

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

Brooklyn Preparatory High School

High School 488

**257 North 6th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11211**

Principal: Janet Price

Dates of review: May 18 - 19, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Ainslie Cumberbatch

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Brooklyn Preparatory High School is a high school with 361 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 74% Black, 23% Hispanic, 2% White, 1% Asian and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 44% of the students enrolled and girls account for 56%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 84.6%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 60% eligibility.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Brooklyn Preparatory High School (Brooklyn Prep) prides itself on engaging students in a strong college and career focus. Staff have worked hard over the past five years to develop a strong emphasis on cognitive thinking strategies through the Habits of Mind (HOM) philosophy. The school combines academic rigor with support for each student to ensure that students acquire the knowledge, skills and habits to succeed in a challenging college program, a rewarding career and in taking responsibility for our world. Students participate in community service and internship programs. However, students feel that their student government should reflect this endeavor to a greater degree manifesting itself in more tangible student-sponsored experiences. School staff praise their school leaders and the instructional program, but yearn for the expansion of some programs. They recognize the challenges their school faces in offering electives and value the portfolio assessment process. The school community works closely to develop a consciousness about the Habits of Mind using the acronym "PANIC" to focus students on five habits, "Perspective, Analysis, ConNections, Imagination and Commitment. Students, staff and parents praise the leadership qualities of the principal and support her in her efforts to build a school of choice.

A strong partnership with the Institute for Student Achievement (ISA) incorporates the expertise and educational principles of the organization into the support web of the school. ISA's ideal of creating small schools where all students graduate prepared for success in college, work and life is exhibited in its relationship with Brooklyn Prep. Staff collect and analyze data from a variety of sources to have a positive impact on student performance. At present, most teachers engage students in goal-setting but the process of interim-checkpoints is not yet institutionalized. Teachers attempt to differentiate instruction but it is more pronounced in CTT classes. Parents support the school's efforts and speak highly of the communicative relationship that exists with the school. However, the school endures growing pains as it works to maintain a consistent level of credit accumulation from one grade level to the next.

Brooklyn Prep has made good progress since its last review, specifically in enhancing the level of rigor for portfolio assessments and the use of data in planning for instruction. School teams examine regularly a variety of data that informs their work with students and school planning. They pay close attention to subgroups and work with students and families to chart student progress and encourage reflection. The school shares some facilities, such as the gymnasium, cafeteria and library, with two other schools accommodated within the building.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school generates a good range of data, which enables them to effectively track students' progress.
- The school has good communication systems for keeping parents fully informed of school activities and their children's progress.
- The staff, students and parents share and demonstrate high expectations for improving student achievement.
- School leaders make informed and effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support improvements in learning.
- Teachers work effectively in collaborative teams to plan their curriculum and instruction and monitor student progress.
- The school is reflective, seeking to continually develop, and uses data to plan realistically for future improvements with students as the focus.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine all student goals to include precise measurable outcomes for each interim checkpoint to monitor progress effectively, and share goals more explicitly across the school to ensure accountability.
- Expand the effort to offer music and more Advanced Placement courses that are engaging and challenging.
- Ensure that the differentiation of instruction, learning activities and student groupings provide high levels of appropriate challenge for all students at all achievement levels.
- Include measurable outcomes and interim checkpoints in all goals across the school to monitor progress and growth.

Part 3: Main Findings

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

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

Teachers in all subject areas design assessments that are tied to their coursework and administered at least three times a year. Math and English teachers supplement their classroom assessments with Acuity predictive and instructionally targeted assessments (ITA). Teachers use the same grading rubric for projects, labs or essays throughout the year and are therefore able to track student progress over time, including identified subgroups. Social studies teachers use periodic assessments based on Regents scoring rubrics to assess progress in writing essays as well as mastering the multiple choice questions, while living environment teachers use Regents-based questions administered in class to assess Regents readiness. In addition, the grade 9 team uses eighth grade data on incoming students, including State test scores, grades and attendance, to form classes and to reach out in the summer to students with poor attendance patterns. In September, teachers administer a Bader reading test, an ISA writing prompt and a teacher-designed diagnostic math assessment to every new ninth grader to get baseline data, which is used for planning and grouping. The school uses the ARIS system to obtain information on students' past performance to help make instructional decisions.

Teachers post their grade books every three weeks on Edline (an online grade reporting and communication system) so that students, parents, administrators and advisors can see how individual students are doing in each class. Students and parents have 24-hour access to Edline and a direct link to teachers through a "contact the teacher" button embedded in the on-line report. Staff monitor the progress of seniors closely. The school's grade 12 guidance counselor and instructional team use ARIS, the school designed tracking tool and teachers' progress reports on Edline to identify students in danger of not graduating on time. These students and their families receive detailed and frequent reports on what students need to make up and available opportunities.

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.

Brooklyn Prep uses rubrics on essays, labs and projects throughout the year to measure student progress towards mastery of specific skills. Teachers lift individual student goals from the language of the rubrics. Based on rubric-graded work, students and teachers decide together on what part of the rubric shows the greatest need for growth. Students then use the rubrics as a tool for measuring growth, building on their skill sets. Grading rubrics in classes set out detailed description of expectations by describing performance at every level. The school plans to institutionalize this practice next year as a common

expectation. Teachers administer initial assessments at least three times a year and set up a system for tracking data specific to each content area to inform lesson planning and curriculum development. In addition, teachers conduct item skills analyses of multiple choice periodic assessments, practice Regents exams and January Regents to identify students who need extra help, including extended day Regents preparation and to select concepts or skills to revisit in class. Teachers also set benchmark goals for their classes. For instance, ninth grade English teachers give students assignments that are graded with the English language arts Regents rubric and set a minimum goal of moving at least half of the students to achieve a score of four or better on a specific rubric criterion. At present, not all teachers engage students actively in this review process.

The school leadership team, including parents, students and teachers use the data they gather to identify areas of focus. The team examined last year's Regents scores, attendance rates and Edline activations to set Comprehensive Educational Plan goals with interim benchmarks for first-time Regents performance, the school attendance target and subgroup and parent engagement in their child's education. The timeframe associated with these interim benchmarks was February 2009. Although the February review showed movement toward reaching each goal, the length of time before reviewing progress limits the scope of interventions and subsequently has an impact on overall outcomes.

The school focuses on student goal-setting. Advisory classes meet twice weekly and advisors conduct individual conferences with students to look at progress reports, set and review academic goals and check on whether students are meeting those goals. Departments and grade teams set goals for increased student performance, with timelines for reflection and pacing. Teams develop periodic assessments for each discipline, shaping individual student goals based on classroom data and creating or revising a scope and sequence that plans backwards from what they want students to know and be able to do when they graduate, setting specific learning targets for each grade. However, the practice of student goal-setting, periodic check-in of student progress and precise measurable outcomes does not exist in every classroom.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school's portfolio-based instructional program includes a product-based curriculum that engages students in a college preparatory experience. Responding to last year's Progress Report data that shows low scores on the weighted Regents pass rates on the Regents exams in English, math and science on the peer and City horizons, the school keeps track of students who are short credits or do not pass Regents exams in the year they are taking the Regents course. Based on their analysis of credit recovery needs, the school administration invested in an on-line credit recovery system, which currently enrolls 14 students in a total of 17 courses. The program results are promising. The school also offers special Regents review courses for students who have completed global studies and living environment courses but have not yet passed these Regents, and PLATO, a self-paced on-line intervention program. The student program offers a choice of electives in grades 11 and 12, but students interviewed want a music program and a wider range of higher-level courses that are engaging and challenging, as was noted in last year's Learning Environment Survey (LES). Classroom instruction reflects the need to further develop teacher competency in delivering differentiated instruction.

The school schedules weekly grade-team meetings to discuss their teaching goals, exchange classroom management strategies, coach each other on strategies for working with specific students and develop and revise advisory curriculum. For portfolio panels teachers grade with the same rubric, but a student in grade 10 needs to perform at a higher level than one in grade 9 to get the same score. The Habits of Mind (HOM) are on display in every classroom, printed in the student handbook and given to parents when their child enters Brooklyn Prep. Consequently, this serves to develop in students a common expression of expectations that students will leave the school ready to employ these cognitive strategies that support success in college and career.

The school's organizational structure seeks to address student needs. The school pursues grants to expand its capacity to serve students effectively. The Goldie Anna Award for Academic Excellence grant provides funding for teachers to develop, refine and improve the portfolio process, analyze and use data from portfolios to set student goals, and spread these practices to other schools. A State grant obtained through the Institute for Student Achievement provides funds for extended day and Saturday enrichment, tutoring, credit recovery and Regents preparation classes. The school follows a collaborative team teaching (CTT) model. This model permits differentiation, the regrouping of students by learning need, the use of formal and informal assessment, as well as additional adult coaching during small group and individual work time. As a result, the Regents pass rate in math is above 70% for students with CTT on their IEP. However, these efforts do not translate into high pass rates on the Regents exams in English, science and global history. Students remark that they like the school, but would like to see more challenging courses such as Advanced Placement courses in Calculus, Advanced Placement courses in the ninth and tenth grade and greater use of technology as an instructional tool. They describe their teachers as "caring".

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

School leaders meet with teachers at the beginning of the school year to set their goals for the year and discuss the professional development support they will need to meet these goals. In choosing their goals, teachers are encouraged to use the California Teaching Standards and to consider where their class work will fit into their department's scope and sequence as well as how they can help students develop the Habits of Mind. Teachers and administrators revisit and revise these goals throughout the year. Administrators make regular classroom visits and provide feedback to teachers noting the progress the teacher is making in achieving the professional goals. The school runs monthly professional development sessions focusing on student work, schedules weekly inquiry team meetings and holds weekly instructional team meetings. An Institute for Student Achievement coach serves as the new teacher mentor supported by the teaching specialist on the network team. These efforts translate into positive outcomes for many, but not all, students.

Teams of teachers work collaboratively to improve instruction in grade and department configurations. The school's inquiry team works with 15 students examining how learning vocabulary can improve student reading comprehension. As a result of last year's work, the team has narrowed its focus, distributed leadership roles among team members and now pays closer attention to benchmarks, timelines and goals. The school is awaiting the results of the final assessment but initial data is promising. Staff

focus on students' personal growth is evident in "kid talk" that takes place at teacher meetings and in advisory. The school's solid partnership with ISA is effective in supporting positive student outcomes. The school has also created beneficial arrangements with the Empowerment Network, St. Nicholas Community Development Corporation and Park Slope Mental Health Services. The school plans to work with Educators for Social Responsibility to further address school culture and climate. At this time formal data is not available for all programs to enable the school to evaluate collectively the impact of all external partnerships and enact appropriate revisions.

Students describe their principal as, "Caring, calm and sweet". Parents like the level of communication with the school, the tutoring program and their access to staff. They describe the principal as, "responsive to concerns, warm and always looking out for the best interest of students".

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 school's long-term goal is to deliver a college preparatory education that prepares students for more than passing Regents exams and focuses on the Habits of Mind. School teams work to support students in achieving this goal. However, the school has not yet implemented goal setting that includes measurable interim goals and benchmarks to improve student and teacher outcomes school wide. As such, noting individual student progress across the school, grades or teachers based on student outcomes is difficult. The school sets Comprehensive Education Plan goals in the fall and reports back on interim progress and makes adjustments to school plans the following February. Due to the long span of time between reviews of interim goals, adjustments do not result in the maximum acceleration of student learning. After reviewing the Saturday Regents preparation program in its first week of operation, the administration realized that there was poor student attendance. To ensure that the largest number of students benefited from this support, the school rescheduled the program for after school and is bringing in Teach for America's test preparation program over the summer to provide intensive support to students. The principal and school teams meet regularly to review student academic performance data, teacher observation data against benchmarks and to make adjustments to school priorities and teacher professional development as needed.

Staff make successful outreach to parents via Edline and the school's website to spread the school vision. Subsequently, parents value the school-home relationship and work well with the school to improve student academic outcomes. The school is realizing its vision of college planning and preparation beginning in the ninth grade, including college and career exploration in advisories, college trips, a dedicated college counselor and College Now options for both high school and college credit. However, parents and students clamor for the expansion of advanced placement and College Now.

The principal has begun to share her vision for next year. After meeting with key staff, the school created one set of priorities for next year's school schedule based on the credit accumulation and Regents data reviewed. The school's self-evaluation paints an accurate picture of the school.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Brooklyn Preparatory High School	△	▷	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?				X
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?				X
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?				X
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?				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 student’s learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?			X	
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			X	
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?			X	
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DY0, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?			X				
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?			X				
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?			X				
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X				
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?			X				
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?				X			
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?			X				
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X				
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent do...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?			X				
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?			X				
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?			X				
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed