

BARD HIGH SCHOOL EARLY COLLEGE
SUPPORTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
BHSEC BEST PRACTICES: Student Supports

About Bard High School Early College

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 students with an intellectually engaging four-year academic program that includes a two-year college liberal arts degree. Students graduate prepared to take upper level college courses, earn a baccalaureate degree, develop successful careers, and contribute to society. First developed in 2001 as a partnership between Bard College and the New York City Department of Education, three BHSEC schools currently operate: BHSEC Manhattan, BHSEC Queens (2008) and most recently, BHSEC Newark (2011), developed by Bard College and the Newark Public Schools.

The BHSEC schools immerse 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 (88%) of students graduate with a Bard College Associate in Arts degree in the liberal arts and sciences and 60 transferrable college credits. Typically, 85–92% of BHSEC Manhattan and Queens students receive a New York State Regents high school diploma. (BHSEC Newark is still too new to have historical data regarding high school and college graduation rates.) More than 97% of BHSEC students continue their studies at a four-year college and most (94%) complete a bachelor's degree.

To help others understand the design underlying the success of Bard High School Early College schools and students, the *National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching* (NCREST) at Teachers College, Columbia University, undertook a study of several 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.

Student support services offered at BHSEC is the fourth practice to be examined. For this study, researchers conducted a series of interviews with student support staff and administrators and conducted a focus group with counselors and faculty. We also analyzed key documents, and reviewed relevant research literature. A detailed examination of these supports follows.

About Student Supports

What makes BHSEC successful is students' accessibility to many resources. Also, hard working/dedicated teachers that stay late for hours tutoring, as well as the writing center, math center, and college transfer office all ensure that every student is well on their way.

Graduating Senior, Class of 2013

School is a more than a strictly academic experience, and students are more likely to maintain their engagement with education if: 1) they feel that they fit into the culture and social environment of the school, and 2) they believe that they can handle the work (Tinto 1993). It is essential for schools to provide students with the academic and social supports to facilitate this integration. Social support is defined by Malecki and DeMaray (2002) as “an individual’s perception of general support or specific supportive behaviors (available or enacted upon) from people in their social network, which enhances their functioning and/or may buffer them from adverse outcomes” (p. 2).

Students benefit from the feeling that the adults in their life are invested in their social and academic well-being. DeMaray et al. (2005) found a positive relationship between student adjustment to high school and perceived support from teachers, parents, and classmates. Student support can also impact student attendance. DeWit, Karioja, and Rye (2010) sought to understand the reasons for attendance differences between middle and high schools. The authors found that students who perceived diminished support from classmates and teachers during this transition had declining attendance rates in high school. This trend was stronger among male students.

Adapting to the increased rigor and demand of an early college high school can be a particular challenge for students whose parents did not attend college. Many low-income and minority students may be the first in their families attending college and therefore have few people who can help them succeed in a rigorous college curriculum (Born 2006). Minority and poor students often need more extensive supports to combat the disadvantages of poverty, poor health care, and neighborhood instability (Ainsworth 2002, Gillock and Reyes 1999, Noguera 2001). In addition, recent immigrants may struggle with learning in a second language as well as adapting to the norms of a new culture (Kao and Thompson 2003). Students with these kinds of challenges make up a substantial proportion of the student body at BHSEC and they may rely primarily on school-based supports to help them navigate their educational experience.

While disadvantaged subgroups experience additional difficulties, all students require support that helps them manage their time effectively and to adapt to the expectations of college-level work (Born 2006). In a study of high school best practices, Wilcox (2011) found that high-achieving schools carve out specific times in a student’s schedule for them to receive extra help. These schools also implement early warning systems to alert staff at the first signs of struggle. Born (2006) found that open lines of communication among parents, students, and teachers facilitate student integration and improve student achievement at early college high schools.

The support services offered at BHSEC help to create a culture in which students feel fully supported and believe that faculty and staff members are always willing to help. They are also designed to facilitate independence and an intellectual maturity that prepares students for postsecondary education.

Transitioning to BHSEC

By having a curriculum that causes us to be intellectually stimulated such as English seminars or an Intro to Philosophy college course, or Writing and Thinking Workshops, we learn to always question and evaluate ideas so that we then develop our own ideas. Through this process, we become more than students. We begin to become scholars, leaders, innovators, and most importantly, we feel true joy because we learn how to think for ourselves and defend our ideals.

