



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report 2008-2009**

**Brooklyn Theatre Arts High School**

**K567**

**6565 Flatlands Avenue  
Brooklyn  
New York 11236**

**Principal: Martin Coren**

**Dates of review: March 11 - 12, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Vivian Selenikas**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Brooklyn Theater Arts High School is a high school with 177 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 80% Black, 13% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 37% of the students enrolled and girls account for 63%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 80.4%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 60% eligibility.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is underdeveloped.**

Brooklyn Theater Arts High School is a small high school in its second year that shares a campus at the South Shore Educational Complex with five other high schools. Students work frequently with teaching artists from the Vital Theater Company, the school's partner organization, which provides opportunities for arts integration into several curriculum areas. The principal has led the school since its inception two years ago and is passionate about the possibilities an integrated arts education can provide. Within this integration however, differentiated instruction based on student assessments and ability levels is not evident.

The students are very aware of the quality of the teaching at the school, where it is satisfactory and where it is not. The school does not provide the level of professional support to make significant improvements to teaching practices. Students are willing to work and are aware that they need challenge, motivation and success from their time at school. Unfortunately, there are insufficient whole-school procedures to provide consistent high quality support across the school to promote robust teaching, rigor, initiative and good progress. Where levels of success occur, it is more a consequence of the assertiveness of the individual student or a product of the motivation and drive of individual teachers. A strong challenge for the school remains in collecting and analyzing its student data, setting goals and establishing strategic plans with benchmarks to monitor student progress throughout the school year. The school has begun to use student data to make scheduling and programming decisions, in particular for students with individualized educational plans.

All teachers serve on either the humanities or math and science Inquiry Team. The humanities Inquiry Team, although unclear in its strategic plan for increasing current literacy levels for the targeted group, meets regularly.

Communication and consistency of well-understood and agreed upon procedures in the interests of student life in the school is poor. Teachers are rarely involved in discussions about policies and practice that will help secure the principal's vision of a school where there is integration of theater arts into the fabric of every subject for every student.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has begun to gather Acuity data in English language arts and math and attendance data in grade cohorts, resulting in an understanding of some students' progress and academic challenges.
- School leaders involve teachers in the formulation of the Comprehensive Educational Plan by reviewing school needs and completing action plans in order to improve student literacy skills.
- The principal encourages teachers to participate in the Inquiry Team process and collect data from Acuity group in order to understand student literacy gaps better.
- The partnership with Vital Theater Company provides significant community-based support for the vision of theater arts integration into the academic life of the school.

### What the school needs to improve

- Put rigorous whole-school procedures in place to ensure high quality, differentiated instruction in all classes.
- Provide increased professional development opportunities to help staff develop their teaching practices and their understanding and implementation of State standards.
- Strengthen the collection and analysis of data to establish strategic plans, with interim goals and benchmarks, to monitor student progress and make timely revisions to meet their needs.
- Create whole school systems to improve day-to-day organization and efficiency, including communication with students, parents and staff, building a positive school culture that supports academic and personal growth.
- Establish interim checkpoints that monitor learning outcomes for individual students and use them to set future goals.
- Ensure the school has systems in place to formally evaluate all aspects of its work and involve all stakeholders in developing strategies for improvement.

## 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 underdeveloped.**

School leaders collect Acuity data in English language arts (ELA) for the Inquiry Team focus group of students. The school also has access to a wide range of student performance data, as well as other forms of quantitative and qualitative information. However, there is little analysis of such information by school leaders or faculty and therefore it is rare for the principal or faculty members to use data to identify sub-groups of students in individual classes, grades or school-wide. The Inquiry Team uses ACUITY data to reveal overall performance of their targeted students, but does not analyze such data over time, either by grade or by student cohort. The school logs high school data through student final grades, but it is rare for the principal to look at teachers' tracking of student performance at the end of each marking period during the year. Leaders do not analyze data analysis to identify patterns and trends in performance for groups of students or by class or by subject or grade.

School leaders have prioritized focus on special education students. The school addresses these students' needs through a collaborative team teaching model. However, teachers do not share common preparation periods and the two special education teachers teach in a variety of content areas and grade levels. There is very little open exchange of information between the principal and the faculty. Therefore, neither the principal, nor classroom teachers, nor support staff have sufficient background information on the performance and progress of students to ensure that students understand their next learning steps in all their subjects. In some instances, educational assistants do not receive full information about the student they support. Across the board, there is no goal setting evident, nor do students and teachers discuss academic goals in a strategic and structured way.

The Learning Environment Survey shows that some parents are content with the amount and quality of information they receive from the school about their child's performance and progress. However, interaction and communication with parents is inconsistent and there are no systems in place for parents to interact consistently with staff, leading to a lack of parental contact with the school. Parents were not involved in the process of creating the goals and action plans for the Comprehensive Educational Plan. Generally, the school does not design, use or adapt tools to provide school leaders with good quality information to lead discussions with teachers or grades about the quality of teaching and effectiveness of students' learning.

**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 underdeveloped.**

School leaders involve teachers in the Comprehensive Educational Plan and Inquiry Team planning by completing action plans that contain specific and measurable goals related to school-wide goals. Leaders post these school wide-goals and their action plans in the principal’s outer office and the Comprehensive Educational Plan goals are visible to all who visit the principal. However, the school does not have procedures and systems in place to set grade level goals for English language arts and math based on students’ previous performance. Currently there are no plans with timelines and benchmarks to ensure implementation of goal setting. The school has no systems in place to evaluate the progress of the students and the school. There are no strategically planned professional development plans for teachers that provide teachers with their goals, leading to a lack of specific and measurable goals for individual teachers. This lack of professional development planning also leads to a lack of focus for standards based teaching.

The Comprehensive Educational Plan’s goals focus on objectives related to teachers only, rather than on goals and objectives that directly involve parents and the entire school community. Students and their families do not receive communication regarding these school-wide goals. The school lacks the systems to discuss, review and set timeframes in order to reach goals for all students in all core subject areas. This lack of interaction and the school’s lack of systems in place to improve communication with parents demonstrate a low expectation of parental involvement with students’ progress. This lack of communication with and feedback from parents and students also result in a lack of focus by teachers and school leadership of what specific supports are required for students to meet their next learning objective.

**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 underdeveloped.**

The school’s mission is to realize the integration of theater arts into all content areas. The presence of Vital Theater Company’s teaching artists, who team-teach with some of the school’s teachers in English language arts and social studies, allows opportunities for creative teaching. However, there are no curriculum maps or calendars of lessons utilized by teachers in planning for instruction to focus on meeting the academic needs of students. This lack of curriculum mapping within and across the core subject areas provides no consistency and no solid foundation for learning in the core subject areas. Curriculum maps do not emphasize sufficiently New York State core standards in all subjects, enabling teachers to gain a clear understanding of academic expectations.

The school has no system in place for creating, reviewing and evaluating assessments utilized by teachers in the classroom to inform their practice. School leaders do not review and provide feedback to teachers on the progress of their teaching craft, nor on expectations for their daily teaching. This lack of review, particularly of student assessments and their progress, results in a low motivation by students to learn and succeed. The lack of consistent feedback to teachers led to below average levels of

trust and respect expressed by teachers in the Learning Environment Survey. There are limited opportunities to visit other schools to observe high quality robust teaching methodologies. In addition, there is insufficient focus on improving teachers' skills in setting students goals and delivering engaging instruction that ensures progress towards the goals set.

**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 underdeveloped.**

School leadership encourages teachers to participate in the inquiry process and all teachers serve on an Inquiry Team. While focus inquiry is in place for all teams, and the school uses researched strategies to improve academic progress, there are no protocols in place to evaluate the participation of individual staff in Inquiry Team activities, thereby not allowing for documentation of conclusive results of this inquiry work. This means that there has been little or no impact of the information gleaned from the Inquiry Team work across the school as a whole. Where common planning time is scheduled, leaders do not monitor how this time is used nor ensure that collaborative professional discussion improves classroom practice. In addition, there is no school-wide professional development plan in place to improve the quality of teacher's craft. Leaders do not ensure the sharing of good practice through inter-visitation, nor monitor classrooms regularly to supervise instruction. While there are development opportunities through team-teaching with visiting teacher artists, school leaders do not consistently evaluate these situations in order to assist teachers in revising their classroom practices.

The school does not have protocols in place to allow for the consistent observation of classroom teaching, thereby leading to a lack of identification of individual teacher goals. The school has no systems in place for the analysis of student progress to implement differentiation of product, process or content in classroom teaching and learning. There was little differentiation observed during the classroom teaching.

**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 underdeveloped**

The Comprehensive Educational Plan identifies the school's most pressing needs. The partnership the school has with Vital Theater Company provides the school with significant community-based support for the mission of theater arts integration. However, school leadership and staff do not routinely analyze and use data to effect change across the school. The Comprehensive Educational Plan has some measurable goals, but no strategic plan to effect change and no interim checkpoints where an evaluation of progress in the pursuit of the goals will occur. Planned learning walks, initiated by the principal in January 2009, have not yet taken place. The Comprehensive Educational Plan contains useful action plan commentaries, but no academic department has a strategic plan to implement consistent methodologies for improvement that affect their teaching. There are no procedures and follow-up in place for routine, rigorous and robust approaches to staff evaluation and school self-reflection with all constituencies. Therefore, the plan does not incorporate the strategies to address the

outcomes of the lack of communication among the principal, teachers, parents and students demonstrated in the most recent Learning Environment Survey, for example. Communication between the principal and faculty over school improvement issues and agreed procedures is very poor.

The links between data analysis, school goal setting, the identification of individual and group professional development needs and the development of teachers' skills, especially with regard to student goal setting and differentiation are all missing. There is no culture of consistent formal evaluation of the many different aspects of the work in a school, including standards-based evaluation of students' work. Therefore, development and progress is very rarely based on meaningful information. The communication and consistency of well-understood and agreed upon procedures in the interests of student life in the school is poor because teachers are so rarely involved in discussions about policies and practice. Without consistency of procedures and policies there is little support to secure the principal's vision of a school where theater arts are integrated into the fabric of every subject for every student.

## School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: Brooklyn Theatre Arts High 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, 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.

<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>	<b>X</b>						
<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>	<b>X</b>						
<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>	<b>X</b>						
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
△	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	▷	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>