



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Brooklyn High School for Music and Theatre

High School 548

**883 Classon Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11225**

Principal: Pamela Randazzo-Dorcely

**Dates of review: June 2 – 3, 2008
Lead Reviewer: Joel T DiBartolomeo**

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Brooklyn School for Music and Theatre is a high school with 385 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 83% Black, 9% Hispanic, 2% White, 1% Asian and 2% American Indian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 40% of the students enrolled and girls account for 60%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 62% eligibility.

The school shares campus space with four other schools. The principal, in her first year, served previously as the school's assistant principal for two and a half years.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is a respected member of the school community who has a clear vision to make the school a better place.
- The school uses a variety of data well to identify and monitor the high expectations it has for the performance and progress of its students.
- The school has an efficient and meaningful process to provide suitable interventions to targeted students.
- The school serves well its special education students who are placed in least restrictive environments.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school and they receive and are enabled to share information about their children's learning needs.
- The school offers its students an enriched music and theatre education that capitalizes on student's individual preferences and abilities.
- The efficient use of the budget ensures that all students are well supported in academic and arts-based classes.
- Teachers work together to evaluate instruction formally to provide feedback to colleagues.
- Teachers new to the profession and school are well supported by their colleagues and a formal mentoring program to enhance their skills
- Collaboration is very high on the school's agenda and there is good communication between the school and its partners.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop and share goals for student sub-groups and monitor the impact of strategies focused on improving their learning at regular intervals.
- Develop yearly and short-term goals within marking periods for the school's neediest students that involve students in monitoring their own progress.
- Provide teacher training opportunities that support the migration of the good assessment practices that exist in some classrooms across the school.
- Identify and use a set of best practice teaching standards and link observations with student learning when evaluating instruction.
- Develop strategies to improve differentiation in the classroom to maximize personalized learning.
- Strengthen the school's college advisory program and provide additional support for students' social and emotional development.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

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

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The principal is finishing her first year, having served the school as assistant principal for the past four years. She has built strong relationships with parents, students and teachers to provide a suitable educational program for all students. She stresses the importance of building on those practices that have served students well in the past. The school uses its arts-based partners and an efficient allocation of funds to provide students with good opportunities to pursue their interests and talents. Students most in need and special education students receive well matched instruction in least restrictive environments. However, because classroom instruction is not sufficiently differentiated, many students do not receive carefully scaffolded instruction to improve their achievement. In addition, while interventions are prescribed for students, there exists no consistent process for setting individual student goals nor is there a meaningful process for evaluating the impact of the interventions that are enacted. Students do not set personal goals and therefore are not part of monitoring their progress towards mastery. The Comprehensive Educational Planning (CEP) process provides a good opportunity to build a long range strategic plan. Different constituents have an opportunity to work collaboratively to address the school's needs, but have not yet developed short and long range school goals for student subgroups.

The school's support organization, New Visions for Public Schools, provides the school with a wide range of data "snapshots" that the school uses well to measure and monitor its performance and progress. The teachers at the school effectively support one another professionally, including their collective commitment to improving practice. A formal mentoring program provides good support for teachers new to the school. However, there is not a clearly defined set of teaching standards, exemplifying good practice to align and calibrate the evaluation of instruction with student learning. The principal and her staff set high expectations for students. They stress the importance of post secondary education and link future success to current performance. Students are not reluctant to advocate for themselves and express a genuine desire for a more comprehensive college readiness program and additional opportunities for personal growth and development.

Since its last review, the school has developed clear year-end goals and evaluates progress towards them at suitable timeframes. Teachers realize that they are responsible for student progress. This is reinforced with the "data" conversations conducted with the principal. However, the predominant pedagogy is teacher-directed and does not always actively involve students in suitable learning activities. Teachers would like to become more proficient with their use of interim and formative assessment data to monitor student performance and to evaluate the impact of instruction. They would take advantage of more training in how to generate and use data if those options existed. The school has a viable CFI Team, but there is little integration of its work and overall school improvement efforts. Parents are very supportive of the principal's efforts

and welcome opportunities to participate in conferences about their children during which student level data is shared.

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 uses rigorously a wide range of data from a variety of sources to measure the performance of students and to track their progress towards graduation. The administration provides teachers, students and parents with useful information about credit accumulation, attendance, course passing rates and cohort data. In addition, teachers are alerted to unique circumstances for special education students and English language learners relative to their performance level and standing in the school. Teachers and departments use mock Regents assessments, "Read 180" to evaluate reading, the "Carnegie Learning Program" to evaluate mathematics and other student work to monitor progress and plan for improvement. Teachers use Easy Grade Pro to manage data and to prepare progress reports for students and parents. As a result, the principal and her staff have a good understanding of the performance and progress of the school's students.

The school does a good job in disaggregating school-level data and is aware of the differences between and among the different student subgroups. The school compares itself to other schools that share similar student characteristics and visits those getting good student results in areas with which it is currently challenged. A number of practices studied on these visits have been implemented. The administration organizes school, department and classroom level data for teachers and provides them with a binder to store it. The data is used well to organize classes, identify students for interventions and extra help and to assign students to Regents Prep classes. Training staff members to collect, analyze and use data is an on-going and important part of the school's work. However, teachers are eager to participate in more substantial training that focuses on the use of interim and formative assessment data.

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 proficient.

The school has identified year-end goals for graduation, attendance and college acceptance for each of its cohorts. However, there are no suitable short or long range goals which are evaluated at suitable timeframes relative to specific strategies for subgroups. In addition, the goals that currently exist and shared do not recognize the different metrics that make-up the schools' Progress Report or the impact of the performance and progress of sub-groups on it. As such, the efforts of parents and teachers are not always targeted to specific groups of students whose improvement would have greater impact on overall school performance.

The school makes good provision for identifying individual students who are in need of assistance. Both the school's neediest students and its special education students are

mainstreamed to the maximum extent possible. For seniors in danger of not meeting the school's goal of graduating with a Regents diploma, specific plans are created. This has resulted in good success as 80% of those students targeted are expected to meet this goal. The school needs to extend this practice of goal setting and planning for all students identified as "falling behind".

Parents are very supportive of the school, the principal and her staff. They are appreciative of the caring environment in which their children are learning. Parents receive an assortment of data in the form of interim reports, written anecdotal performance summaries, diagnostic assessment results and grades to inform them about their children's performance and progress towards the challenging goals set for them. They also enjoy good access to teachers and the administration. The school has conducted a number of trainings for parents, including meetings during which the demands of the different Regents examinations were reviewed. Parents feel at ease sharing information about their children that helps teachers and counselors understand more fully the learning needs of their children.

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 curriculum is aligned fully with state and local mandates and offers students a choice from among three different art-related majors. The unique needs and interests of students are reflected by the good number and variety of advanced academic and arts-based elective courses and programmatic supports for students. As a result, many students are engaged in learning that is rigorous and accelerated. In addition, the school capitalizes on student interest in the arts by linking many of these classes to core academic courses. There are some teachers whose lessons actively involve students in challenging and interesting work and others that build on the individual strengths or needs of students to drive their next steps for learning. However, differentiating lessons to maximize opportunities to learn is inconsistent and not a secure practice.

Resources allocated to the school are maximized so the school can match well its academic and enriched music and arts classrooms to student's interests and talents. The relationships between and among the adults and the students are centered on care, trust and respect. Teachers are very good at managing the behaviors of students even when students do not comply immediately with their request to follow school rules or other directions. There exist sound policies and appropriate supervision to govern the consistent enactment of procedures for student attendance and tardiness. Students late to school are documented and moved into instructional settings quickly resulting in a minimum loss of instructional time and the school is holding onto gains it realized in its attendance rate during the past school year.

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 proficient.

There is a good practice for collective classroom visits among the school's teachers. These experiences are used to build a common understanding of good practice, areas of growth for individual teachers and to identify additional supports for teachers and students. A good amount of professional development is based on teacher's Professional Growth Plans, the results of collective observations and student data. However, there exists no consistent use of a framework for teaching and learning that embodies best practices. As a result, there is only fair alignment of feedback for teachers elicited during formal classroom observations, teacher goal setting and group classroom visitations making it difficult to monitor teacher development over time.

Many teachers create, administer and score their own mock Regents examinations. They report that they could benefit from additional support in this process and in using the results of these assessments. Teachers new to the profession participate in a mentoring program to support their assimilation into the school and their development as educators.

Students are proud of their school and receive some academic and social support. However, the school does not provide suitable support relative to post-secondary opportunities including college advisement. Rules that govern the conduct of students in classrooms and corridors exist but are not applied consistently. The school has a number of highly effective partners that support its goals and that provide direct services to students. These include New Visions, Roundabout Theatre Company, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Penny Harvest and the Oprah Winfrey O Ambassadors Club. New Visions for Public Schools also served as the school's intermediary when it was first launched and the school blends very well the support it receives from this organization.

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 proficient.

The entire school community understands and supports the vision and mission of the school to inspire greater student learning through pursuit of an arts-based education. There is widespread commitment to participating in the development of a long range Comprehensive Education Plan that incorporates the views of all stakeholders. School leaders use grades as the primary data source to measure effectiveness of school plans.

The Professional Growth Plan for teachers includes a data analysis of the data generated in their classrooms and they recognize their responsibility to outcomes. Each marking period teacher grades are reviewed and recommendations and adjustments are made. However, these analyses do not benefit from disaggregation by sub-group. As a result, there is no immediate or strategic response to sub groups whose progress is in doubt. For example, the school has identified the progress of its male students as a major concern, yet no goals, plans or monitoring system is in place to close the gap they have when compared to their female counterparts.

Teachers have created a number of good periodic assessments that measure student progress towards meeting state standards. The provision for programs like Read 180 and Carnegie Learning provide diagnostic data to some teachers. But the consistent use of baseline and periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure effectiveness of plans and timely interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas is not secured.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Brooklyn High School for Music and Theatre	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