



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Brooklyn School For Global Studies

Middle School/High School 429

**284 Baltic Street
Brooklyn
NY 11201**

Principal: Lisa Gibbs

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Lead Reviewer: Tony Hubbard

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Brooklyn School for Global Studies is a middle/high school with 615 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 49% Black, under 1% American Indian, 40% Hispanic, 7% White, 1% Asian Pacific and a little under 2% other students. The student body includes 29% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 84.1%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 67% eligibility.

The school is unusual by combining middle and high in a grade 6 through grade 12 format. It is deliberately small and aims to offer small class sizes and personal attention for students. Its enrolment is complicated because a significant number leave after grade 8 to go to other high schools, while others join in grade 8. Others leave at the end of grade 10, so that the cohorts for grades 9 and 10 are over twice the size of the other grades.

The school is one of a small number 'Design Your Own' schools, which create their own project-based assessments for subjects other than English language arts (ELA), recognised by New York State as an alternative way to accumulate graduation credits.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Administration and teachers have a perceptive understanding of the students' progress and learning needs coupled to a wide range of data.
- The school is very effective at accelerating the learning of most of its lower-achieving students.
- Teachers are highly collaborative and reflective so that their goals and planning are consistent and matched to student needs.
- The school successfully teaches most students to think and study for themselves.
- The school has taken strong measures to drive up progress in English language arts and math but particularly in grades 6 to 8.
- Teachers keep parents well informed about their children's progress, particularly through student reporting, mentored by their advisors.
- The organization and staffing of the curriculum and support are well targeted to the learning and personal growth of each student.
- At all levels the school targets professional development very effectively to equip teachers to meet all their students' needs as well as possible.
- The school rigorously reviews and adjusts its overall goals and plans to ensure the best outcomes for all its students.
- The principal, supported by the assistant principals, leads her school team strongly and shows an inspiring vision for the school's future.

What the school needs to improve

- Implement the school's aspiration to extend the detailed assessment, and analysis in some subjects to set precise goals, over the whole curriculum.
- Consolidate and develop the curriculum to be relevant to students of all abilities and learning styles, particularly the least academically motivated.
- Continue to work to engage those parents that do not regularly visit nor respond to school's communications about their children's progress or non-attendance.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The word "invest" is constantly on the principal's lips and that is what she and her two assistant principals seek to do; they invest in staff, parents and, above all, the students themselves, so that all are fully engaged in enabling students to realize their full potential and to grow as responsible people. This passion can be seen in the systematic involvement of all staff, through cabinet and faculty structures, parents, and students, through the student government, in the decision-making, planning and goals of the schools. The principal's vision for the school as a community of learning, in which students work and think independently in an inquiry based way, guided rather than instructed by teachers, is already widely in evidence in the school. At every level, teachers and guidance staff know their students and both their needs and potential, very well because of the small classes and the excellent communication between teachers, administration, faculty and advisors. They use both their own observations and a wide range of quantitative data to determine what each student and group needs to learn or reinforce, how and when. Using data, the inquiry team established the importance of focusing on non-fiction for students in grades 6 through 8. Credit accumulation and project completion are under constant review and the school has been successful in increasing both these elements. This more than fulfils the recommendation of the previous Quality Review. School leadership very effectively established a culture of reflection, underpinned by extensive and, in some respects, outstanding professional development. Faculty and administration keep the curriculum and its organization and delivery under review introducing and adjusting strategies as needed. The visiting of classes at all levels is now routine and used in a focused way to improve quality. All this is reflected in the good and, in some cases, inspiring teaching, effective in accelerating learning but also interesting and enriching. The students' educational experience has been extended and enriched with a host of activities and projects. However, the core curriculum is not yet sufficiently relevant or attractive to the academically unmotivated students in its range and organization. Similarly, despite the enormous resources devoted to involving all parents, leadership knows that it still has not succeeded in engaging parents of some of its least motivated students.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The administration and teachers know their students very well both academically and personally. Teachers are fully familiar with the use of data to inform planning, through

school-wide professional development. Teachers start to gather data before the students enter into grades 6 and 9, giving diagnostic tests in reading, writing and math to establish benchmarks for future progress. The school understands that a high proportion of its students enter at grade Level 2 and regularly retests and tracks reading and writing scores against practice English language arts test scores. Consequently, they and their students know who is on track to progress and who needs further support, and are able to identify and target specific areas of relative weakness at particular stages in the school. The gathering and analysis of data is at its most thorough in relation to English language arts and math, but it is also focused on individual students and groups in other subjects, through regular quizzes, mastery testing, through the progressive portfolios in the high school division and through the extensive use of rubrics throughout the school. Credit accumulation is constantly checked and analysed. The school has rapidly increased the rate of successful project completion in its “*design your own*” studies. Leadership has identified the need to refine further their information about the full curriculum to the high level it now is in English language arts and math. The school has a full understanding of the progress and needs of special education students and English language learners. The widespread and inclusive collaborative teaching of these students enhances teachers’ understanding of and ability to accelerate their progress.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

Administration, faculty and individual teachers routinely use the data to plan how classes and individuals should progress further. At school level, the instructional cabinet meets regularly to review progress in the strategic areas of school focus and across the board. Faculties share and use extensive quantitative and qualitative data to establish the next stages of development. This is best seen in both middle and high school math faculties which regularly meet to discuss the results of mastery testing, regroup individuals for either re-teaching or enrichment and adjust program and priorities, before moving on to the next stage. Other faculties use extensive mock tests, projects marked with the aid of rubrics and quizzes to check and adjust progress of individuals and groups. Administration has identified the aim of achieving the same high level of precision of goal setting for other faculties as has been achieved in math and English language arts. Throughout the school credit accumulation is closely tracked and recovery classes set in place to ensure that as many students as possible graduate successfully. In all this and in the school’s communications with students and parents, the school projects the highest expectations for each student’s capacity. All classrooms echo the same message through such means as a common approach to grading students’ work, finely shaded to show degrees of high or satisfactory achievement. The school knows that a significant minority of the older students are not well motivated despite its best efforts, and that they need to redouble their efforts to engage them and, in many cases, their parents. Most students know what is expected of them and respond and work hard to improve. Students have been successfully trained to self-evaluate and to report to their own parents together with their advisors, in a way that shows a mature and detailed understanding of their own progress and how they should improve. The school and parents’ association provide many opportunities for parents to be involved in the life of the school academically and socially.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

In all subjects throughout the year, units of work have built-in assessment that allows rigorous tracking of the progress of individuals and groups towards established goals. The school’s “roundtable” approach to the assessment of the “*design your own*” project is precisely calibrated and involves students in sharing responsibility for evaluating their own work. The school has been successful in driving up progress and course completion rates. The school’s focus on inquiry-based learning and such programs as “*habits of mind*” engages the great majority of students. Students participate well in reasoned, well-informed debate, in some cases independently of the teacher. The use of a period of silent reading at all levels not only accelerates reading and comprehension skills, a key goal of administration, but allows an important period of quiet reflection for all the class. Effective supervision by administration and the professionalism of the teachers ensure that lessons are well planned, sharply focused on clear goals for each student and correctly differentiated. Many are enjoyable as well as challenging, engaging students directly in their learning. The curriculum adds a wide range of engaging electives to the required core. It fully reflects the school’s focus on global studies and is supported by a host of interesting extracurricular sporting, artistic and other activities. It is broadened to include the personal and social growth of students through its advisory program for all and through trips abroad, such as the visit to Spain in the previous year. Much is done to involve the disengaged students through internships, and, for example, the option of robotics for a few. However, because of the drive to focus on the essential core subjects and the concentration on English language arts and math at the beginnings of each day there is not enough range, variety or interest in the non-elective curriculum to engage those who are not academically motivated. In other respects, administration has been effective in using the budget and schedules to concentrate resources and allocate time where they are most needed. The introduction of a four-session block schedule has enabled most students to consolidate learning more effectively. The school does everything it can to maximize attendance and punctuality, which remains a problem in relation to a significant minority of students.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The administration has been very successful in building and supervising a strong academic and support staff that it deploys very effectively. After a substantial turnover in summer 2007, keen new teachers, including several that are new to teaching, have been recruited and inducted very professionally. The school’s very effective arrangements for mentoring and for observing lessons make sure that new teachers have clear guidance and goals for consolidating and developing their teaching skills. Collaboration and mutual lesson observation is fully part of the culture of the school. Teachers routinely identify aspects of a grade or subject they wish to investigate and improve and arrange for all faculty members to visit one volunteer’s lessons and share findings. The principal and assistant principals have a thorough knowledge of staff strengths and weaknesses through their frequent visits. They set and monitor clear goals for improvement and

check progress. The advisory system, together with the guidance and other support professionals, ensures that students' personal growth and well-being are strongly promoted, so that the majority feel well supported. From day to day the school runs smoothly. Teachers have high expectations of behavior and any issues are dealt with firmly but fairly, involving parents and any outside agencies as needed. The school's sanctions log is effective in helping the work of the inquiry team by identifying behavioral as well as academic factors holding back the lowest-achieving third. The school has a host of effective links with the wider community. One that has given a sense of community and leadership to many, including some previously unmotivated students, has been the stay-over visits to Camp Ramapo. The link with Urban Memory project produced some wonderfully observed photography and thoughtful writing.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The principal knows clearly where she wants the school, its students and staff to get to, through her graphic depiction of how the school will look, feel and be when her vision is realized. There are already in place many of the building blocks to get there; learning is inquiry-based, teaching is mostly well differentiated and critical thinking is evident in many classes. She and her administration and teachers are realistic about their priorities. Maximizing the students' progress and ensuring a successful entry into the next stages of their educational lives is a high priority. The school's immediate plans concentrate on driving up achievement and progress of all the most needy students, especially in the core subjects. These are set out in clear and verifiable plans and targets, to be reached by steps that are being checked at each stage. Where necessary, the principal and administration change course a little, as do teachers at students' different levels. The approach to teacher outcomes is the same. Both faculty and individual teachers have goals to achieve and accountability for achieving them. Teachers and faculty apply similar values and practices in relation to classes, grades and individual students, especially with those that are their prime focus of attention. The instructional cabinet and faculty meet regularly through the year to review and "tweak" progress. Subsequent plans are routinely keyed into the outcomes of previous plans. The school is a vigorous body that makes change in a planned and energetic way.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Brooklyn School for Global Studies	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?				X	
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X	

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area?				X	
2.3 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?			X		
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?				X	
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4					X

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5					X

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped