

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**Brooklyn High School for Leadership and Community
Service**

**High School K616
300 Willoughby Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11205**

Principal: Georgia Kouriampalis

**Dates of review: May 3 - 4, 2011
Lead Reviewer: Jacqueline Grossman**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Brooklyn High School for Leadership and Community Service is a transfer high school with 216 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 72% Black, 25% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 60% of the students enrolled and girls account for 40%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 62.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's goals are effectively supported by structures and resources that enable the unique and individual challenges of its students to be met.
 - The school, in its early years, has invested wisely in abundant technology to support the engagement of their students and to provide access to tools, resources and systems that support different learning styles. Classroom observation yields many examples of technology being used for assessment, for visual learners, and for individual research, as well as for modeling by teachers.
 - Small class size, lunchtime tutoring by all teachers, community meetings, and a customized schedule all support highly individualized programmatic experiences for each student. Every structure in the school has been created in service to the overarching vision of helping these previously unsuccessful students attain their high school diplomas.
- The highly personalized culture successfully reconnects students to education, resulting in renewed aspirations for college and their lives.
 - The staff is deeply committed to ensuring that outside distractions do not impinge on students' safety or ability to learn. From the personal greetings each morning to the intense relationships each student builds with their individual advocate counselor, this level of personal attention to their academic, social and emotional needs is the key to students' maintaining a commitment to getting a high school diploma and in many cases, going on to college. Students are nurtured back to a state of vibrancy that reconnects them with their own goals. This one-on-one attention has enabled the school to double the number of students who passed the English Regents since their entry point, as well as double the number of students eligible for graduation in the space of a year.
- Constant scrutiny of a range of data results in the early identification of trends and enables the school to innovate to support student progress.
 - The school daily tracks the mitigating circumstances that contribute to absenteeism, and crafts incentives to counteract them. Attendance increases as each circumstance is addressed. An art therapy group, gender based support groups, and professional development opportunities have all been determined based on an analysis of relevant data sources such as the Learning Environment Survey or Regents results. This kind of flexible response has helped the school develop a strong culture of inclusiveness that supports these students in re-committing to their education and has helped many students accelerate in catching up on missed credits.
- User-friendly tools and processes provide transparent access to information, enabling students to clearly see the path towards graduation.

- Every two weeks, a simple yet sophisticated benchmark analysis process gives teachers clear information about which interventions and curricular alterations must be made to ensure students are learning. At the same time, it provides students with an easy-to-digest format and gives them a quick, constantly updated view of their own progress towards a diploma. This process has resulted in a significantly faster credit accumulation for students.
- Speed Conferencing occurs bi-monthly and enables the counseling and academic staffs to meet and coordinate services based on student progress. Transition Day, which occurs once per cycle, is a time for reflection and for planning ahead. Students use this day to develop their goals for the coming cycle, with the assistance of their advocate counselors; these goals are revisited biweekly during advisory. These processes result in a student body that understands their own progress towards graduation and takes ownership towards it.
- Effective support and evaluation of staff, ensures a common vision and creates a coherent experience for students.
 - New teachers are provided with genuine mentoring supports that help them develop reflective practice and have accelerated their progress as pedagogues. Work with content coaches and participation in professional development with external partners has given more senior teachers a chance to hone their craft. As a result, every teacher interviewed expressed that this school furthers their own professional aspirations and makes them more skilled at reaching this specific student population.
 - The principal is an effective supervisor who provides her staff with ongoing feedback. Teachers engage in a goal setting and reflection process, based on the benchmark analyses and on student work products, that ties teachers' growth areas together with the students' growth areas. There is a constant sharing of best practice both from the leadership to the teachers as well as between teachers themselves that contributes to a common vision.
- The school pays significant attention to urgent social and emotional needs, which enables students to prioritize and maintain a focus on academics.
 - Many students credit the school for redirecting their moral compasses in a manner that stimulates them intellectually and helps them to develop life goals. Students and staff both benefit from an intense and exemplary partnership with the community based organization that provides a myriad of social service connections, referrals for medical and mental health providers, and access to student internships that excite many students and give them insight in to the world of work. The two-way communication between the partner and the teachers makes each adult responsible for all aspects of a students' growth.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop rich curricula across subject areas to ensure that every classroom provides experiences that promote student engagement.

- Classes such as the documentary film making class or the poetry class are highly engaging, rich in both content and process, and promote higher order thinking. However, an inconsistency with respect to the development of rich, real-life curricula was evident in the traditional academic classes. There are missed opportunities for cross-department planning. In several classes, tasks and processes were uniform; indicating that planning to meet the needs of individual students was not as thorough.
- Ensure that assessment is used to drive each team and each teacher's planning and practice towards greater differentiation.
 - One teacher divided an assessment in to parts and checked it on the spot, and then used that data to target support immediately before students completed the second part. This additional scaffold helped students internalize and retain the material much more quickly. However, while most teachers utilize the benchmark grade analyses and unit tests to revisit certain standards or skills that were not mastered, they are not always using it to refine instruction to the point of true differentiation.
- Continue to deepen teaching practice that promotes classroom interactions between students and offers multiple entry points for success.
 - Many classes were dominated by meaningful student interactions while others were teacher dominated, even in classes with very few students. While students have been successfully reconnected to the importance of their education, they are not necessarily all pushed to achieve at the highest levels possible; there is a general level of engagement that is not deep enough for some students who are ready for more rigorous work.
 - The level of differentiated supports for students' personal needs is not matched by the same level of differentiation in some classrooms, where entry points are often the same for all students. This diminishes the ability of the students to truly address some of their academic deficiencies or address their strengths in ways that would be highly personal to them.
- Track the development of intellectual goals at the school, team, and teacher level to ensure they are used to drive instruction and promote reflection.
 - Goal setting, both at the team and student level, is typically focused on task completion rather than on deepening intellect. As a result, many students are unclear about how they are succeeding or improving or what skills they need to work on to be ready for college or careers.
 - While some teachers provide detailed feedback with clear next steps for growth, others provide minimally useful feedback that does not help students develop reflective practice, thus leading students to quantify their progress than speak of it in terms of quality. As a result, many students do not benefit intellectually in the same deep way as they do from their counseling support, and some students who are capable of achieving at higher levels are not pushed to do so with sufficient urgency.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Brooklyn High School for Leadership and Community Service	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>				
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>				
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