

Launched in 2011, **Brooklyn Frontiers High School (BFHS)** is a new partnership model filling a critical gap in services for overage, under-credited youth who have fallen two years behind their peers prior to entering high school. There are two such schools in NYC, implementing the Accelerated Achievement Model. These students traditionally have one of the highest dropout rates in NYC; these schools were created to address that need.

BROOKLYN FRONTIERS HIGH SCHOOL: PARTNERING FOR YOUTH SUCCESS

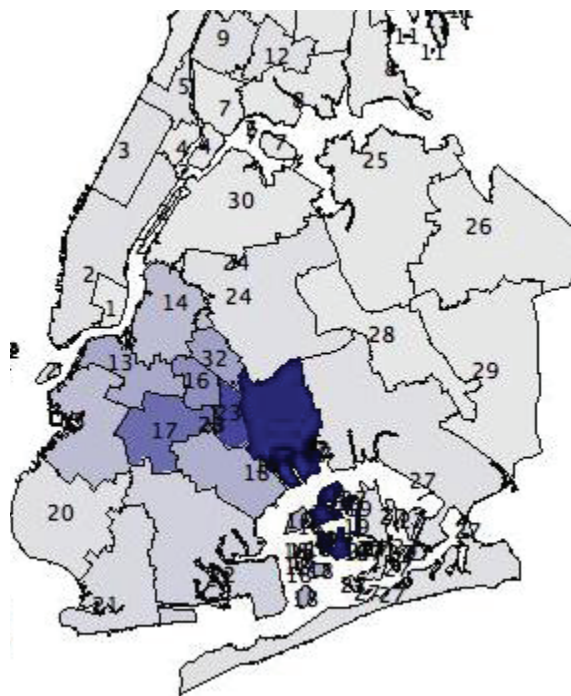
A key element of the school is **partnerships**. The DOE-CBO partnership, is facilitated by the Office of Postsecondary Readiness, and provides students and families with essential, ongoing support in areas that are necessary for our students' success both inside and outside of the classroom. BFHS' success hinges on a seamless partnership between the NYC Department of Education (DOE) and Good Shepherd Services (GSS), in which the academic expertise of DOE staff is integrated with GSS' unique expertise in serving youth and families in high-need NYC neighborhoods. Through the partnership, BFHS seeks to enhance the educational outcomes of students by providing developmental opportunities for students to feel safe, develop a sense of belonging, and build tangible skills. The most current research in education and human development identifies these three types of opportunities as crucial mediators of academic achievement.

THE NEED A majority of BFHS students come from neighborhoods in Central Brooklyn, such as Bedford Stuyvesant, Brownsville and East New York, which have some of the highest rates of out-of-school, out-of-work youth in New York City, as well as rating very low on the Child Opportunity Index. Connecting with youth in these areas is crucial to ensuring that they have the opportunity to pursue their ambitions and contribute to society.

- 89% of BFHS students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.
- Almost half (45%) receive special education services.
- Incoming 8th grade scores show that 89% and 93% of BFHS students are below proficient in Math and ELA, respectively. Only 6% of students who enter high school at a Level 1 are predicted to graduate with a Regents Diploma.

Virtually all of our students have been exposed to significant adversity in some form, from neighborhood violence, to homelessness, family instability, poverty, and/or mental health or substance abuse issues. The research is clear that trauma results from adverse life experiences can disrupt the brain's architecture, with long-term consequences for learning and school persistence. The fact that our students were older than their peers in middle school further places them at a high risk for dropping out, as being held back is one of the strongest predictors of eventual dropout. What is encouraging is that research tells us that timely and responsive intervention and supports can protect against and even reverse negative outcomes, essentially reshaping the life trajectories of young people who experience such adversity.

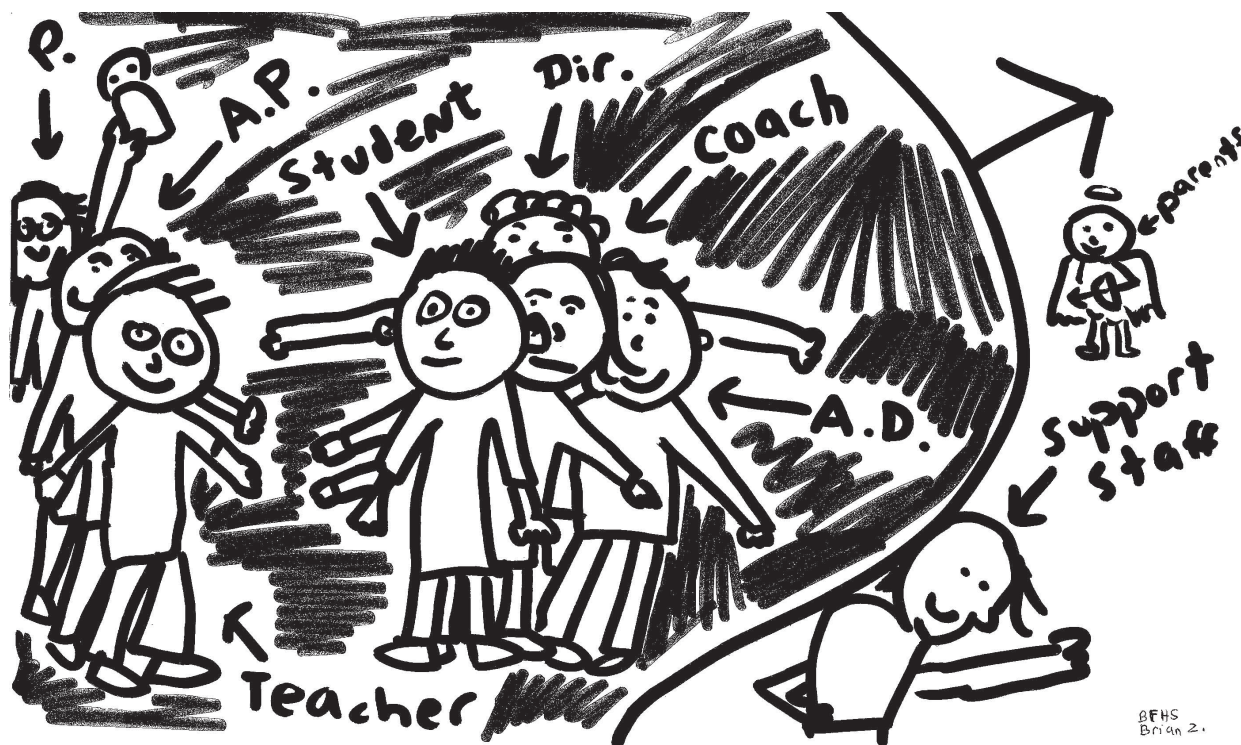
BFHS STUDENTS COME FROM NEW YORK CITY NEIGHBORHOODS OF VERY LOW SOCIAL AND ECO- NOMIC OPPORTUNITY



CONCENTRATION OF STUDENT HOME
ADDRESSES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT, 2013

ACCELERATED ACHIEVEMENT MODEL

At BFHS, our goal is to work with students to overcome obstacles to their success, so that they are able to master the skills and knowledge necessary to earn a high school diploma and be college and career ready by the time they graduate. Our expectations are that students gain the ability to build healthy relationships, problem solve, set goals, navigate conflict and challenges, take responsibility for learning, communicate effectively, and motivate themselves to change their course. In all our efforts, we apply a strength-based, Youth and Family Development (YFD) approach building on students' existing competencies, while recognizing the importance of meeting students' developmental needs. We are committed to working with youth and their families in their many forms and cultures, and to partnering with them to achieve positive outcomes along their journey to self-sufficiency.



Incorporating the principles of the YFD approach, the **Accelerated Achievement Model** is composed of the following integrated, research-supported practices:

Small, Safe and Supportive Environment: Many of our students arrive at school saying that one of their biggest obstacles to success in the lower grades was being in large classes in which the teacher was not able to get to them when they had a question or needed extra support. At BFHS, classes have fewer than 17 students. Given the small school environment, our classroom teachers are afforded opportunities to reach all of the students, enabling them to build strong relationships and to provide students with the feedback and academic support they need to be successful.

Primary Person Approach: At BFHS, each student is assigned a GSS coach, who provides social and emotional and academic support, working with students and teachers to create individualized academic plans, inspiring them to persist as they navigate academic and personal setbacks, and helping students to envision a fulfilling future beyond high school. This approach ensures that every student is connected to at least one caring and nurturing adult through which he or she is able to obtain support, guidance and an enhanced sense of self-efficacy.

Student-Centered Programming: Our students come to us with individual academic strengths and areas for growth, and they do not all academically progress at the same pace. To meet each student's academic needs, BFHS individually programs each student. This approach ensures that every student in our school gets the classes to build the skills and earn the credits that s/he needs to graduate.

Common Core Curriculum with a Focus on Building Literacy and Math Skills: Our students report that, in their previous schools, they have experienced classes with lowered expectations and work that was neither challenging, nor prepared them for future success. As a core principle of our model, we believe that high level, challenging work is

essential to students' future success and that our students are fully capable of doing it. BFHS' curriculum is Common Core aligned. We know that many of our students arrive at our school with academic challenges so, in order to successfully complete this type of work, teachers and GSS staff are trained in supporting students' literacy and math skills and scaffolding lessons and units so that students are able to build up their academic abilities and produce Common Core aligned work across the curriculum.

Embedded Academic Interventions and Supports: In order to do high school level work, a significant number of our students begin their high school careers needing to further develop their math and literacy skills. Upon entry into our schools, students are assessed to identify which students need specific interventions. We then schedule these students into math and literacy interventions that are embedded in the academic day. These intensive, ongoing interventions provide students with the opportunity to build the key skills they need to be academically successful. Our school serves a large percentage of students with disabilities. In order to adequately serve this population, many classes are co-taught with a content and special education teacher. We individualize programs and supports based on the needs of individual students.

Future Focus: Helping students to envision a future beyond high school and understand the link between their school success and future ambitions is a proven strategy for preventing dropouts. For example, students participate in post grad planning courses, overnight college trips, leadership summits, and college preparation courses over the summer. During their senior year, students may attend Co-op Tech to attain technical certifications, participate in credit-bearing academic internships with business partners and organizations and earn college credits through College Now. We have developed key partnerships with CUNY, Year Up, and other local educational institutions. Students explore the world of work through scaffolded internship opportunities in the broader NYC community where we are able to match students to careers of interest and provide them with a mentor who helps reinforce the skills they need to be successful in the world of work.

Family Engagement and Involvement: One of the keys to students' success in school is their family's involvement in their education. Family engagement and involvement is a cornerstone of our school. One of the main functions of our GSS coaches is to provide consistent, ongoing outreach to our students' families. This outreach includes regular phone calls home about students' progress in school, PTA meetings and other school events.

Wrap Around Supports: Many of our students are in need of supports including housing, food, mental health, counseling and other non-academic services. GSS coaches provide students with wrap around support so that, if there is a support that a student needs that cannot be directly provided by the school, GSS will work with the student and family to identify and facilitate the student's connection with the appropriate agency.

ABOUT OUR PARTNER:

GOOD SHEPHERD SERVICES has a long history working with overage, under-credited youth. The GSS model for transfer schools was pioneered in 1980 with the development of South Brooklyn Community High School, a model that was replicated in 2006 to create West Brooklyn Community High School. GSS functioned as an intermediary to create four more GSS transfer schools with two different partner CBOs in NYC. GSS also operates 11 YABC programs through Brooklyn and the Bronx. It made sense, then, that GSS was invited by the DOE in 2011 to partner on implementing the Acceleration Achievement Model, only the second school of its kind in New York City. As with all GSS programs working with overage, under-credited youth, Brooklyn Frontiers uses a youth and family development approach, which draws on the strengths and resiliencies of the students and families we work with to provide the resources they need to transform their lives.
