacher demonstrated graphics using the SMARTboard. Students were working with peers to solve locus problems. Furthermore, the teacher provided language support for English language learners, by translating into Spanish while building their English language acquisition.
- In classroom visited, students participated in class discussions by responding to guiding questions. In an US history class, the teacher asked, "Why did the United States enter WWII? Why did Japan attack the United States? How did the attack on Pearl Harbor challenge the American ideology of neutrality?" In an English language arts (ELA) class, the teacher asked, "How does this statement comment on the nature of war? Do you agree or disagree with the argument presented?" In both classes, students worked in small groups engaged in rich conversations and creating their own questions and arguments. However, in some classes, questions posed by teachers were almost exclusively fact-recall, and/or low order. In few classrooms students did not have consistent opportunities to engage in conversations and in most classes students did not ask questions to teachers.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

### Findings

Curricula and academic tasks are aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards and consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills. Curricula are planned and consistently refined using student work and data.

### Impact

As a result, all students across grades and subjects are engaged in rigorous curricula and tasks that promote college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal revealed that English teachers met in teams throughout the year in order to create and modify curriculum maps aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and to ensure that all texts reflect the titles and complexity of the Common Core recommended text list by grade level. All curricula were designed to ensure both vertical and horizontal progression, an explicit alignment with the Common Core and an interdisciplinary awareness of major contents and concepts explored in social studies.
- Teacher teams review data and discuss curricular adaptations at least twice per week. For example, teacher teams reviewed state English exam item analyses data and determined that struggling ELLs and students with disabilities were having difficulty with use of textual evidence and claim and counterclaim. The team then changed the order in the pacing calendar and designed additional lessons to better support students in responding to counterclaims. As a result, preliminary MoSL data reveal 15% increase in student use of textual evidence and a 25% rise in students refuting counterclaims.
- The English as a second language team have modified the annual research paper for ELLs to include adapted passages, increased visual representations and personalized questions to aid student comprehension and scaffold instruction. This team met with all 206 teachers to provide dedicated professional learning and curricular adaptation support to ensure appropriate scaffolds and supports for ELLs were embedded in curricula.
- In an effort to improve ELL scores on the state Earth science examination, the school created a bilingual earth science class co-taught by an Earth Science teacher and an ESL teacher. January data show an increase of 14% passing with a level 3 or 4 on the Living Environment Regents exam January 2015.
- Most of the Integrated Co-Teaching teacher pairs have been programmed with a common planning period to allow for the development and refinement of academic tasks that provide all students with multiple entry points into a lesson and equal access to the Common Core.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

### **Findings**

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school's curricula. Classroom teacher assessment practices reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment. However, the levels of actionable feedback to students varied across some classrooms.

### **Impact**

As a result of inconsistent assessment practices, some students are not aware of their next learning steps.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The principal reported that item analyses on Regents exams are conducted to identify the areas of both student strength and weakness. This data drives curricular modifications and informs instructional modification so that student learning is maximized. For example, data analysis of the June 2014 Earth Science Regents showed that students had difficulty drawing isoclinal on a map. As a result, an additional day of instruction on the topic was included into the 2014-15 pacing calendar. Furthermore, students are given an item analysis of their Math Regents exams so that they can self-identify and understand their strengths and challenges and work on their own areas of difficulty.
- During the meeting with teachers, they reported that uniform cycle assessments are given. The results of these assessments are compiled and analyzed by teachers and also in teams. Teachers determine what skills and standards students did and did not master and make curricular adjustments and teaching strategies to permit for the re-teaching of identified topics.
- The feedback to students varied within class work folders from rubrics that were circled or checked providing feedback to student, to rubrics that provided more meaningful feedback that included a next step for students. For example, "Next step: Please focus your explanations. Be direct about how your examples prove the controlling idea." or "Next time focus on character. Try to bring in more academic vocabulary to your analysis of the protagonist and antagonist." In other instances, the feedback was a grade number, "Excellent" or "Great Job." As a result, the inconsistency in offering actionable feedback prevents some students from being aware of their next steps to produce high quality work.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
---------------------------	---	----------------	-----------------------

### Findings

Teacher teams systematically analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused. Distributed leadership structures are embedded so that teachers have leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions.

### Impact

Structured professional collaborations have typically resulted in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students, and teachers play a key role in improving student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet twice per week to modify and adapt curriculum including the addition of classroom strategies such as close reading/annotation of text materials. For example, English teacher teams examine student writing to identify common student deficiencies as well as to perform item analyses of common assessments to identify students' areas of strengths and weaknesses. Teachers use data from common assessments to inform and develop action plans to make the necessary instructional adjustments to improve students' learning. Furthermore, school leaders meet with teacher teams at least once per week to discuss curricular adaptations, student data and teacher team needs.
- The principal reported that highly effective teachers open their classrooms to teachers for intervisitations. During this time they serve as leaders by modeling effective pedagogical practices such as the Socratic seminar, the use of the jigsaw, the gallery walk, the four corner debate, and other engagement, questioning, and effective discussion techniques. During the meeting with teachers, they shared that this practice has been instrumental to improve their pedagogical growth and support students' outcomes.
- The principal and the literacy coach collaborate and lead professional talks on the text "Falling in Love with Close Reading" and provide ongoing professional learning throughout the year. Teachers shared that they use this book to guide their practice. For example, in math, students use the close reading approach to circle the words connected to their math problems, to determine what the question is asking, to extract data to represent in a graph.
- Distributed leadership structures are embedded in the school to promote teachers participation in key decision-making concerning school activities. For example, one Earth science teacher suggested to the administration to deepen the use of native language supports, scaffolds and vocabulary strategies to support students in content and language acquisition needs. As result, one section of bilingual Spanish Earth Science is taught by 2 teachers: one a licensed Earth Science teacher with fluency in Spanish, the other a licensed ESL teacher. The outcomes of this initiative are yielding a 25 point passing percentage increase per cycle. Another example, is the implementation of the Literacy Fridays in physical education, this program is coordinating by physical education teachers where they refine and align their curricula to provide students with additional support in academic vocabulary in the sciences. Students close read, annotate the text and respond to text dependent questions. As a result, there is an increase of 13% of students passing the Living Environment Regents with scores above 75% comparing January 2014 to January 2015. In addition, there was a 7.5% increase in credit accumulation when comparing with 2014.