

BARD HIGH SCHOOL EARLY COLLEGE

ENGAGING STUDENTS IN THE LIBERAL ARTS

BHSEC BEST PRACTICES: Faculty Hiring and Support

About Bard High School Early Colleges

Premised on the belief that many adolescents are ready and eager for greater challenge, Bard High School Early College (BHSEC) seeks to provide bright, highly motivated, and diverse high school students with an intellectually engaging four-year academic program that includes the completion of a two-year Associate in Arts degree. Students graduate prepared to take upper level college courses, earn a baccalaureate degree, launch successful careers, and contribute to society. The first BHSEC (BHSEC Manhattan) opened in 2001 as a partnership between Bard College and the New York City Department of Education, a second BHSEC Queens in 2008, a third, BHSEC Newark in partnership with Newark Public Schools in 2011, and most recently, BHSEC Cleveland, in August 2014 in partnership with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

BHSEC immerses students in the traditions and practices associated with a liberal arts college education. Students take high school courses for two years and then engage in a full college-level course of studies in the eleventh and twelfth grade, graduating high school with an Associate in Arts degree from Bard College. With a faculty of highly qualified scholars and artists that teach both high school and college courses, BHSEC aspires to impart higher-level thinking skills through analytic writing, focused discussion, and in-depth inquiry.

After four years at BHSEC, the majority (90%) of students graduate with a Bard College Associate in Arts degree in the liberal arts and sciences and 60 transferable college credits. Historically, 98–100% of BHSEC Manhattan and Queens students receive a New York State Regents high school diploma. (BHSEC Newark and BHSEC Cleveland are still too new to have this historic data regarding either high school or college graduation rates for the full four-year program.) More than 97% of BHSEC students continue their studies at a four-year college and most complete their BA/BS degrees.

To help others understand the design underlying the success of the Bard High School Early College model and its students, the *National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching* (NCREST) at Teachers College, Columbia University, undertook a study of BHSEC's key practices. This series of seven reports provides insights into how key practices are implemented at BHSEC and how they could be replicated by other institutions and organizations.

The fifth practice to be examined is BHSEC's faculty hiring and support services. For this study, researchers conducted a series of interviews with faculty and administrators. We also analyzed key documents and reviewed relevant research literature. A detailed examination of the faculty hiring and support process follows.

Introduction

The hiring and subsequent support of instructional staff are critical to a school's success because faculty are the most important determinant of student learning and achievement. Studies have found that teachers account for approximately 40% of the variance in student achievement in K-12 education (Jepsen 2005; Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain, 2005). At the postsecondary level, faculty members play the single most important role in student achievement (Umbach and Wawrzynski, 2005).

Because BHSEC students are expected to both earn a high school diploma and complete an Associate degree within the four years, hiring excellent and passionate educators to help students meet this high bar is essential. BHSEC faculty must be skilled in supporting the intellectual growth of high school students and must be able to teach with the rigor and autonomy required within college degree programs. A nuanced hiring process is especially important to find strong candidates who will be committed to supporting students who struggle with the rigorous academic program.

The supportive teachers and administration are what makes BHSEC successful. Without the support from all the [teachers and staff], the students like me would not have come [as] far as we did.

Class of 2013 Graduate

About Faculty Hiring and Support

Literature on effective teachers emphasizes the importance of three attributes: content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and an empathic personality. Teachers with extensive depth and breadth of content knowledge in their discipline can foster student motivation and achievement (Siegle, Rubenstein and Mitchell, 2014). In addition, teachers must deeply understand their content from a pedagogical perspective to increase the likelihood that students will learn effectively (Segall, 2004). Teachers' ability to respond to and redirect discipline-specific questions, create curricular materials, and define clear objectives positively impact student achievement (Tamir, 1988).

Moreover, students report higher levels of engagement and learning when faculty members use active learning techniques, emphasize higher order thinking, and challenge students academically (Umbach and Wawrzynski, 2005; Frome, Lasater, and Cooney, 2005). All BHSEC faculty are trained in techniques developed by Bard's Institute for Writing and Thinking (see report #2 in this series) meant to foster active engagement in the classroom and higher level thinking. In addition, when teachers empathize with and understand the issues faced by young people, they can build strong and motivating relationships with students and reduce conflict (Jennings and Greenberg 2008).

