

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Brooklyn Collegiate

Middle School - High School 493

**2021 Bergen Street
Brooklyn
NY 11233**

Principal: Amote Sias

Dates of review: March: 19 - 24, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Vic Chaffey

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well
What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review
Overall evaluation
How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Brooklyn Collegiate is a middle school - high school with 530 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 83% Black, 11% Hispanic, 1% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 0.9% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 89.4%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 63.2% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's leadership and vision has created an effective and caring school.
- The school promotes social and emotional well-being of boys to improve self-esteem and raise achievement.
- The school uses data to inform it of progress and achievement of students, classes, grades and groups.
- The principal has created an outstanding social environment that promotes excellent relationships between staff and students.
- The school has a very good arts and technology curriculum.
- Targeted professional development based on the needs of the school and individual staff has improved teaching performance and classroom practice.
- The principle is skillful and creative in the way she manages and organizes the school's budget staffing and scheduling arrangements.
- Students and parents recognize that this school has high expectations.
- The principal and staff work in close harmony, which contributes substantially to the ongoing development of the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to raise standards of literacy across the school to improve the progress and achievement of students.
- Strengthen and goal setting and interim assessment procedures for students and groups.
- Make greater use of differentiated approaches to teaching and learning.
- Improve students' reflective skills so they can identify their strengths and weaknesses, and improve their personal target and goal setting skills.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

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

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Brooklyn Collegiate is a school that prides itself on striving for the very highest standards for all its students. It was very disappointed when, in the latter part last year after being named a high-achieving, gap-closing school in early 2007, previous levels of performance were not achieved. The school, under the capable leadership of the principal, looked closely at the reasons for the drop in standards. The school used its comprehensive data collection and analysis capabilities to identify areas of weakness and set about putting an action plan in place. Improving literacy became a focus for the whole school, as did the performance of certain groups of students. Most significantly, improving the rapport between staff and students was identified as the area that would make the greatest difference. It is too early to judge the effect of these measures on improving academic standards. However, the improvement in the social well being of the school, and particularly the boys, is evident. Relationships are excellent and the school is a calm and orderly place where students show respect for each other and for their teachers. Both staff and students comment on the family atmosphere that is now found throughout the school.

The school's collection and analysis of assessment data is good. It has a very clear view of the achievement and progress of individual students, classes and grades. Goal setting and interim review strategies support student learning but need strengthening to ensure greater effect. Students do have individual goals but they lack the self-reflection skills to personalize them. The school uses targeted professional development to support both individual teachers and whole-school development. This includes work on differentiated teaching strategies and these are gradually being introduced into classroom practice.

Most areas for improvement outlined the last Quality Review have been addressed, particularly those associated with the use and collection of data. Areas where improvement has been slower, such as the greater use of differentiated instruction are still being addressed. The inquiry team is an effective body that is already determining strategies aimed at improving student's literacy levels.

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 school has effective systems, which include the use of Acuity data and other test scores, to gather information about how well students are performing. The data collection includes comparisons of the progress made by different classes, grades, and groups of students. The school updates this information on a regular basis, reviewing changes in student and group performance as it does so. This analysis has identified groups who need extra support, for example, certain groups of boys and those who need help with credit recovery. The school is improving the underperformance of boys by raising their self-esteem through targeted advisory sessions and celebrating their success in other aspects of school life, notably sport. Not all teachers are equally effective in using and understanding the information collected by the school. However, the data specialist and other senior members of staff provide help to remedy this situation when needed.

The special education support group is particularly effective in reviewing each individual student's needs and progress and in using this information to develop whole-school practice to support students. As a result, there is good support for the school's small percentage of special educational students. Well-targeted interventions monitored on an individual basis help this group of students to make progress. Support for the very small number of English language learners is delivered according to need.

The school opened in 2004 and as a result, it cannot yet compare very effectively its own past and present performance due to lack of data. Review is effective where data is available, for instance concerning attendance and to establish reasons for the recent drop in performance. The principal reviews the performance of similar schools. For instance, she has adapted a credit recovery program used in a similar school as a model for her own.

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.

The school generally makes good use of the information it has collected in order to set next steps for individual students, classes, grades and groups. Students' goals are set. The vast majority willingly accept guidance provided by staff to ensure their continuing development but do not use self-review and reflection to analyze their own strengths and weaknesses. As a result, students are not so sure of the part they play in improving their own performance.

Goals are also set at the whole-school level. However, these lack rigor as they tend to focus on general school-wide targets. For instance, a goal might focus on 10% to 20% in improved academic achievement, rather than analyzing individual subject areas and setting appropriate targets for each. This makes it more difficult for the school community to know how successful different areas of the school have been in raising achievement.

The school is skillful at promoting the performance of those students who experience the greatest difficulty making progress. It uses data effectively to look closely at why the progress of some students and groups is weaker than others. The school's emphasis on improving the standards of literacy is a direct result of looking at data in this way. The work of the inquiry team is a good example of this.

The principal shares the school's goals, performance and progress with students and staff through a "state of the school address". The school communicates this information to parents by letter. Parents are very pleased with the way in which the school keeps them informed of their child's progress at school. They value links to the school provided by the parent co-coordinator and through parent workshops. Communication between home and school is aided by the school's open door policy and students appreciate the way their needs and concerns are addressed effectively. There is a suggestion box where parents can bring to the attention of the school anything they wish in a confidential manner. Parents like the fact that staff take their views very seriously. They are very pleased with the way the principal leads the school and the high expectations she has for all the students. A senior student remarked the school had taught them how to dream and reach out for what they wanted to do. As one parent said, "She has the vision, we have never been disappointed."

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.

The school provides a curriculum that students enjoy and that has particular strengths in the expressive arts and technology. The school has won a number of awards in these areas, including ones for web design and another in fine art. A wide range of elective and academic elective courses further enriches the curriculum. Included in these are culinary arts and four physical education courses. Extra curricular courses in both the arts and technology are very strong. Teachers endeavor to provide stimulating lessons that inspire students to work hard and want to learn. However, because the use of differentiated approaches to learning are not well developed, students' needs are not always fully met. Particular, those of the lowest and highest achievers, for example, worksheets may not always match the literacy levels of those students who find reading more difficult, but the sheets can be too easy for the higher achieving student.

Staffing issues, now satisfactorily resolved, created problems for the school last year. The principal worked hard to remedy the situation and the school is now beginning to make good progress once again. A grade 12 student commented on this issue, saying there had been a lack of commitment from teachers, who had now left. The school has reflected on the issues that became apparent last year in both underperformance and relationships and has responded well to the challenges perceived. It has introduced its "4Rs" program, which concentrates on the whole community working together on improving reading and writing, research activities, and in developing rapport and respect. The elements of this program that concentrate on rapport and respect are having a dramatic impact on the school. Students appreciate the support they are given by staff and staff feel that relationships are improving all the time. One commented, "I know I am being appreciated." Both groups feel that the school has become like a family. The high level of mutual trust and respect between staff and students is evident for all to see.

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 principal and her senior staff provide a good range of professional support to staff in order to make them even better at their jobs. The school uses observations, walkthroughs, and intervisitations to support individual teachers. The school targets professional development to increase skills and knowledge of staff. Recently the school has organized sessions on improving classroom management and differentiated approaches to teaching and learning. Staff are also given opportunities to share good practice, for example by seeing each other teach and through the use of common planning time. The school provides effective support for staff new to the school or profession. This includes arrangements for mentors and individual meetings with the principal

The school is very aware that a strong advice and guidance regime is one of the ways to create a calm well-disciplined and effective school. The 4Rs program has significantly contributed to the schools general harmony and has strengthened staff student relationships. The principal described the effect the program has had on the school as reducing the atmosphere from a boil to a simmer. This school-wide initiative is linked to others that focus on groups of students, particularly boys. The boys' advisory program has raised the self-esteem of individuals in this group. The excellent relationships between everybody in the school have laid the foundation for improved classroom performance.

Students both young and old feel very safe in the school and greatly value this fact. One of the younger students described how safe he felt as like "being wrapped in bubble wrap" and that being in the school was like being "in a force field that kept all the bad people out".

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 school reviews its plans formally each year to determine their effectiveness and to plan for the subsequent year. Throughout the year, the school and individual staff look closely at the progress the school has made and measure it against agreed benchmarks. Interim assessment is in place but requires strengthening to improve its effect. At present, it is not as structured as it might be and so lacks rigor. Teachers do review student assessments to modify their instructional plans in classrooms so that instruction better matches student needs. The school effectively reviews its practice, altering plans as necessary. The analysis of why performance dropped last year resulted in an array of measures to remedy the situation, notably the 4R's program and targeted professional development to improve literacy skills across the school.

The principal has a clear vision for all the students she wants them to raise their horizons, experience the world and dream of reaching whatever goals they set themselves. She sees the school's function to provide the way the students achieve those dreams. The staff, with their commitment and hard work, are supporting the principal in her vision well.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Brooklyn Collegiate School	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