



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Accountability and Achievement Resources
2009-2010**

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

Brooklyn Theater Arts High School

High School 567

6565 Flatlands Avenue

Brooklyn

NY 11236

Principal: Joshua B. Good

Dates of review: March 15 - 16, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Richard D. D'Auria

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Brooklyn Theater Arts High School is a high school with 175 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 81% Black, 13% Hispanic, 3% White, 2% Asian and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 35% of the students enrolled and girls account for 65%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 79.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The school is making significant progress under new leadership. All members of the school community are rallying around a common shared vision to move the three-year-old school forward. The implementation of professional learning communities enables grade and subject teacher teams to meet, share, and plan collaboratively. Consequently, instructional coherence is improved. Leadership and teachers use a wide variety of formative and summative assessments well, and early recognition of students not on track to graduate has led to focused efforts that have resulted in a marked increase in credit accumulation and improved Regents' examination passing rates this past January. There are multiple structures in place to routinely monitor and adjust instructional, curricular, and organizational decisions.

Key strategic organizational decisions support the school's goals including the provision of teacher planning time, coupled with external consultants that are guiding and supporting teacher practice. Teachers engage in inquiry work with identified students and conduct lesson studies with regular inter-visitations to guide their work and learn from one another. Teachers examine student work when case conferencing. However, there is sparse use of student work with actionable feedback as an instructional tool in classrooms. The school's vibrant partnership with Vital Theater enables an infusion of thematic instruction into the school's curriculum, implemented through resident teacher artists who work with faculty. The partnership also provides opportunities for students to engage in professional theater internships. Classroom instruction is engaging, where teachers utilize a workshop model approach and students routinely interact with peers while they learn. However, the degree to which teachers differentiate instruction varies and is currently insufficient. Periodic assessment data is not used routinely to group students flexibly depending on their skills.

The school has a set of clearly articulated goals that the community supports well. However, although students engaged in some initial learning goal setting activities at the beginning of the school year, their goals are quite broad and systems are not yet in place to regularly monitor, evaluate, and adjust those goals over time. The school has a robust core of involved parents and a good rapport has developed between the parent teacher association and leadership. Parents like the hands-on approach of the principal and that they are well informed and brought into the loop on school decisions. However, regular and reciprocal communication between teachers and families is not yet consistent or systemic.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The strategic use of resources provides very good targeted support for school-wide goals.
 - Scheduling enables teachers to engage in collaborative inquiry and to share their expertise in professional learning communities that improve instructional coherence. They use the time well to conduct lesson studies and in-depth qualitative analysis of identified students using a case conferencing protocol, resulting in more focused instructional strategies.
 - Outside consultants support improved teacher pedagogy and new dean's positions help the school to maintain a positive tone. New software enables the more sophisticated analysis of student progress, resulting in strategic skill development. The use of extended literacy and math blocks for selected students and Regents preparation books for all supports improved outcomes.
- The school very effectively uses a wide array of interim and summative data for goal setting and guiding adjustments in practice that benefit students.
 - School leaders and teachers use many data sources to gain clear insights into students' needs. When ARIS revealed that only eight juniors were on target to graduate, the school adopted new strategies which improved their credit accumulation by 10%. January Regents' also indicate significant gains in passing rates for grade 10 and 11 students compared to last year. Acuity assessments reveal that 75% tested are on track to pass the English Regents. Strategic use of grade 8 scores enables appropriate placement into extended blocks and term course sequences.
 - Leadership analyzes scholarship data with staff as the basis for teachers to formulate their own effective goals, resulting in practice that is more reflective and supports improved instruction.
- Teachers engage in a variety of professional development teams that foster ongoing adult learning that has a positive effect on instruction.
 - Teachers' grade teams nurture a professional learning community. They engage in meaningful inquiry through careful analysis of assessment data and student work, using case conferencing protocols to guide the implementation of appropriate instructional strategies. Teachers conduct lesson studies, where they jointly plan, observe, analyze, and refine classroom lessons, improving instructional coherence and rigor.
 - Teachers also meet by subject area. This enables vertical as well as horizontal articulation, thereby enabling teachers to develop curriculum maps and pacing calendars within their disciplines, resulting in greater coherence across the school. Teachers establish norms and agendas, providing leadership opportunities that further increase internal capacity.
- The new administrative team is working well with faculty to build a collegial and cohesive community that is strategically poised to move the school forward with a shared vision for student success.

- A clearly articulated short list of school-wide goals based upon data has a broad base of support. School leaders align well the goals of the Comprehensive Education Plan and the principal performance review and garner school-wide support through ongoing communication and sharing.
- The school is making significant progress in both teaching practices and student achievement, facilitated by new leadership. The principal engages in team teaching with staff, developing collaborative spirit and enabling a broad base of support. This has ensured that teachers share the principal's vision and strive for the same goals.
- Students are actively engaged in their own learning through well-designed lessons that foster accountable talk with peers and higher order thinking skills.
 - Active engagement of students is consistently evident within classrooms across subjects and grades. Teachers utilize the workshop model, providing all students with opportunities to engage in challenging activities with partners or groups. These interactions routinely enable task-related student talk along with peer feedback.
 - Students report that learning is interesting and engaging. They had many opportunities for active participation in a social studies class, where they engaged in mock protests with placards, arguing the merits of the suffragist movement. This helped to foster deeper understanding of the issues of that time.
- The school's founding community-based partner and various grants support the school's theme and enriched students' experiences.
 - Vital Theater's teaching artists work closely with faculty to infuse a theater arts theme into the curriculum and have strongly supported the recent successful production of "High School Musical". Students also gain behind-the-scenes experience through internships supporting professional productions. This taps into student interests and enriches their learning.
 - A funded Disney grant underwrote the school's recent production and supports a dinner theater once a semester. In addition, a city council grant proposal is underway to purchase Smartboards for every classroom so that teaching can be further enriched.

What the school needs to improve

- Establish additional transparent and collaborative systems whereby students can monitor and reflect upon their progress toward achieving their learning goals using interim benchmarks over time.
 - Departmental teams have only recently begun to develop common interim and mock Regents assessments. As a result, teachers and students are not yet able to use these assessments to monitor progress over time toward skill specific goals.
 - Teachers do not yet have fully developed systems for providing feedback to students and their families regarding progress toward interim goals.

Therefore, students are currently not fully cognizant of their progress or aware of when and how to reflect on and re-evaluate their learning goals.

- Implement systems that enable students to engage in developing skill specific learning goals based upon performance data that guide their next learning steps and drive more strategic differentiation of instruction.
 - The school has not yet fully developed systems that establish data-informed skills-based learning goals for students. Initial efforts to establish content specific student learning goals began in last semester's leadership class. However, discussions with students and a review of sample goal sheets, reveal that student-learning goals are currently very general, such as "a need to improve" or "keep it up, work a little harder".
 - Although teaching engages students in their own learning through paired and group activities, the connection between interim performance data and instructional practice is not yet evident. Teachers routinely group students by general ability rather than using specific skill proficiency to further focus and drive differentiated instruction.
- Improve structures to evaluate and support teachers in the use of authentic student work to guide their practice and improve instruction.
 - The practice of posting student work with actionable feedback based on standards based rubrics is inconsistent within classrooms. Consequently, students miss insights into revision and opportunities to learn from each other and understand next steps.
 - Student work is not used systematically to examine the effectiveness of instruction and support teachers' development. Although teachers examine student work during their inquiry conferencing, they do not use their findings to question the impact of their teaching and align classroom practice to improve students' written work.
- Build upon the successful relationship with involved parents by engaging more of them as active partners in the educational lives of their children.
 - Parents experience good communication from administration and a "hands on" principal who knows every child's name. However, discussions between faculty and families are not always reciprocated. Although an increase in the use of e-mail has facilitated communication, the frequency and nature of parent interactions varies between teachers.
 - Despite the positive relationship which exists between the parent teacher association and leadership, there are insufficient opportunities to engage parents in practical workshops to support and increase their use of ARIS Parent Link and raise their expectations of what students can achieve.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Brooklyn Theater Arts High School	△	▶	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	△	▶	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			X	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			X	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?				X
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X	
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	▶	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?				X
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			X	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?		X					
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?		X					
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?		X					
Overall score for Quality Statement 3							
		X					
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?		X					
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?				X			
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals 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 progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?		X					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 5							
			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed