

Quality Review Report

2008-2009

Brooklyn Collegiate

Middle School – High School 493

**2021 Bergen Street
Brooklyn
NY 11233**

Principal: Amote Sias

Dates of review: November 19 - 20, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Joy Stopher

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Brooklyn Collegiate is a middle/high school with 574 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 84% Black, 11% Hispanic, less than 1% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 92%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 70% eligibility.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

When asked what made the school special a student immediately replied, "The love". There is indeed a genuine trust, respect and cooperation between students and adults, which supports and enhances learning. Underpinning this is a shared vision for success and a strong "college culture" resulting in high expectations that permeate all aspects of the school's work. Since the opening of the school four years ago, the principal has worked relentlessly to drive forward continuous improvements in teaching and learning to turn the vision into reality. There are strong systems in place to monitor and evaluate student progress and revise plans to raise achievement. The school believes that to raise achievement it must develop the "whole child" and so it gives a high priority to collecting and analyzing a detailed range of data about all aspects of academic and personal performance. This has led to real sense of "family" and generated commitment from students, staff and parents. The level of communication with parents is strong. Goal setting extends from the strategic through to the individual student. The school is rigorous in making sure that students and their parents have a detailed knowledge of what they need to do to improve.

Teachers make highly effective use of data to differentiate their instruction giving students opportunities to assess their own work and reflect on how best they might learn. School leaders visit classrooms on a daily basis to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and support the achievement of the school's goals. They have been successful in ensuring all teachers use data to differentiate instruction, set goals and enable students to work in pairs and groups. They are now ready to strengthen the criteria they use to focus precisely on the immediate priorities for improvement to raise the quality of teaching and learning to the very highest standard in all classes. By creating department chairs in all core subjects and administrative areas the school has empowered staff to play a major part in decision making and goal setting. Vertical teaming, looping and interdisciplinary planning are beginning to enhance the consistency and progression across grades and the school has plans to develop this further. Interdisciplinary planning is also helping the school to achieve its major goal to improve literacy. During the last year, the school has significantly increased the quantity and use of technology and now has the opportunity to extend this further to raise student achievement particularly in literacy and to enhance instruction.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- High expectations permeate all aspects of the school's work.
- The school gives a high priority to supporting students both academically and personally, which has a strong and positive impact on achievement.
- The level of trust, respect and cooperation between adults and students and amongst students themselves enhances learning.
- Very good use is made of data to differentiate instruction and monitor student performance.
- Teachers ensure that students and their parents have an accurate understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- There are strong systems in place to monitor and evaluate student progress and revise plans to raise achievement.
- The school has empowered staff to play a major part in decision-making and goal setting generating a high level of commitment to continuous improvement.

What the school needs to improve

- Maximize the benefits of vertical teaming and interdisciplinary planning to enhance consistency and progression across grades.
- Strengthen the criteria for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning so it focuses precisely on the immediate priorities for improvement.
- Enhance the current focus on literacy by broadening and embedding the use of technology even further.

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.

The school's focus on developing the 'whole child' ensures that it gives a high priority to collecting and analyzing a detailed range of data about all aspects of academic and personal performance. School leaders maintain an extensive database of information using systems such as ACUITY, SCANTRON and ARIS together with exam and credit accumulation, and other assessment data to monitor the performance and progress of every student in all core subjects, electives and other programs.

The detailed analysis of English language arts and math has led to the development of a "triad" system whereby the school identifies low, middle and high performing students in each of the four performance levels. This helps teachers to plan and differentiate instruction in all areas. Guidance counselor's and dean's office logs provide broader information about students. The school monitors and follows up attendance on virtually a daily basis. Even though attendance is higher than in most City high schools, the school is striving to improve the percentage.

The Comprehensive Educational Plan goals drive the collection of data. Leaders and faculty drill down to the level they need to inform decisions and bring about improvement. A detailed analysis of the performance of eighth grade students led to the setting up of systems such as looping and teaming in the middle school where the same teachers teach the same students for two consecutive years. Similarly, effective subgroup data analysis by gender and ethnicity resulted in the setting up of some single sex classes for boys.

There is some excellent practice in involving students in assessing their own work and reflecting on how they can improve. At the end of an art project, for example, students complete a sheet, which describes four levels of assessment for three areas of learning. The student uses this to assess their own work, followed by a peer assessment and then a teacher assessment. The teacher invites the student to comment on the overall project and how they might get a higher grade next time.

Departments provide detailed information for parents and actively encourage them to contact teachers and others about how best to support their child's learning. Communication with parents is strong and the school encourages two way and ongoing discussion. Students agree, "There is no escape!" Teachers do contact home on a very regular basis and a parent is equally likely to receive a call to celebrate success, as they are to inform them about what needs to improve.

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 systems and structures for setting goals, measuring the progress towards them, revising them and setting new targets occurs at all levels from the strategic whole school goals through to those for individual students. All teachers set goals for their students and all teachers make very good use of data to differentiate their instruction. The high level of group work in lessons enables students to talk to each other about how they can improve and to share different strategies to meet their goals. The information provided by departments to students and their families is detailed. It facilitates ongoing and regular discussion and students genuinely believe that their teachers are totally committed to helping them do their best.