Graduating senior, Class of 2013

Although BHSEC freshmen were typically high achievers in middle school, many students arrive without the skills needed to master the rigorous BHSEC curriculum. In addition to their regular classes, BHSEC students often have 4–6 hours of homework nightly. Managing this workload requires discipline as well as time management skills. Students must develop effective scholarly habits, such as problem solving skills, study skills, and learning how to study in a group. BHSEC students must also learn how to communicate with teachers and tutors to receive the help they need. BHSEC provides a range of supports to develop students' intellectual abilities and maturity.

They were the top students in middle school. Now they're with lots of top students. There is a heavy workload and lots of stress.

Guidance Counselor, Manhattan

BHSEC's emphasis on critical thinking, deep reading, and analytic writing is also new for many incoming students. Most middle schools have not prepared students to read and think at the sophisticated level practiced at BHSEC. Before school starts, BHSEC hosts a Writing and Thinking Workshop and Summer Bridge Program to get to students up to speed and to ease any issues they have in transitioning from middle school to BHSEC.

Writing and Thinking Workshop

The annual Writing and Thinking Workshops in which all students and faculty participate at the beginning of each academic year provide an important opportunity to become more integrated into the BHSEC culture. This practice was modeled after similar workshops that have been held at Bard College for over 30 years. In these intensive sessions, discussed in *BHSEC Best Practices: Critical Thinking* (# 3 in this series), students learn to read deeply, interact with faculty, and to respond to their peers effectively and respectfully. They also focus on the development of critical thinking and discussion skills. In addition, these workshops provide faculty members with an initial opportunity to flag students who are in need of academic or social support.

One BHSEC experience [that is memorable] would be attending workshop at the beginning of each year. I think it has helped me open up to presenting my ideas as well as meeting more fellow students so we start off the school year with a few companions already. I was also exposed to learning writing techniques that could help later on as well.

Graduating Senior, Class of 2013

The Writing and Thinking [workshop] really set the tone and was helpful in improving the way that I think.

Graduating Senior, Class of 2013

Summer Bridge Program

Each BHSEC school sponsors a Summer Bridge Program for all incoming ninth graders, although the length and focus differs. At BHSEC Manhattan and BHSEC Queens, this program takes place for two to three days at the end of school in June, while BHSEC Newark offers a two-week session near the end of the summer. These Bridge Programs are run by student ambassadors as well as faculty and staff, and they serve as a good opportunity for staff and students to begin building relationships with each other. Activities are planned to ease students' anxieties about making new friends and tackling early college work. Students attend sample classes, learn study skills, and participate in team building activities.

Thanks to funding from a special New York State “Smart Scholars” grant, BHSEC Manhattan and BHSEC Queens have also been able to offer a joint three week summer program to all incoming 9th graders from targeted (underperforming) middle schools. Taught by BHSEC faculty, students are provided with classes in the humanities, mathematics, and the arts, along with special science programs. Approximately 50 or more students attend each summer. Among other activities, they take an annual trip to the Bard College Annandale Campus in upstate New York where, in addition to touring the campus and meeting with Bard College admissions representatives, they participate in a college science laboratory project.

Excelling in the BHSEC Curriculum

BHSEC is committed to providing the supports that students need to succeed academically during their two high school (Grades 9 and 10) and two college (Years 1 and 2) years. This is accomplished through faculty academic support, peer tutoring, encouraging use of the Writing Center, and by closely monitoring student progress.*[After struggling with calculus] I became close with teachers, learned how to use the learning center, learned how to balance my time, learned how to balance the rest of my schoolwork, and learned how to be happy that I worked hard even if I could not get the grade that I wanted.*

BHSEC Manhattan Alumna, Class of 2013

Faculty Academic Support

Faculty members provide regular tutoring sessions for students needing extra help. Although tutoring is recommended for students who are struggling in their classes, it is not mandated. Faculty members also hold office hours and provide departmental study groups and recitation sections before and after school. Students are encouraged to take advantage of faculty office hours often, even if it is just to check in with their teachers. Faculty are required to hold regular office hours at least once a week, but many hold them every day. Students are encouraged to build relationships with their teachers and to be vocal about their needs and concerns.

I think it is rare to find a school at 5pm filled with students who are being tutored, but that happens daily at BHSEC. The library consistently has more people in it than the cafeteria.

Graduating Senior, Class of 2013

Tutoring? Everyone goes 3:20 to 3:50 every day. It’s not mandated. It’s scheduled. Here you go to tutoring even if you aren’t having problems, even if you meet for 10 minutes a week just to make sure you’re on track.

Guidance Counselor, BHSEC Manhattan

Faculty members go above and beyond to support students and seek to be available to help them when needed. Students report that faculty members are always available and willing to help, facilitated by a relatively manageable load of 4 classes and approximately 80 students per teacher.

[A major benefit at BHSEC is] having Ph.D professors who so generously spend extra time to teach you in a personal tutoring session, and who spend so much time helping to improve students’ writing.

Graduating Senior, Class of 2013

Tutoring, office hours, and other support services offered by faculty are not only available to their own students, but to any student. At BHSEC, students are encouraged to find an adult with whom they can talk and maintain a relationship—this can be any adult at the school with whom they feel comfortable. The result is a culture of support in which students feel that every adult at BHSEC is willing to support them.

Professors are extremely approachable and address students as equals, as opposed to patronizingly.

Graduating Senior, Class of 2013

As for the faculty, the teachers pay extremely close attention to their students, always available to tutor students during or after school hours to make sure they have all the resources to succeed in their classes.

Graduating Senior, Class of 2013

Peer Tutoring

At BHSEC Queens and Manhattan, peer tutors devote one period a week to tutoring during at least an entire semester. Tutors must be recommended by a teacher, have a B average, and be in their third or fourth year. Peer tutors receive a college credit in Grammar and Rhetoric that reflects the learning that occurs when teaching others. As well, serving as a peer tutor qualifies as a leadership role that can be included in college applications. Peer tutoring at each school operates out of the library and the tutoring schedule for both peer and faculty tutoring is posted prominently. A faculty member oversees this program and creates the tutoring schedule, but students work with each other autonomously.

It's great—they don't want to show an adult their writing.... The peer tutors are booked. For the most part, it's used more by the older students and the higher achieving. The Year 1 and Year 2 [college level students] really buy in; the ninth graders take a while.

Guidance Counselor, BHSEC Manhattan

Tutors are trained on how to make students feel comfortable and how to provide assistance targeted to student needs. During our observation at BHSEC Queens, each tutor was working with a student and there were students waiting for help in some subjects. The students reported feeling very comfortable approaching their peers for help and the tutors said that they find the experience rewarding.

I like peer tutoring, because when I talk to teachers I am afraid of sounding like I wasn't paying attention. With peer tutoring I can ask the same question over and over without feeling self-conscious. I want to be that person for someone.

Year-One Latin Tutor, BHSEC Queens

The Writing Center

The Writing Center at each school is open daily before, during and after school. At BHSEC Queens, the Writing Center has an open door policy and many students like to have their papers reviewed before handing them in. In addition to peer writing tutors, there are faculty members available to read student work. A white board in the Writing Center features an inspirational quote that changes every few weeks. Students are invited to come in and write their own interpretation or comments about the quote

on the board. They are also invited to erase the comments and to write a new quote for discussion. There is candy in the room, and students feel free to come in and out to say hello or to receive help.

Peer writing tutors focus on helping students in a range of ways including how to develop an outline, state a problem, and craft an argument. Writing center tutors are taught to use strategies such as reading out loud, creating outlines, and making diagrams as strategies to improve writing skills. Tutors are not expected to have all the answers, but can point a student in the right direction.

In our observation of a Writing Center located in a school library, we found it to be an excellent place to observe the high morale and strong collegiality that exists in the BHSEC schools. The Center buzzed with quiet conversation, with topics ranging from recent exams to advice on how to format a college essay. Students worked on computers on their own or were seated at tables participating in peer tutoring or in self-selected study groups. A librarian was present to help students find books or to guide them in using online databases to find scholarly articles.

Close Monitoring of Students

All adults at each BHSEC work together to monitor the progress of students. BHSEC staff is comprised of administrators, faculty, and guidance and counseling staff, all of whom are engaged in student support. In addition, there are college advisors, learning specialists, and tutors. Academic support groups exist at each school, generally comprised of a vice principal, guidance counselors, the head of the College Transfer Office, and graduate interns. The group meets regularly to discuss students who are having difficulties academically, emotionally, or otherwise.

I am often very moved in those meetings at how much care and thought goes into supporting the students who could be doing better.

BHSEC Queens Faculty Member

Progress reports are released with final grades at the end of each semester. Each of these reports contains narratives from all of the student's teachers that discuss the student's strengths and areas for improvement. In keeping with Bard College requirements and practice, narratives have value beyond a simple letter grade and serve as important means for providing students and parents with evaluation, feedback and a path for improvement.

Students who are on academic probation meet with guidance counselors, and parents are invited to provide input on the best way to help the student. Faculty members or guidance staff are required to reach out to parents when any high school student misses or receives an F or D on a major assignment or assessment, or has an issue with repeated lateness or leaving class for an extended period of time. Parents are also notified when any college student has not responded effectively to discussions about missed work, low grades, or poor attendance that could lead to failure. Parents are always notified when students miss 3 consecutive classes without notification from home, and an automated service calls home when students are late for a first period class. Partly as a result of these efforts, attendance rates at the three BHSEC schools are very high—generally over 96%.

At the same time, BHSEC seeks to help students build greater independence over time, encouraging them to take responsibility for their own performance and behavior.

While open communication with parents is encouraged, parents are discouraged from stepping in to advocate on behalf of their children when it comes to questions about assignments, grades

and academic issues so that their children will gain a sense of responsibility, independence and efficacy.

BHSEC Dean of Administration

Special Needs Students

At each of the BHSEC schools, additional help is provided for students with special needs. The level of assistance provided varies by school and by the needs of the students. At BHSEC Newark, learning specialists go into classes 4-5 times per week to support the entire class and to make sure that the special needs students understand key concepts. These specialists also work with teachers to modify their teaching techniques and tests to align with the needs of special needs students. For example, a learning specialist may obtain an audio book for a student who is behind. A student may also be allowed to finish a test in the specialist's office if more time is needed. The learning specialist may also hold group classes for special needs students, to bring them up to grade level.

Support for College Transition

College Transfer Advising

BHSEC students typically graduate with an Associate's degree from Bard College and are often able to transfer all of the college credits earned to the colleges they attend after high school. Thus, many apply to colleges as transfer students, making the admissions process more complex than for students from traditional schools. Students generally need help selecting the right college, filling out transfer admissions forms, and completing financial aid applications. BHSEC's College Transfer Office (CTO) provides extensive supports to help students through this process.

The college counselor is amazing. There hasn't been a question yet that she cannot answer. I don't know what we would do without her.

BHSEC Queens Student

The CTO also makes BHSEC special. I have talked to friends in other high schools and none of them have had such a calm, cool, and collected college application process. The CTO is such a valuable resource and I would tell students come to BHSEC just for the college advising program.

Graduating Senior, Class of 2013

Beginning in the spring of their third year (Year 1 of the college program) through the fall of their last year, all students are assigned to a college advisory, which meets for a 50-minute period each week to focus on college and career skill building as well as the college application process. There are approximately 20 students per advisory. Students make a list of colleges that they may wish to apply to, attend college fairs as a group, consider whether to apply for early admission, and work on financial aid applications. There is a committee of faculty who spend time reviewing students' college essays and other application materials. In addition, there is an annual college trip where juniors have the opportunity to learn about colleges that they may not have considered applying to.

The Bard College Trip last year really showed me that I've grown up and made college seem more realistic and closer. It helped me match what we talked about in advisory to reality.

BHSEC Queens Alumna

The BHSEC experience that has had the biggest impact on my life so far is probably the Simon's Rock trip. It opened my eyes to the different kinds of colleges, and built more of a community between the [Year 2s].

BHSEC Queens Alumna

A full-time College Transfer Office Director in each school oversees the curriculum of the advisory and also organizes college fairs and college recruiting visits. Students use the computer software program *Naviance* to complete a college matching questionnaire, research colleges, and as a tool in writing application letters.

Social and Emotional Supports

Students may experience social, emotional, or family-related issues that can impede their learning. Some students have responsibilities at home that prevent them from taking full advantage of the supports available at BHSEC. Caring for a sibling or loved one may take priority over coming early to school, staying for after school tutoring sessions, or attending faculty office hours. Some students also struggle with long commutes or lack of computer access at home. Others may find that being home is not conducive to their studies.

In addition, BHSEC schools serve large immigrant populations. Some students need help with learning English and parents may need help with understanding the schools' expectations and their child's academic progress. Some immigrant students suffer from pressures at home to pursue STEM-related or highly paid careers. Interviewees noted that the liberal arts and sciences focus and the liberal values that are inculcated at BHSEC can clash with the traditional beliefs of some immigrant and first-generation families.

