

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

South Brooklyn Community High School

High School 698

**173 Conover Street
Brooklyn
NY 11231**

Principal: Louis Garcia

Dates of review: May 26 - 27, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Anita Skop

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

South Brooklyn Community High School is a transfer high school with 151 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 26% Black, 65% Hispanic, 8% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 0% English language learners and 5% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 70.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Although the structure of transfer high schools is grounded in community-based partnerships, South Brooklyn Community High School's collaboration with Good Shepherd Services reaches an extraordinary level of solidarity that is exemplary. Students comment on how they "talk to their advisors every day," and parents state that they "greet you with love."

All members of the school community are committed to reaching the clearly defined school goal of an ever-increasing graduation rate. They see themselves as accountable for student and school success. Advisors work with the same students throughout their stay at the school, and are active partners in raising student achievement. The school has a culture that honors student strengths and empowers them to be active participants in their own education. A rigorous, standards-based curriculum, and heavily individualized student support before, during, and after-school, help students to reach greater levels of success. Extensive analysis of a wide range of data on a daily basis including formative assessments, mock Regents, and a schoolwide classroom assessment protocol, identify areas of need. Every three weeks benchmark assessments in all subject areas reflect on student progress in meeting academic needs and are shared with parents at advisory conferences. Coupled with targeted student and teacher generated academic and social goals, students, parents, teachers, and advisors, come to understand interim steps along the path to success. However, while there is a great deal of attention to each individual student, subgroup trends are less deeply analyzed, and differentiation of instruction that challenges the very strongest students is still somewhat limited.

Teacher teams meet weekly and utilize the inquiry process with specific protocols to deconstruct student work. The teams offer all members the opportunity to share successful strategies and reflect on their practice. Distributive leadership is evident in the team structure, which includes the principal, but only as a working member. This and other varied forms of professional development increase teacher capacity. Additionally, the school utilizes data to reflect on decisions and adjust school structure repeatedly such as the creation of a global studies block. However, the school does not yet have a data driven protocol in place to reflect on teacher growth at key intervals.

South Brooklyn Community High School is changing the world for its students every day. It is a community where everyone passionately believes in their students and teaches them to believe in themselves. As one young man stated, "We came here and we were lost, and they saved us."

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The dedicated principal, his nurturing staff, and community-based partners align all organizational and instructional decisions to strategically address student-learning needs and meet clearly delineated school goals.
 - Ongoing reflections on student pass rates and mock Regent success, aligned to the over arching goal of student graduation, caused the school to revamp the global studies structure to include a mandatory two course block sequence. This change enabled the school to show significantly improved test results on the January 2010 Regents examination.
 - Teachers hold themselves highly accountable for student success in reaching school-wide goals. Their working in teams, and voluntarily tutoring before school, after school, and on their lunch hours, ensures consistency of student support and success. This has enabled the school to provide an in-depth support system and successfully move struggling students.
- Collective protocols that capture formative, summative and classroom data on a daily basis have enabled the school to identify and meet student needs, and to consistently adapt instructional methodologies.
 - The use of the Power Schools data collection platform, implemented so that advisors could access student data, captures quantifiable information on participation rates, homework, level of class work, and other significant classroom proceedings. This universal protocol occurs in all content areas and in all classes, giving teachers the ability to adapt instruction and provide individualized support to students on a daily basis.
 - Students' scores, from benchmarking examinations administered every three weeks, are disaggregated and shared with advisors, parents, and students during in-depth conferences. This protocol enables the school to target group and individual student needs and lay the groundwork for continued success.
- A targeted and universally shared vision, defined by aligned, data-driven long- and short-term goals, drives the work of the entire school community and is unfailingly seen in all classrooms.
 - Mock Regents, given each semester, and meticulously disaggregated, provide the data that defines the school and student short- and long-term planning, and aligns targets with the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan's goal of increased graduation rates. This protocol is the vehicle that moves the school's vision of student success forward, and provides teachers, students, and parents with a consistent roadmap.
 - Individual student goal sheets, developed by students, with teacher and advisor support, are referenced in advisory on a weekly basis to monitor progress towards identified academic, social, and emotional goals. This

process reflects the most granular level of schoolwide planning and enables students to see their role in reaching personal and school goals.

- The teacher-led inquiry team, consisting of virtually all staff, meets weekly and utilizes specific protocols to focus on unearthing, addressing, and targeting student needs, and deepening levels of teacher practice.
 - The teacher team, composed of all instructional personnel, uses the analysis of student work to discern universal areas of need for subgroups and individual students. As a result, the school identified inference as a key student need and focused on this skill in all content areas. This targeted, interdisciplinary instruction has enabled students to show greater success on the English language arts Regents.
 - Distributive leadership is cultivated as all members of the team rotate to share findings and facilitation. This process is well supported by the principal who attends as a working member of the team, resulting in teachers commenting, “Everyone takes the lead.”
- The school’s intense collaboration with their community based partner provides their unique population with high expectations and the support needed to develop the social and academic skills needed for success.(4.4)
 - Advisors, seen as shared partners in reaching the schools goals and promoting student success, engage in ongoing levels of conversation with staff, students, parents and the administration on a weekly and sometimes daily basis. The power of this affiliation has resulted in a culture of expectation and achievement that enables all students to own their own success by giving them the tools to realize their goals and take responsibility for their actions.
 - Full staff “community culture” meetings enable advisors to support teachers in understanding the unique needs of their students, many of whom are working and parents themselves. This enables staff to develop instructional modifications and references well matched to students’ unique needs.
- Structures are in place so that curricula, instructional and organizational decisions are routinely re-evaluated at frequent specified intervals so that changes consistently align practices coherently with school-wide goals.
 - The school has structures in place, which enable regular reflection on the success of decisions. A careful analysis on the higher levels of achievement in science caused the school to realize that the enhanced hands on work in science lab courses needed to be replicated in other content areas as well. As a result, greater kinesthetic opportunities for students were integrated into other subjects and a math lab course was developed, leading to greater student understanding of content concepts.
 - A schoolwide grading rubric was developed in response to ongoing analysis, which unearthed inconsistencies in teacher grading policies. Observations and reflections on student work continue to ensure that the rubric is in use and that it is appropriately evaluating student success.

- The focus on students' strengths rather than deficits and the ongoing dialogue between students, advisors, parents, and teachers fosters high levels of expectation and a universally interactive school community.
 - Interviews with new students and their parents, and ongoing conferences with advisors and the administration enables parents and students to share their personal expectations and plan together for how the school can help meet these needs. Attendance, academic requirements, and social rules are clearly defined for all students and supports are put into place to ensure meeting expectations. Students are called instantly if they are more than a few minutes late or if they are having any difficulty.
 - Because of the ongoing parent outreach through the three week benchmark conferences, and the school's overwhelming welcoming tone parents are apprised of their children's needs and strengths, and eagerly share in schoolwide decisions, such as the change to captive lunch to alleviate cutting.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand the range of differentiation in all classes to guarantee that all students, especially those who are higher functioning students, are challenged and supported in reaching their potential.
 - While the curriculum in all content areas is aligned to State standards, and there is a great deal of individualization to meet student needs, the degree of differentiation is occasionally not demanding enough to challenge students at the highest achievement levels. Furthermore, though all students are highly engaged in all subject areas, student work is a bit generic in a small number of classes.
- Create a protocol that codifies and tracks the individualized professional development plan for each teacher, including measurable goals at key intervals throughout the school year.
 - The school has a common instructional focus, as demonstrated by the grading rubric and the numerous universal protocols. Professional development is provided to teachers through observations, conferences, network support, and other sources. However, the school does not have a specific data driven protocol to define teacher goals and assess progress towards those goals at key intervals throughout the year to track their growth and reflect on their impact on student learning.
- Utilize the school's data collection system to expand the analysis for a broader range of student subgroups, so that schoolwide trends are more deeply explored and measurable goals set.
 - While the school does extraordinarily fine work reflecting on individual student data at a granular and virtually instantaneous level, analysis of subgroups and trends is not as deeply developed. As a result, patterns for specific groups of students are not as quickly identified, and prescriptive responses to these trends are not as rapid.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: South Brooklyn Community 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