The processes used to compile the Comprehensive Educational Plan are part of a continuous cycle of improvement and underpinned by high expectations and the belief that every student is “college bound”. The principal has worked relentlessly since the school opened to drive forward continuous improvements in teaching and learning to turn the vision into reality. She takes a leading role in making sure staff and students are accountable for the achievement of individual and whole school goals through a very regular and systematic meeting schedule. The department chairs cascade strategic decisions and goals through to their department teams and then oversee their implementation. The English language arts department described the three specific agendas for the three meetings they hold each week as student conversations, strategies and instructional and specific grade level planning.

Lessons learned from the work of last year’s inquiry team included the importance of involving those who implement the strategies that are created. As a result, all the department chairs are part of the inquiry team and discuss and examine data each week. Because this group represents all departments including deans, coaches and counselors, the school ensures it keeps its focus on the “whole child”. It is also pivotal in ensuring that all departments use an inquiry approach to improving student performance and progress.

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 well developed.

The school leadership team, the department chairs and administration are involved in making decisions, monitoring progress and budget setting. This group represents all sections of the school community so there is a genuine shared understanding of what the next step is to meet the school’s goals, what resources are required and the necessary organizational changes needed. It has also led to a high level of flexibility and innovation and a willingness to try what might work. There is fluidity in programs for students to move from one class to another including single sex classes. The drive for greater continuity and progression across grades has led to the vertical teaming and looping in the middle school where all teachers in core subjects meet daily to discuss achievement, plan lessons and share best practices. This in turn has heightened

interdisciplinary awareness and teachers have begun to see the benefits of this in deepening and extending students' learning. It has also enabled the school to help teachers in all subjects to focus on the core goal of improving literacy. The school has already planned to extend this and has identified scheduling changes it intends to introduce next semester. During the last year, the school has significantly increased the quantity and use of technology. It now has the opportunity to develop this further particularly in the field of literacy once students have acquired the keyboard skills currently being worked on. Some teachers make very effective use of 'SMART boards', as seen in a global studies lesson, which really engaged and motivated students, but the use of the internet to enhance and deepen learning is not yet widespread.

There is a marked level of trust, respect and cooperation between adults and students. This is helping to raise achievement and contributing to the high standards that middle school students achieve in the high school. Students willingly support each other and work together collaboratively to improve their learning. Middle school students commented very positively on the help and support they receive from older students. The commitment of the school to providing individualized personal support for students is evident in its use of the "thirty-seven and a half minutes". All students receive this and all adults provide it. All adults in the school, including faculty, support staff and secretarial staff mentor two or three students each resulting in close and supportive relationships at a stage in their development the school believes they need the most stability.

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 well developed.

School leaders visit classrooms on a daily basis carrying out "snapshots" in addition to informal and formal observations and give valuable feedback to teachers. Department chairs agree goals with teachers in their subject areas and ensure that professional development meets the needs of each individual as well as contributing to department and whole school goals. The individualized goals are based on evidence from observations, student performance in exams, student work and teacher reflection. The resident staff developer, the principal and assistant principals also act as mentors to teachers. There is a shared understanding of the importance of differentiation, group work, planning based on learning outcomes and activities to engage students. There is some variation in practice but because the school chose department chairs based on their instructional practice they are able to implement and drive forward initiatives and ensure professional learning for faculty. The good frequency of meetings and the extent of collaboration provide powerful development for staff and extensive opportunities to share ideas and resources. There is some excellent instructional practice within the school and all teachers differentiate their instruction and set goals for students based on ongoing assessments. School leaders are now ready to strengthen and share the criteria they use to evaluate teaching and learning to focus precisely on their immediate priorities to raise the quality of teaching and learning to the very highest standards in all classes.

The school has an extensive youth development plan and the guidance department and dean's office are an integral part of its approach to accelerating learning. They meet with students, parents and teachers to review data and suggest strategies to meet students' academic and social needs. The principal demonstrates her commitment to

this aspect of the school's work and meets weekly with the guidance department. All seniors have a staff mentor. The college culture drives expectations and the school provides many opportunities for students to stimulate their enthusiasm such as College Summit, College Board and Sports and Art Foundation activities.

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 well developed.

The school is rigorous in its approach to making sure it has all the data necessary to understand the academic and social needs of each student. A culture of reflection and self-evaluation exists at all levels in the school. Students reflect on their own work and performance and have high expectations for their future. Parents talk about how the school is working to its overarching goal for students to "go to the best colleges and be productive citizens". Teachers provide continuous feedback to students and parents and listen to what they say to try to improve their own work. Department chairs facilitate the transfer of data from their departments to a strategic level and vice versa. School leaders constantly identify trends, determine progress and make swift interventions supported by organizational changes when necessary. The Comprehensive Educational Plan is a fluid working document and central to the process of continuous reflection. There is a high level of involvement from the school leadership team and the parent-teacher association in setting the immediate, medium and long-term goals.

The school's self-evaluation is highly accurate and it knows exactly what it needs to achieve to improve further. A reflective approach and the extensive involvement of the whole school community are enabling continuous improvements in teaching and learning, which are moving at a fast pace. The collaborative and supportive culture is empowering staff to acknowledge when something is not working and to be innovative and creative in their approach to finding solutions.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

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|--|---|---|---|----------|
| School name: Brooklyn Collegiate | △ | ▷ | ✓ | + |
| 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, DYQ, 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.

| To what extent do ... | △ | ➤ | ✓ | + |
|---|---|---|---|----------|
| 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.

| To what extent do school leaders... | △ | ➤ | ✓ | + |
|--|---|---|---|----------|
| 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.

| To what extent do ... | △ | ➤ | ✓ | + |
|--|---|---|---|----------|
| 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 |