In Seminar, they are examining texts and thinking a lot about different things. Also they may be the first in the family to be that well educated; parents may be threatened, especially in immigrant families.

Guidance Counselor Queens

Advisory

Advisory serves as the touchstone for student support at each of the three BHSEC schools and at each grade level. Advisories are generally structured as a regular, formal meeting time intended to strengthen student-adult relations in a school and provide student supports (Imbibo, Brown, Dunphy, and Knopf 2009). The time spent in advisory varies across BHSEC schools: at BHSEC Newark, it is held for 10–15 minutes every day, while at BHSEC Queens and Manhattan advisory occurs during one period per week. The primary goal of advisory at BHSEC is to provide a safe space for students to build relationships with an adult and with each other. All teachers serve as advisors.

I ask students to identify a high or low [point in their day], in order to build community, let off steam, and to celebrate successes.

BHSEC Newark Counselor

The advisor facilitates group discussions and activities that focus on character building and student support. Advisory is also a time for teachers to listen to students' achievements or concerns, to disseminate information, to identify anything that is bothering them, and to learn more about their

students' lives. Advisory helps students feel socially integrated by giving them a voice and showing them that the adults at BHSEC care.

The advisory is the pulse of the school. The [BHSEC model wouldn't] be as effective without the support. It's an early college model but at the end of the day, we're still working with adolescents.... This builds rapport between teacher and student. It's the best form of classroom management, and the best way to help students learn content.

Faculty Member

Students generally have the same advisory in 9th and 10th grades and during the first semester of Year 1 and final semester of Year 2. The same advisors meet with students individually throughout their time at BHSEC to monitor and discuss their academic performance. During the second semester of Year 1 and first semester of Year 2, students participate in a college advisory, discussed above. In addition, there is a monthly extended advisory period that focuses on topics like drugs, alcohol, or bullying. Advisors work from outline on a focal topic provided by the professional guidance staff. Time is built in for students to check-in and share their experiences and each advisory is planned purposefully to increase students' engagement with the issue at hand.

Counseling and Mentoring

All students are assigned to a guidance counselor in 9th grade who will follow them throughout their experience at BHSEC. The schools have prioritized maintaining a low number of students per counselor, thus ensuring that each student has access to help when needed. At all the BHSEC schools, counseling is provided on an as-needed basis, with some students participating in weekly individual counseling and others receiving family counseling along with key family members. BHSEC Newark has licensed social workers to provide support to students, and guidance counselors provide the counseling at the other two BHSEC schools. Each guidance counselor typically has counseling interns who provide additional support. When necessary, they make referrals to and collaborate with mental health professionals.

The BHSECs have also developed support services for specific groups of students who may need additional attention. At BHSEC Queens, for example, there are mentoring services for black males. Interviewees noted that some young men may struggle to maintain a tough and masculine identity in the face of academic and emotional issues. The school's vice principal matches selected young men with a male faculty member with whom they can build a trusting relationship.

There was a young man whose grades were declining, and he seemed to be lonely. I discussed his performance with other teachers and learned that his mother was newly married and expecting a baby. We paired him with a staff member from the computer lab for regular meetings and mentoring, and I saw a big improvement in his grades.

Faculty Member

BHSEC faculty typically have Ph.Ds. and are deeply knowledgeable about their fields of study; however, not all are immediately comfortable with their role in providing student supports. The counselors proactively, but gently, provide assistance to faculty on how to best run their advisories and how to reach certain students.

It could be a simple tweak that can change the dynamic of the classroom.....We are advocates and buffers for our students.

Clubs and Student Government

Each of the BHSECs offers a range of clubs, identity groups, and support groups that address student needs and provide leadership opportunities. In keeping with the collegiate culture, the clubs are largely student driven, developed by students in response to student needs. Each club must enlist a faculty advisor to be recognized as a formal student club. Students report that faculty members are very approachable and willing to oversee any club that they propose-- if they can find the time. Time is an issue because these groups can only meet from 4–5 pm, after tutoring ends, or during lunchtime. Clubs may change from year to year, as the student body and student interests change.

I am a part of two groups. One is for first-generation college students. My parents can't help me with college and it is not their fault, but I need to talk about this stressful process with someone. I am also a member of a group for girls only called g-chat. It is a group where we come together to discuss academic, social, and emotional issues. It is a safe space.

Year 1 Student

Students at the BHSECs have also formed support and identity groups such as a gay-straight alliance, Muslim faith group, and a multicultural group, among others. These groups help to support social development by bringing diverse students together around their common issues. Students are encouraged to join at least one group despite their busy schedules because participation can promote social integration and different kinds of learning. These groups help to minimize conflicts between students and encourage collaboration and collegiality.

A lot of students were talking about being Black in their environment. One of the counselors, a professor and an administrator got together with students to form a Black Student Association.

Guidance Counselor

At BHSEC Queens, there is a community council in which students, teachers, teacher union representatives, faculty advisors, and the principal all meet to discuss issues students are facing. The meeting agenda is set by the student government and the meetings offer a chance for students to talk to and hear from administrators. A student moderates the meeting. Some of the topics that have been discussed in the past include gender-neutral bathrooms, a battle of the bands event, and the need for a silent study room near the library.

By offering clubs, support groups, and student government, BHSEC makes every effort to insure that students can develop healthy relationships with each other and form a supportive community. In the cases where students do not feel comfortable talking to faculty members, there are many opportunities for students to interact with each other and obtain emotional, academic and social peer support.

The Impact of Student Supports

BHSEC serves a diverse population, in terms of demographics and ability, yet 87.2 percent of students are able to progress through the rigorous curriculum and to earn an Associate's degree by the time of graduation from high school. Students who enter school with the lowest 8th grade math proficiency are only slightly less likely to earn 60 or more college credits by the time they graduate, when compared to

those with higher 8th grade math proficiency. Additionally, there are minimal socioeconomic, racial, and first-generation status gaps between students earning 60 or more college credits.

BHSEC students are able to earn an Associate's degree at no cost, and they also receive supports that assist them in transferring these credits to enroll in a four-year college with financial aid. Over half of graduating seniors report that they will receive financial aid. 61.3% of economically disadvantaged students report financial aid offers, and 50.4% of non-disadvantaged students do so.¹ These data are a testament to the effectiveness of BHSEC's student supports. Clearly, many would not be able to complete BHSEC's rigorous program and transition to college without a lot of help. Further evidence of the value of BHSEC's student supports comes from the students themselves. In annual surveys of recent graduates, many former students report that there is a strong overall culture of support at BHSEC. Students know that there are faculty and other staff who are invested in their achievement, and who will go out of their way to be helpful. Although students may struggle with the curriculum, the supports available give them the confidence to know that they can excel and that there is always help if needed.

BHSEC is not just a school; it is a family.

BHSEC Queens Alumna

[The] teachers at BHSEC have had the greatest impact on me. I'm not going to name them, but I have had 10 teachers who taught me things I couldn't even believe and supported me as a thinker and a writer... I don't think that I would be who I am today without some of the teachers I have had and the things they helped me discover.

BHSEC Manhattan Alumna

The faculty and the administrators have open ears. They understand our goals and make every effort to help us achieve them.

BHSEC Queens Alumna

There is also some evidence of the value of individual supports provided. By keeping track of students who make use of supports, a BHSEC data specialist found that students who used the Writing Center and/or the Summer Bridge Programs had higher GPAs; those who used the Writing Center most frequently earned at least one letter grade higher than those who did not. Faculty interviewees noted that students who attend tutoring and ask for help are more likely to do better. Faculty stated that they view improvements in the grades and assignments of struggling students as a major indicator that supports are working.

Replication

The BHSEC model for student support can be replicated with the participation of dedicated, hardworking, and flexible adults. It requires the involvement of people who focus primarily on student supports such as guidance counselors and learning specialists as well as many others who regularly take time to guide and nurture students. It also requires small class sizes and moderate teaching and counseling loads. The BHSECs have made it a priority to find and commit the resources needed to offer

¹ This data refers only to BHSEC Manhattan and BHSEC Queens, as BHSEC Newark has not yet graduated its first class

student supports at a high level; fundraising to support this is part of the ongoing plan of work of the leadership.

The consensus from interviews was that BHSECs student supports are founded on a culture of support, flexibility, and commitment to students' personal and academic success. At the same time, BHSEC has developed strategies and programs that are clearly useful to students and relatively uncommon in other schools. These include BHSEC's Writing and Thinking Workshops and Summer Bridge Programs, the work of the College Transfer Office including the college advisory structure, and peer tutoring. Each of these could be replicated, individually or as a package, with guidance from BHSEC practitioners.

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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