

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Brooklyn Academy of Science and Environment

K547

**883 Classon Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11225**

Principal: Veronica Peterson

Dates of review: November 22-23, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Jill Herman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Brooklyn Academy of Science and Environment is a high school with 443 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 79% Black, 12% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 89.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders make decisions in resource allocations that are intentional and strategic in order to support and strengthen student achievement.
 - Scheduling and programming are organized so that teams of teachers share responsibility for similar students. They meet consistently and identify needs, and provide interdisciplinary reinforcement of skills necessary to achieve. The strongest teachers have intentionally been placed in ninth grade. The principal teaches 9th grade science.
 - Most classrooms have smart boards and portable computer labs. Textbooks and novels are evident in all classrooms. Science labs are well stocked. Additional courses are created meeting student needs as well as before school and after school for additional help. All students take four years of math and science, with varying options available in order to achieve school's goals and strengthen college ready skills.
- Teams of teachers and individual teachers gather and analyze a variety of data in order to improve their practice and improve student learning outcomes.
 - Teachers have created interim assessments aligned to standards, having identified expanded writing and academic vocabulary as an area of need. Students have struggled with understanding what is being asked of them on Regents exams. Results are shared in grade teams. Feedback is given that strengthens teacher practice in development of instruction that will meet the needs of learners in the classroom.
 - Individual teachers use a variety of classroom level work to continuously assess students' strengths and weaknesses in order to either provide additional enrichment or remediation in a timely fashion.
- Professional development supports school wide goals as well as targets individual teacher needs in order to elevate instructional practices.
 - All classrooms are implementing cooperative learning. Professional development is provided by principal on a rotating basis to each grade team. Various aspects are discussed and teachers reflect on their understanding and delivery. Intervistations are organized that focus on cooperative learning. Teachers write up visits to provide low inference data and feedback to each other in order to improve this strategy.
 - The principal and assistant principal take a variety of data into account as well as classroom observations before evaluating teachers or making tenure decisions. Several teachers have had probation extended. Feedback is timely and specific with administration supporting teachers through co-teaching, visiting other teachers, and providing clear doable suggestions.
- The school has structures that regularly evaluate academic decisions that have an impact on student learning.

- The school committee, comprised of administration and teachers, identified sub groups that have not been successful in classes or passing Regents in Global History. This has led to creating interim assessments aligned to standards as well as additional classes for students to be successful on exams and college level work.
- English teachers are adapting a common editing strategy across the grades. Social Studies teachers are developing required research papers in every grade that will introduce expectations of evolving standards. Through these processes and practices coherence is greatly increased resulting in capacity building for school community.
- Teacher teams are engaged in collaborative inquiry that improves student outcomes as well as develops autonomy and leadership of adults.
 - Using protocols, teacher teams meet by grade and share assignments, assessments, and student work of the bottom third which results in adjustments that improve both teaching and learning for students they share. Having analyzed student work, teachers have adjusted instruction and intentionally use vocabulary in their lessons that impact students' success on state exams.
 - Teachers rotate facilitation of team meetings. Content team leaders are on school committee ensuring communication and input on school decisions. Teams report that they have a strong voice in school decisions and considerable autonomy in their inquiry teams.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that rigor and higher order thinking skills are consistently embedded in academic tasks across grades and subject area in order to accelerate student learning.
 - Some classrooms demand problem solving and reasoning while others merely require the answer or recall of facts, not providing opportunities for students to practice and master skills that will prepare them for college.
 - Although cooperative learning groups are used as a strategy to meet the needs of different learners, tasks are not differentiated. A group might be doing the same problem but there is not consistent checking for understanding which leads to students often remaining confused or bored.
- Develop consistency in classroom activities that promote engagement and ensure a variety of learning opportunities so that all students can achieve at high levels.
 - Some classes start on time demanding participation, while others allow for side conversations and minimal engagement. Work products are inconsistent; some reflect very little evidence of required thinking skills or feedback from teachers leading to a lack of investment and understanding of next steps on the part of students.
 - There are some classrooms that use routines to check for understanding and provide opportunity for student voice while others use the form of cooperative learning without the processes of roles, task construction, time, and intentional group construction that would benefit a diversity of learners.

- Develop school wide strategies that promote trusting and respectful relationships that facilitate social/emotional growth and development in adolescents.
 - Learning Environment Survey reveals a bullying problem. Students report there is cyber bullying. Only one 9th grade classroom teacher did a month long project on it. An external partner, a social worker, also led discussions with some groups of students, but it has not permeated the school community, and students view this as peripheral to the school's concerns.
 - Many students indicated they are interested in learning and being successful academically. They stated that they have trusting relations with the two guidance counselors. A new structure has been put in place this year for 9th graders to improve relationships. Currently the Learning Environment Survey reflects that students are not comfortable going to teachers with problems. One student stated, "I don't have relationships with teachers. Why would I go to them?" Students believe that teachers' relations with them are solely academic and they are not personally connected to them.
- Strengthen and integrate support services that provide opportunities for teachers to integrate youth development practices into classrooms to enhance academic and personal growth of students.
 - School leaders are beginning to work with teachers in regard to tone and management skills in classrooms, and this effort requires strengthening in order to support students' emotional and social needs.
 - Although external partners are integral to the school community and provide opportunity for connections to real world learning, this is not currently integrated into the everyday life of the school.
- Expand and delineate necessary communication elements with students and families that inform all constituents of students' strengths, weaknesses, and next steps in order to improve outcomes.
 - The use of snap grades allows for students, families, and teachers to keep up to date on students' progress. Parents receive emails and phone calls. Deepening communication to include very specific strengths and areas for improvement, academically and behaviorally, as well as next steps, would strengthen student and family collaboration.
 - Currently, students are not engaged in the practice of reflecting on their own learning and are unable to state why they received a good or bad grade. Some teachers are beginning to develop this process in order to develop skills that will enhance student learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Brooklyn Academy of Science and Environment	UD	D	P	WD
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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		
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, 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	

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