



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

**Quality Review Report  
Office of Accountability  
2008-2009**

# **Quality Review Report 2008-2009**

**Brooklyn Generation School**

**High School 566**

**6565 Flatlands Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11236**

**Principal: Terri Grey**

**Dates of review: March 9 - 10, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Barbara Kwiecinski**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Brooklyn Generation School is a high school with 153 students from grade 9 through grade 10. The school population comprises 88% Black, 7% Hispanic, 1% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 64% of the students enrolled and girls account for 36%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 89%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 86% eligibility.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is proficient.**

The Brooklyn Generation School is a unique school, in its second year of operation. It is the first school to put the Generation Schools' model into practice. This very positive partnership allows students to benefit greatly from small-group instruction and a longer academic year. Students enter the school from a low base, but as a result of an engaging curriculum their progress improves dramatically. Students enjoy foundation courses each morning and studio courses each afternoon. The school carefully tracks the progress of each student. As foundation courses are taught at the same time, students are able to regroup according to their need. They give enrichment and arts opportunities for all students. Where students struggle, they receive good remediation during this time.

The administration assigns teachers according to their strengths. Dual-role teachers deliver two foundation courses and one studio course daily. Single-role teachers focus on one subject. As a result, the most appropriate person teaches each elective. Students like this staff variety and the fact that the curriculum choice is wide.

Students feel well prepared for the world of work and believe that the month long intensive college and careers guidance courses open their eyes to "the real world". They proudly share their work and explain how external partnerships make the City their classroom.

All faculty, students and families understand the school's mission, which is summed up in the statement "Dream bigger. Work harder. Care more." The recently introduced individual "Student Success Plans", allow students to be reflective and set their own goals. At present the goals are too general and do not always allow students to articulate the steps to improve their performance. Nor are parents confident in helping students reach their goals.

There are many examples of good teaching. The daily two hours of common planning time for each teaching team has a positive impact and supporting teachers who are less confident in the use of data to adapt practice. Differentiated instruction is developing and good practice is shared. Whole-school professional development is good, as is the principal's commitment to support staff in all their development requests. At present, individual staff development plans are not consistently in place for all teachers. As a result, the practice of weaker teachers changes too slowly as accountability timeframes are not formalized.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Parents and students speak very positively about college and career intensive programs which widen student horizons.
- The teacher and student schedules provide flexibility within programs and allow frequent regrouping, according to student need.
- Teachers plan collaboratively each day and support each other, in order to move the school forward in a positive direction.
- Students speak very positively about the school and feel well supported in both their personal and academic growth.
- Good collaboration results in the school's vision being understood by staff, parents and students and underpins the work of the whole community.
- Teachers use many data sources in order to understand students' individual strengths, celebrate success and target areas of need.

### What the school needs to improve

- Extend the use of data to further track the progress of subgroups of students, quantify goals and identify evaluation points.
- Further refine the goal-setting process so that students and their families understand the process and improvement steps.
- Continue to share practice and use data more consistently to inform lesson planning and contribute to differentiate instruction.
- Formalize professional development planning at individual teacher level resulting in increased consistency, particularly with respect to work scrutiny and assessment.

## 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 proficient.**

The school uses many data sources to understand the performance and progress of each student. All teachers have data binders and these contain information from standardized test results and ARIS data. In addition, mock Regent examinations identify student strengths and weaknesses. The school is working to develop teachers' ability to add informal data to their binders. Some teachers are excellent at adding conferencing notes, but others lack confidence in this area. This results in inconsistencies in the usage of data and the quality of data collection. Teachers receive support every Wednesday to use the data to structure their daily common planning time. Teachers collaborate well and are very happy to help each other. Some teachers still perceive that the flexible groupings mean planning does not need to be differentiated to individual need. The school delivers English language arts instruction through the living environment and humanities courses. The effective use of English language arts data in science and humanities gives clarity of focus. As a consequence, the school tracks student strengths and weaknesses.

The school tracks the progress of English language learners and special education students, but at present the progress of all other subgroups is not disaggregated. This leads to a lack of clarity when the school considers the performance of other subgroups, for example the differences in progress between males and females.

The school tries very hard to involve parents in their children's learning journey. The school "wellness team" reports provide good information to parents of students with particular problems. This support is well received. At present some parents do not have the confidence to contact the school about their students' learning needs. The school is aware of this and is actively working with the small number active School Leadership Team (SLT) members to address this issue.

**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's Comprehensive Educational Plan sets the direction for the school with a focus on integrated algebra, living environment and global studies, with English language arts infused throughout the three areas. The school uses measures of success, which relate to the school's data, to set rigorous whole-school targets. As a result measurable goals are set for all curriculum areas. The school is working to increase parental and student involvement in this process and has put creative methods

in place to extend parental input. These include Progress Reports, which include data on students' academic and personal progress. Through one to one discussions parents feel well informed of student progress.

Through the advisory program teachers and students work collaboratively, to put individual success plans in place. These have a common format. Students speak positively about these plans and welcome the meaningful one-to-one relationship with an advisory teacher, who guides their goal setting across all curriculum areas. This goal-setting process is relatively new and, at present, not all goals are quantifiable, which makes it difficult for some students and their families to identify next steps.

All students speak very positively about the college and career intensive courses, which they take twice a year for a month at a time. They view this as a very positive initiative and one which is unique to their school. This helps students to further define their aspirational goals. They ably describe their work related to the medical field or support for international aid and their work at a harm reduction center. This credit-bearing project-based career intensive course raises students' horizons and extends their personal goal-setting process.

The wellness team focuses on students' social and emotional needs and sets appropriate goals related to attendance and behavioral data.

**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 very different approach to staffing results in teachers within the school working to their strengths. As a consequence, the program flexibility meets most students' needs in English language arts, math, science and social studies. Rather than one guidance counselor supporting all students in terms of career opportunities, a team of teachers is involved in career readiness and college access. Students and parents welcome this support and the links with private sector organizations inspire students to aim for high quality careers. These include medicine and health, media and journalism, banking, investing and many more. Students say, "Visits to the workplace are inspirational," and provide opportunities they never dreamed of. As the first school to implement the Generation Schools model it looks forward to the end of the academic year when more impact measures will be available to further measure curriculum success.

The school's partner, Generation Schools, supports staff to develop pacing calendars. Curricula are aligned to State standards. All teachers have data binders and use data to group students appropriately. In the best lessons, students work at different centers in achievement level groups, in order to promote meaningful discussion. This results in dialogue between peers who critique each others' work and debate their different view points. In a good science lesson, students enjoyed playing Jeopardy to test their understanding of genetics. They collaborate well and support each other's learning. This results in high engagement. Teachers love the school's small size and class groupings, which they believe prevents any student from "falling through the cracks". Teachers' assessment of student work is variable and the principal intends to formalize her expectations in order to hold all teachers accountable. As a result some teaching is not sufficiently differentiated to meet all students' individual needs.

All teachers speak very positively about the principal and say that she is always open to new ideas. If there is the financial capacity and an appropriate curricula rationale she readily gives support. One example of this is the introduction of the Wilson Reading program to support the needs of special education students.

**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.**

All teachers attend a two-week summer institute where faculty reflect on the work of the previous year and evaluate, refine or renew goals and initiatives. In addition, content areas, department and grade teams have the opportunity to plan collaboratively for the next semester. Linking this to the daily two-hour common planning time gives teachers very valuable time to work in effective teams. In addition, faculty meet together on a weekly basis. This gives administration the opportunity to ensure that they align whole-school professional development to school goals. Differentiation takes high priority and many teachers feel more confident in using the many data sources in their planning. For many teachers this is in its infancy. They are responding well to very good support established in this academic year. At present, there is not sufficient evidence that all teachers have individual professional development plans with individualized goals. As a consequence there is insufficient challenge for the few teachers who underperform and do not meet all students' needs.

The inquiry team is well organized with a well-defined action plan. The focus is on 30 students including roughly 15 ninth and 15 tenth grade who struggle to understand equations and inequalities, in order to translate problems into mathematical symbols. The school identifies this as a particular problem when students transition into high school. The team breaks mathematical problems into small-step solutions. Due to the team sharing their methodology with all faculty they believe that students are on target to reach the goal of an 80 percent success rate on a custom designed mock Regents test, by June 2009.

The principal is highly visible and provides teachers with effective feedback from both formal and informal observations. Teachers respond positively to this, as well as to the support of the staff developer. Most teachers are happy to refine their practice, but at present there is too much variation in the assessment of students' work. As a result some students are unclear how to improve. The principal sees assessment as a vital "next step" in teachers' learning journey.

Advisory classes are in place and students speak positively about the "special relationship" with their advisory teacher. They like the fact that one person has an overview of their academic and social development. The school is currently having discussions to consider how further involve families in daily school life.

**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 extensive planning time and the structures in place which support professional worktime allow all administration and staff to consider student progress at individual, grade and subject level on a daily basis. The leadership team works with teachers and looks at all data sources to regroup students in English language arts, social studies, math and science foundation classes. In all these areas, the school sets measurable goals at whole-class level. These goals are reflected in general terms in student success plans. At present, they are not all measurable. Students define their goals as “a desire to succeed and gain college placements”. This results in a lack of clarity as to how a student can proceed from one level to the next.

Differentiation is a key school priority. Lesson observations show that students are grouped according to achievement level, but too often they carry out the same work at different learning stations. Students produce work of varying quality, but the higher-achieving students need further challenge. The three foundation classes operating at the same time clearly use the same content area to meet the students’ different needs. However the plans for higher achieving students are not consistently challenging and their abilities not always recognized.

The school leadership looks reflectively at all data outcomes. The newness of the school and the administrative team mean that data use to inform professional development planning is in its infancy. The principal has an accurate picture of the strengths of all her staff and has plans in place to support whole school development.

The Learning Environment Survey indicates the need to clarify to all, the school’s mission and vision. Through effective professional development all staff and students now work together and understand the importance of the month long intensive to enable all students to “dream bigger”. The successful intersession programs at many colleges result in students producing rigorous real-life projects of high quality which are credit-bearing.

The school is proud that the Comprehensive Educational Plan is a working document developed through collaboration of all staff. The school intends to extend this. The school describes more student and parental involvement as “next steps”.

## School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: Brooklyn Generation School</b>	△	▷	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<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?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?		<b>X</b>		
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<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?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			<b>X</b>	
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?		<b>X</b>		
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?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

### 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.

<b>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.</b>							
<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				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X				
<b>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.</b>							
<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				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X				
<b>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.</b>							
<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				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
△	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>