Schools can attract and keep the most effective teachers when the hiring process is decentralized and when they can interview and select their own faculty rather than simply accepting those assigned by a district or state level authority (Rutledge, Harris, Thompson and Ingle, 2014). Alternative certification programs can also aid in the recruitment and retention of educators by eliminating bureaucratic obstacles to entering the teaching profession for those with the desire and capacity to teach (Hirsch, 2001). Both of these approaches are utilized in BHSEC schools, discussed in detail below.

BHSEC is also concerned with retaining good teachers. Nationally, 40 to 50 percent of teachers leave the profession within their first five years in the classroom (Ingersoll, 2003). Teacher mentoring can reduce the early attrition of beginning teachers (Odell and Ferraro, 1992). Teachers also remain engaged when there is a culture of collaboration and shared sense of responsibility in a school setting (Gallagher, 2012). What is more, secondary schools that give teachers autonomy over curriculum and instruction have an increased chance of teacher satisfaction (Moore, 2012). Finally, teachers perform better when there is consistent, collaborative, and relevant professional development (Darling Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995).

BHSEC recruits and supports excellent educators in ways that are aligned with practices promoted in educational research. This paper will explain BHSEC's approach to hiring and supporting faculty and will conclude with thoughts on how to replicate these practices.

Faculty Qualification and Traits

To be eligible for employment at BHSEC, potential faculty must have established a deep understanding of their disciplines and be active contributors to the advancement of their fields of study. Because all full-time BHSEC faculty members are expected to teach at both the high school and college levels, candidates for faculty positions should hold a doctoral or terminal degree in the area in which they apply to teach. Educators who are doctoral candidates but who have not yet completed their degree are also encouraged to apply, with the understanding that they will complete their doctorate during their first years on the faculty. Currently, 70% of BHSEC faculty hold PhDs or MFAs in their discipline.

BHSEC's learning environment is unique because of its small class sizes and teachers who are actually invested and interested in the subjects they teach, which allows BHSEC's students to be more engaged in the work.

Class of 2013 Graduate

Faculty need to fill multiple roles at BHSEC, teaching discipline-specific classes in the college program as well as high school classes in their field. A premium is placed on scholars who can teach their discipline as well as *Seminar*, BHSEC's foundational and interdisciplinary Great Books course taken by all students during Years 1 and 2 of their college curriculum (11th and 12th grade). (See the first paper in this Portfolio series).

While they may be content experts, the majority of candidates for BHSEC faculty positions have not taken education school classes in pedagogy: applicants with a doctoral degree are not usually trained to teach high-school aged students and few have taught at the high school level. However, BHSEC believes that these skills can be developed over time with support from school leaders, whereas strong content knowledge and expertise is necessary to teach BHSEC's college classes and to adequately prepare 9th and 10th graders for college courses in a particular discipline.

At the same time, because the schools operate as public high schools as well as colleges, and receive public funding as high schools, all faculty must meet state certification requirements to teach high school courses. All candidates must enroll in the certification process required by the state in which the BHSEC is located as soon as they are hired. Because the BHSEC teachers possess advanced degrees in their fields of study, they are typically able to take advantage of local or state alternative licensing rules that allow them to begin work with only a temporary license. It is then required that they receive their certification in one to three years.

At the Manhattan and Queens BHSECs, the school leaders teach pedagogy classes for new faculty through Bard's Master of Arts in Teaching program that can be used to fulfill NYS state licensing requirements. At BHSEC schools in other jurisdictions, new faculty must take locally required classes to meet state certification requirements. In those classes, new faculty learn helpful classroom and pedagogical techniques as well as fulfill requirements for mandatory state licensing required of all public K-12 teachers. Adjuncts hired to teach specific college elective courses are the exception to certification rules.

BHSEC also makes a conscious effort to maintain a demographically diverse faculty so that students have a range of role models.

Hiring Process

Advertisement and Recruitment

When a faculty position is open, administrators work with the appropriate department at the school level to decide what areas of expertise they want to prioritize and to draft a job posting accordingly. BHSEC recruits candidates nationally using ads posted in professional journals (e.g., Chronicle of Higher Education, Higher Ed Jobs, Modern Languages Association, H-net for humanities, American Chemical Society, Association for Women in Mathematics, Latinos In Higher Education, Journal of Blacks in Higher Education), online career sites, job fairs, and via postings on the Bard College and the BHSEC web sites. BHSEC schools are also required to post job listings on their partnering public education department employment sites. Faculty members note that word-of-mouth and personal referrals greatly help in recruiting candidates. Faculty may be hired as employees of either the school districts or of Bard College, depending on the source of funding for each position.

In addition to a CV, candidates are required to submit a statement of teaching philosophy and letter of interest; In some cases, they are also asked to provide sample course materials or syllabi of courses taught. In general, BHSEC faculty searches look much more like college faculty searches than those conducted when hiring high school teachers.

Selection Process

Administrators and departmental faculty typically form a hiring committee that reviews applications for each search. They consider a candidate's field of expertise to ensure that candidates complement those already in the department and in order to maintain academic diversity within the departments.

The faculty hiring committee or school administrators (depending on the size of the school and the department) choose the final candidates and initiate initial phone interviews. During these preliminary interviews, members of the hiring committee are especially concerned with understanding the candidates' ability to work with young adults, their interest in the BHSEC culture with its emphasis on writing and thinking, their classroom teaching and management style, and their academic interests. Questions faculty recall being asked during these phone interviews include:

- *If you could teach any class what would it be?*
- *Give us an anecdote that has informed your teaching.*
- *How would you tailor your instruction to teach [complex] material at a high school level?*

The top candidates are then invited for a full day, in-person interview during which they teach a "sample class" and meet with faculty and administrators. The day-long interview process allows BHSEC faculty to become acquainted with candidates and to judge whether they will be a good fit at the school.

We try to get a sense of what people are like because in a university setting you can isolate yourself if you don't get along with your colleagues. But here, we are in very close contact. We have to have a collaborative and collegial environment.

BHSEC Queens Faculty

School leaders and faculty find that observing candidates while they teach a sample class provides essential insights into their ability to work with youth. Further, the experience of teaching sample classes helps candidates better understand BHSEC's students and instructional priorities. According to the school leaders, an instructor in a good sample class is interactive and engages students, in addition to demonstrating excellent content knowledge. The hiring committee also pays attention to how the candidate responds to student questions and feedback. A principal shared an example of an effective sample class in which a science candidate presented her research on tortoises.

First [the candidate] gave a lecture. She had packets on tortoise growth over time. Students did measurements. Students entered data. Then they produced a graph with all of their info [and] interpreted the graphs.

BHSEC Manhattan Principal

This was viewed as a strong class because the candidate was teaching conceptually and not overly concerned with facts and memorization. Candidates are expected to be open to questions and comments from their peers and from students.

Many people say they're open to questions from students but don't really attend to them and respond.

BHSEC Queens Principal

BHSEC Faculty Commitments

The BHSEC faculty workload generally includes teaching four courses, holding office hours, and providing academic support or advising. Science faculty, whose courses generally include a two or three hour laboratory component, teach three courses each semester. All faculty hold specific office hours each week and some faculty offer special group tutoring sessions.

BHSEC faculty design their own courses as is typical of college faculty, creating syllabi that are both relevant and rigorous. Faculty strive to make their content interesting so that it captures their young students' attention. One faculty member noted that, for students to be engaged they "have to believe in you and see value in what you're doing." In addition, BHSEC faculty need to be flexible and innovative in their classroom management style. They must respect students as intelligent young adults and avoid rigid or dogmatic styles of instruction or classroom management. One faculty member encourages students to challenge any rule he makes; when students do so, he is committed to either explain the rule or eliminate it.

There was one class in which [BHSEC faculty] spoke to us so openly as equals and as college students that I felt so honored to be there and be a part of Bard.

Class of 2013 Graduate

At BHSEC, it is expected that faculty will welcome debate and provide extensive opportunities for discussion. Based on Bard's *Institute for Writing and Thinking* approach to instruction, faculty teach in a way that encourages students to think and write critically so that they continuously develop these skills. Faculty are expected to embrace a student-centered philosophy of teaching that encourages students to take responsibility for learning and create their own meaning, rather than viewing themselves as the experts with students as passive recipients.

Most faculty also run an advisory session for a group of students on a daily or weekly basis, depending on the school. An additional expectation requiring considerable time from faculty is drafting narrative quarterly reports for each student that discuss student growth and what the student must do to achieve success in each class. In addition, faculty are expected to serve on school committees and to serve as advisors for student clubs and extracurricular activities.

Committee types and structures vary among the BHSEC schools, but generally include those typically found on college campuses, such as the Committee On Academic Programming (COAP), Accreditation, Admissions, Professional Development, and Academic Integrity. BHSEC Newark and BHSEC Cleveland do not have formal committees yet because they are smaller and relatively new. However, BHSEC Manhattan and Queens both have a system in which committees are assigned weights depending on how much time a committee member will need to devote to it. Faculty who join less demanding committees may participate on several, while others may only join one committee that requires more time. According to faculty members interviewed, the most time-consuming committee duties include reading admissions essays, reading college applications and essays, and planning assessment and academic goals for the school.

On occasion, new faculty may be given a lighter load. They may be exempt from service requirements in their first year, or assigned several sections of one course to reduce the amount of preparation needed.

Professional Development

Since dynamic, thoughtful instruction and support of students are the two top priorities for BHSEC, frequent professional development opportunities are provided to faculty. One of the most important professional development opportunities is a series of sessions offered to new faculty that allow them to earn their teaching certification. Participating faculty move through the certification process as a cohort, meeting once a week for four semesters. The class assignments consist primarily of group projects and observations of classes taught by senior faculty, and the program culminates with an independent research project related to their teaching.

In addition, good instruction is informed to a high degree by the practices taught in Bard College's Institute for Writing and Thinking (IWT). On occasion, new faculty also train with the faculty at Simon's Rock, a residential school that formed the basis of the BHSEC model, before the school year begins. These annual training provide a core professional development opportunity each year for new faculty. One history faculty member was hired without a full understanding of the BHSEC culture and key practices. After her first *Writing and Thinking Workshop*, she noted that she became a "writing and thinking zealot" investing considerable time into making sure that her syllabus was well aligned with the model.

Writing and thinking is a fantastic tool for helping students get their ideas out in an unrefined way without judgment; [it] helps students unlock their intellectual potential.

BHSEC Newark Faculty.

Faculty are encouraged to attend IWT workshops held at Bard College throughout the year on specific topics or books, including the week-long workshops held each summer that teach the use of IWT techniques, including Writing to Learn, to address specific issues or disciplines. In addition, IWT Associates may be asked to work with specific BHSEC departments around building more Writing and Thinking and Writing to Learn techniques into everyday classroom use throughout the year.

The annual faculty orientation provides another professional development opportunity. Faculty and administrators meet to discuss plans for the upcoming school year. As well, this orientation is a chance for faculty to learn about new rules or policies surrounding attendance, grading, textbooks and other topics. Advisory leaders for each grade meet to decide how advisories should be structured and what material they should cover. These training days often culminate with a social event, a good chance to build community among faculty and administrators.

Newark Public Schools and the New York City Department of Education mandate several professional development (PD) days throughout the year. These days are devoted to departmental planning, curriculum development, assessment types and timelines, changes in district policy, topics raised by the faculty, or other issues related to improving faculty practices. Some of the schools have Professional Development committees that recommend and plan for special speakers or programs for PD days or other designated times for professional development.

Important to the BHSECs' identity as branch campuses of Bard College and Bard College at Simon's Rock, occasional professional development sessions are held specifically for Seminar faculty across all of the campuses, or mathematics faculty across campuses. While difficult to organize, these inter-campus exchanges have been fruitful and much appreciated by participants from all schools. One of the key goals of a recently completed inter-campus Strategic Plan is to make more such opportunities more available.

Faculty Supports

In interviews, faculty said that they felt well supported by their leaders and peers. Faculty supports are provided as needed, but new faculty often receive formal assistance in the form of weekly meetings and mentoring from senior faculty or administration. New faculty are paired with a mentor as a part of their teaching certification process. They may also build relationships within their peer cohort as they go through the certification process together. Greene et al (2008) observe that new faculty benefit greatly from supportive colleagues, mentorship, and peer observation.

BHSEC faculty also participate in a faculty exchange program, during which the BHSEC faculty member teaches at the Bard College campus in Annandale, NY or at Simon's Rock in Great Barrington, and Bard College provides a faculty member to teach in place of the exchange participant. These semester-long or year long exchanges give BHSEC faculty members the opportunity to teach in a residential college setting with a reduced course load, allowing them to teach, learn, and focus on their research. The BHSECs are working with Bard College and its overseas programs to broaden possibilities for further such exchanges.

Faculty supports and privileges may be limited by district and union requirements regarding faculty schedules and building hours. These requirements sometimes cap the hours teachers are allowed to be in the school building or require teachers to be in the building even on days when they may not have a class. In a focus group discussion about working at home, one person noted that college faculty typically "have to work at home to do a good job. There should be flexibility in an early college model." She noted that with more flexibility, both faculty and students would gain by being able to schedule classes and activities at mutually convenient times rather than within the hours mandated.

Support for Faculty Research and Practice

BHSEC faculty are encouraged to remain active in their disciplines by publishing original research. However, faculty must balance their research interests with the more immediate tasks of preparing lessons and curriculum, developing thoughtful student assessments, providing out-of-class supports to students, and satisfying service requirements to the school. Several of the faculty members interviewed noted the challenge of working on their own research or writing after a full day of teaching.

Faculty are encouraged to share their research with each other and with their students. Those interviewed spoke very highly of the research-related support that faculty provide to each other. They report that their colleagues are interested in each other's work and provide helpful feedback to one another. At BHSEC Newark, there is a regular meeting where all faculty convene to discuss their research; at BHSEC Manhattan and BHSEC Queens, faculty occasionally present their work to their colleagues and students in more formal sessions during or after school.

I am a better teacher when I am writing and thinking well with my own research.

BHSEC Queens Faculty

Each BHSEC school, with the support of Bard College, makes funds available for faculty to attend professional conferences and pursue their own research. Both Newark Public Schools and the New York City Department of Education make funds available for professional development opportunities as well. Some faculty receive external funding to attend conferences or to undertake research, such as Fulbright Fellowships. One faculty member

described an opportunity to present at a conference in Burma about how to use writing and thinking methods as a form of assessment. He was able to take some time away from teaching to reflect on his practice with other educators, and he brought new knowledge and excitement back to his school.

Examples of faculty research interests and accomplishments

Name	Role	Area of Interest	Accomplishments
Ian Bickford	English Faculty, Seminar	Modern transatlantic literature, 19th-century American literature and film studies, and Milton	Publications include “A High Shelf: Milton and Seventh-day Adventism” in <i>Milton Studies</i> (2010) and “‘Dead Might Not Be Dead’: Milton in the Americas and Jamaica Kincaid’s <i>Flat World</i> ” in <i>Modern Philology</i> (forthcoming)
Matthew Carlberg	Mathematics and Computer Science Faculty	3D modeling of indoor and outdoor environments using camera and laser data	Co-inventor on a pending patent for asynchronous digital circuits, including arbitration and routing primitives.
Denice Gamper	Science Faculty	Medicinal chemistry and neurobiology	Awarded research fellowship for high school science teachers in neurobiology, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University
Steven Mazie	Social Studies Faculty, Seminar	Political science, political theory, and public law	Blogger for the NY Time’s Big Think Praxis column and U.S. Supreme Court correspondent for <i>The Economist</i> . Mazie’s recent publications include “Up from Colorblindness: Equality, Race and the Lessons of <i>Ricci v. DeStefano</i> ” (2011), “Rawls on Wall Street” at the <i>New York Times</i> (2011), “Equality, Race and Gifted Education: An Egalitarian Critique of Admission to New York City’s Specialized High Schools” (2009) and <i>Israel’s Higher Law: Religion and Liberal Democracy in the Jewish State</i> (Rowman & Littlefield/Lexington Books, 2006).
Carla Stephens	History Faculty	African history, US diplomatic history, and world history (black Atlantic/Indian ocean)	Working on a book proposal based on her dissertation, “The People Mobilized: The Mozambican Liberation Movement and American Activism (1960-1976).

Collaboration and Community

The BHSEC schools work hard to create opportunities for substantial inter- and intra-departmental collaboration around instruction. Faculty are encouraged to observe classes that are identified by students as outstanding to see what other instructors are doing well and to learn. Faculty regularly meet to discuss ways to incorporate observed good practices into their own teaching.

Faculty collaborate within their departments to develop the course of studies and classes that will be offered over the four year period, to grade exams, discuss choices for textbooks, and to create assessments. Collaboration is especially notable in the creation of the yearly Writing and Thinking workshops as well as themes for Seminar. Across departments and grade levels, faculty meet to discuss issues students face and how to best support them. Faculty also collaborate across departments around particular curricular themes. One BHSEC Newark faculty noted that “if students are learning about the Roaring 20s in History, English teachers may assign Great Gatsby at the same time.”

Faculty Evaluation

BHSEC faculty are held to high standards, and there is a formal evaluation process in which both tenured and non-tenured faculty participate, based on local district requirements. All BHSEC faculty hired by the NYC Department of Education or Newark Public Schools are subject to the district’s teacher evaluation system. For consistency and fairness, BHSEC schools use a similar review process for faculty who are Bard College employees. In Newark, faculty must create an Individual Professional Development document explaining their goals for the upcoming year and then meet with administrators to discuss their progress in the middle and at the end of the school year.

Faculty are observed by school administrators four to six times per school year and receive feedback. In addition, as is the practice at all Bard College undergraduate programs, students write anonymous evaluations of courses at the end of the school year. Faculty report that this feedback is of value in improving their practice. One BHSEC Newark professor noted that, “Evaluations are very important under these circumstances. We are very smart people but most of us have not worked with this population. So getting feedback and refinement is a good thing.” In addition, some faculty report that they compare current grades and indications of students’ levels of engagement with those of past semesters in order to make improvements.

Replication

Replicating BHSEC’s model for faculty hiring and support may be enabled by several factors. According to BHSEC leadership, hiring of highly prepared and qualified faculty is facilitated by the abundance of recent PhD graduates on the job market. Tenure-track university faculty positions are in short supply for new PhDs, and many of these graduates are interested in teaching in a school such as BHSEC, where disciplinary excellence is highly valued.

School leaders also note that because the BHSECs offer students the opportunity to graduate with a degree from Bard College, BHSEC must be able to employ faculty who can teach at the college level. Memoranda of Understanding established with each district gives the schools the freedom to hire outside traditional district hiring requirements, specifically to hire faculty with the credentials needed for college teaching but who are not yet certified to teach high school.

To replicate the model, schools should be able to offer an alternate route to state certification that allows new faculty to begin teaching without full state education certification.

BHSEC's professional development model is highly replicable, especially through the use of workshops and resources available at Bard College's Institute for Writing and Thinking. Those wanting more information can contact: The Institute for Writing & Thinking, www.bard.edu/iwt/.

The BHSEC folio series is a publication of BHSEC, in collaboration with the National Center for Restructuring of Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST), a research center at Teachers College, Columbia University. The series includes information on seven exemplary practices associated with the three BHSEC schools. Each publication in the series is based on qualitative research conducted by NCREST.

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