



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

**Quality Review Report  
Division of Performance and Accountability  
2010-2011**

# **Quality Review Report 2010-2011**

**Cobble Hill School for American Studies**

**High School K519**

**347 Baltic Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11201**

**Principal:  
Anna Maria Mule**

**Dates of review: February 14-15, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Aimee Horowitz**

## Part 1: The school context

### **Information about the school**

Cobble Hill School for American Studies is a high school with 676 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 62% Black, 20% Hispanic, 02% White, 01% Asian students, and 14% not recorded. The student body includes 06% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 40% of the students enrolled and girls account for 60%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 80.3%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- A wide variety of reports and qualitative data are used to reflect on student performance at the school, grade, and classroom levels and to identify trends that can be targeted to reduce the achievement gap.
  - Many sources of data including scholarship reports, cohort data, attendance, truancy and occurrence summaries are used to identify schoolwide needs. School leadership and key faculty members have recently implemented a comprehensive electronic data communications tool to track student performance and inform programming; resulting changes to building protocols have enhanced student attendance.
  - Teachers analyze Periodic Assessments, unit tests, writing assignments and Regents data to identify student needs. This year, they administered mock Regents examinations in key content areas as a diagnostic tool to deepen understanding and target interventions. As a result, scores on the January English Regents have shown significant improvement.
- Observations are used to identify teacher needs and target professional development such that teachers' individual instructional needs are met.
  - Observations indicate that writing non-fiction, vocabulary development and reading comprehension instruction create a consistent focus in classrooms. As a result student assignments include writing in all content areas, improving stamina and understanding.
  - The necessity to improve English language learner instruction caused the school to initiate a series of training sessions on Q-Tel strategies creating a more effective response to newcomers.
- The school has initiated a comprehensive professional development menu, in consultation with faculty that is aligned to school wide goals to support teacher and student growth.
  - In response to the Common Core standards, teachers in key content areas are collaboratively creating and refining curriculum maps. Further, the need for enhanced non-fiction writing, in line with the school's goals, has led to extensive professional development and revised teacher practice, resulting in improved student writing and Regents performance.
  - Twice weekly subject and grade level common planning time and study groups facilitated by master teachers enable discussion and sharing of pedagogical practices to improve achievement. Consequently, teachers are becoming more reflective as to what strategies are successful.
- The school's leadership, although new to the building, has instilled a clear vision of student achievement and college and career readiness enabling the school community to understand and clearly focus on these priorities.

- Clearly defined goals, explicit in the school's transformation plan, Comprehensive Education Plan, and Professional Development plan, define the direction of all school decisions and are aligned to both academic and social emotional goals for students. This alignment has focused the school community on improving student achievement and prepares students for college through targeted programs.
- The School Leadership Team, and the Transformation Team, newly implemented this year, use data to help define school-wide goals, which are then shared with all constituencies throughout the building resulting in support from the entire school community.
- The social emotional and academic needs of students are supported by carefully chosen partnerships that provide services and real world learning experiences.
  - Concerns over classroom management led the school to provide faculty with ongoing professional development in proven strategies that create a safe and respectful classroom learning environment. Students now comment that, "Teachers have more control in classes and are supportive. Some even go above and beyond and mentor you."
  - The school has strategically aligned its partnerships with schoolwide goals. College Summit, College Now and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) strengthen academic growth and support a college going culture.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Provide support for teachers in understanding and utilizing an inquiry based approach to collaborative planning and strategic decision making to focus on improved student learning.
  - Though all teachers participate in team meetings at grade and department levels, an inquiry based approach is not utilized to reflect on student progress as aligned to pedagogical practice. Teachers reflect on individuals in their classes with a focus on work habits and social emotional needs. However, a strong connection between instructional practice and student outcomes is not firmly established.
  - Team meetings enable teachers to compare the generic achievement of the students across classes. Nevertheless, supports for students are not targeted as differentiated strategies within classes, but rather as programmatic supports such as zero period tutoring or preparatory courses for students who had failed the Regents examinations or credit recovery limiting opportunities to improve achievement among targeted students in their classrooms.
- Increase the level of academic rigor in all classrooms to consistently include critical thinking skills and higher order student work products to ensure student engagement.

- Though the school has aligned instruction to targeted goals, classroom pedagogy does not yet engage students in rigorous tasks which develop higher order thinking skills and problem solving. Questioning is low level and does not generate evidence based discourse or extended student responses. Consequently students don't feel challenged and often are compliant rather than motivated.
- A few teachers plan activities that include minimal differences for selected students, such as incorporating video and art; otherwise, tasks are frequently limited and rudimentary. In addition, directions were often ill-defined and unclear to students who reported feeling unsupported, unmotivated, and frustrated.
- Ensure that differentiation practices are in place to enable all students to access rich learning experiences that are challenging and meet their defined needs.
  - Differentiation is inconsistent throughout the school with stronger students often being used to support weaker students. As a result, their learning needs are not met and they are not challenged. Moreover, the work of peer editors is not always monitored resulting in limited feedback to students to support next steps.
  - Though student writing is evident in all classes, and the writing process is used in some, tasks do not always engage all students and are often limited to defining terms or developing literal responses that rarely require in depth analysis. As a result, significant numbers of students are not mastering skills needed to succeed on Regents assessments.
- Expand teacher analysis of classroom level data to reflect on the needs of student subgroup areas of need.
  - While the school consistently utilizes Periodic assessment and other formative and summative data to analyze student performance, the school has not yet refined this analysis to target subgroup disaggregation and reflection. As a result, students with special needs continue to lag behind general education students.
- Deepen the level of parental participation in school programs and decision making to enable family understanding of and commitment to school goals.
  - Although the school has a functioning School Leadership Team, and a parent organization, parental involvement in decision making is limited. Parents commented that the school does not adequately address their questions and concerns and that communication is often difficult.
  - The principal has initiated a school newsletter and parents are invited to events such as the Holiday Extravaganza and the Writing Day celebration. In spite of this outreach, family leadership is minimal, limiting the possibilities for a strong home-school connection.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: Cobble Hill School for American Studies</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		<b>X</b>		
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?		<b>X</b>		
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?		<b>X</b>		
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?		<b>X</b>		
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?		<b>X</b>		
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>		
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?		<b>X</b>		

**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>	UD	D	P	WD
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		

**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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	

**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>	UD	D	P	WD
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		

Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed