

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**P.S. 373 - Brooklyn Transition Center
High school K373**

**185 ELLERY STREET
BROOKLYN
NY 11206**

Principal: Regina Tottenham

Dates of review: May 28 - 30, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Barbara Joseph

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 373 - Brooklyn Transition Center is a high school with 340 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 63% Black, 31% Hispanic, 4% White, 1% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 62% of the students enrolled and girls account for 38%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 83.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school provides an integrated network of supports and partnerships to promote students' personal growth and improve post secondary outcomes. (4.4)
 - o The school provides ongoing training to staff on techniques and strategies to promote positive behavior support to students. 100% of the teachers are trained in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention and the foundational elements of Emotional Literacy. The school has implemented the Get Ready to Learn (GRTL) Program in classes for students with autism as well as the use of a sensory cart by occupational therapists to individualize sensory routines for students who exhibit self regulation disorders. This ongoing training along with the implementation and monitoring of the school's positive behavior support programs has led to a 5% decrease in incidents compared to last year.
 - o The school has extensive partnerships with community based organizations and agencies to provide support services for students and families including academic, social emotional and vocational training to prepare students for post secondary outcomes. The school has over 20 established work sites across Brooklyn that provide students with part- and full-time job training and academic instruction to develop the specific job skills needed for potential employment as well as in house vocational programs to improve employment eligibility. The school is working collaboratively with the Association for the Help of Retarded Children to initiate the Medicaid service coordination process so students and families have appropriate services and supports and are eligible for supported employment when they age-out at 21. All students graduating this year (42) have been placed in part- or full-time supported employment. The school started the District 75 paraprofessional training program and partners with Brooklyn Developmental Disabilities Office enabling some students, currently 11, to receive classroom instruction while gaining hands on training through internships in District 75 classrooms. This program has a significant success rate with 92% of graduates being hired as full time paraprofessionals with the Department Of Education. Through the Community Based Organization partnerships and the expansion of job related activities in the school, administration has exceeded its goal of increasing vocational opportunities for students by 10%, resulting in greater opportunities for appropriate post secondary placements.
- A school culture of mutual respect and positive attitudes towards learning supports the social/emotional growth of students and adults, resulting in a strong commitment for student success by all stakeholders. (1.4)
 - o Across the school relationships are respectful and warm towards students and between staff. Staff collaborates to ensure a safe and orderly environment for learning to take place. The implementation of school wide positive behavior support programs has a direct impact on student social-emotional growth. Attendance is improving steadily, evident in the 2% increase from last year. The daily routine of the GRTL program in individual classes is having an impact on decreasing the number of Level 3 incidents by 73% for students with autism and 14% for students in 12:1:1 alternate assessment classes as compared to last year. The institution of Friday student-teacher conferences is providing opportunities for teachers to meet with students individually to discuss their specific learning needs and next steps. At the student meeting, students expressed they feel safe at school and know how to get help when they need it.

They also expressed their dreams and goals for what they want to do when they graduate, including becoming a paraprofessional through the paraprofessional training program. The Student Government has been responsible for working with administration to implement a variety of activities including basketball, the Mighty Milers running club and Project Lockers. Family Friendship Days is providing a forum for parents and guardians to meet with staff and outside agencies to provide them with information and support. This school passionately supports students, their families and teachers in meeting the individual needs of every student.

- The school leadership makes strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and impact learning for all students. (1.3)
 - o The school uses resources creatively to support the learning needs of the students and staff and to support school goals. The strategic use of school funds to purchase interactive whiteboards for every classroom and iPads supports greater variety of instructional strategies and curriculum design across the school. The hiring of substitute teachers monthly enables the school to conduct professional development for staff on a variety of content and instructional techniques. The implementation of the GRTL program this year across the classes for students with autism impacts their ability to sustain attention and focus on learning, resulting in a decrease in Level 3 and Level 4 incidents. The purchase and use of the Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI) and UNIQUE Curriculum provides formative and benchmark progress information on students in alternate assessment and informs instructional groupings. The differentiation of instruction results in more challenging and engaging tasks, resulting in a 15% increase in student achievement in English language arts and a 20% increase in math scores as compared to the Fall SANDI baseline data. Schedules are planned so all teachers, including related service providers, meet weekly to look at student work and data in order to make instructional decisions. Student /Teacher conferences scheduled every Friday are impacting student ownership of their learning. Brown bag lunches for teachers and regularly scheduled paraprofessional lunches give staff the opportunity to collaborate with administration on instructional and organizational topics. As a result, teachers report that they feel supported in improving their pedagogy to promote higher levels of student achievement.
- A vision for future development is understood and supported by all stakeholders and is evident in clear, focused data-based school goals to accelerate student learning and improve social emotional growth. (3.1)
 - o The administration has developed targeted goals to improve math and English performance, student engagement and behavior as well as increase vocational and job related experiences. These goals were developed collaboratively with all school stakeholders including parents and the School Leadership Team. After reviewing various data sources and prioritizing student needs, goals and action plans were crafted with a focus on the transition, academic, functional, vocational and social-emotional skills needed to prepare students with varying levels of ability for "post-21" outcomes. As a result, the school community has a unified vision of what achievement looks like for its students and the steps needed to reach its goals.
- School leaders gather and analyze a variety of information and data on student learning to make organizational and instructional decisions. (2.1)

- Administration and teachers, including related service providers, look at a diversity of data, including formative data, end of the unit assessments, low inference teacher data collection, behavioral and individual education plan (IEP) data as well as student work in English language arts and math to make organizational and instructional decisions. Particular attention is given to the continuum of prompting levels used by staff to promote independence in skill mastery. The school uses the SANDI assessment three times a year to provide additional periodic information on student progress towards mastery of IEP goals. As a result, this year the school is able to identify and group students based on their present level of performance in order to further differentiate instruction that is aligned and/or linked to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), resulting in a greater than 5% increase in English language arts and math performance.
- Teacher development is supported by a universally understood and adopted research-based framework to ensure that all teachers receive ongoing feedback to promote professional growth and improve student outcomes. (4.1)
 - o The school is participating this year in the Department of Education's Talent Management Pilot to improve teacher effectiveness. Administration uses ARIS Learn to capture informal and formal observation information and feedback to teachers, utilizing the research-based Danielson Framework for Teaching. Administration observes every teacher a minimum of six times and provides actionable feedback after each observation. An analysis of each teacher's Professional Learning Plan and classroom observations indicated a need to provide professional development for staff on Webb's Depth of Knowledge and questioning strategies to promote student engagement and provide rigorous, differentiated and relevant instruction for students with diverse cognitive abilities. The frequent observations and feedback to teachers informs teacher assignments, tenure decisions and professional development plans, resulting in improved classroom practice and student increases in English language arts and math skills as evidenced in the Student Learning Portfolios.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop systems for measuring progress towards meeting interim and long-term goals so that plans can be modified and communicated across the school to impact student progress. (5.3)
 - Through the IEP tracking form, the school-wide 3 tiered rubric and the development of the Student Learning Portfolio, teachers and administration have a variety of data to review and measure student progress. However, the school has not yet integrated a systematic, transparent student tracking system that enables teachers and administration to collaboratively analyze and measure progress more frequently towards meeting the specific criteria embedded in each student's interim and long-term IEP goals. Without this system, school leaders, teacher teams and teachers are restricted in strategically making the appropriate instructional adjustments needed to improve student learning, therefore the school's capacity to close the achievement gap is hindered.
- Deepen the system for how all teachers and teacher teams use a range of information to identify strengths and needs of students in order to make informed instructional decisions. (2.2)

- Teachers and teacher teams use a variety of data, including SANDI, Brigance, Level 1 Vocational assessments, behavioral including GRTL data as well as other low inference and programmatic data, to determine academic, vocational and functional needs of students. The school agreed to administer the SANDI midyear to benchmark student progress towards mastery of selected skills linked to IEP goals. An IEP tracking form has been developed to track student progress on a monthly basis and the 373K Differentiated Rubric is used across the school to assess on a 1-4 scale if the essential elements of a task have been met, but it lacks specific content assessment information based on the task alignment/connection to the CCLS necessary to make specific instructional decisions. There is inconsistency in the frequency of teachers monitoring student performance data and then adjusting instruction and student groupings based on the findings as part of the measurement criteria written within individual IEP goals, limiting higher levels of academic and functional skill improvement.
- Continue to build upon the practices of differentiated instruction so that all students are appropriately challenged with rigorous tasks to accelerate levels of achievement. (1.2)
 - The school uses the SANDI assessment tool and the Unique curriculum to provide targeted standards based instruction to support the mastery of each student's IEP goals. Students are functionally group in classes based on the SANDI baseline information to differentiate instruction to meet the individual needs of students in alternate assessment. Even though students are functionally grouped, students' reading levels are not evident, nor are there identified student deficit skill areas in reading and writing. In addition, the school does not cohesively use a foundational reading program to further develop literacy skills. Some classes for students with autism utilize communication systems programmatically and teacher's craft open-ended questions so that lessons encourage student dialogue, but individual communication systems are not consistently used with students who require an alternate means of communication. Questioning does not consistently engage students with the appropriate level of rigor. Consequently, there are lost opportunities to promote the generalization of skills, higher order thinking skills and the supports needed for students to reach their fullest academic potential.
- Increase the consistency of rigor to ensure that there is an emphasis on developing higher order thinking skills across all classrooms and worksites in order to challenge all learners. (1.1)
 - The school is working to connect assessment through the use of the SANDI to develop meaningful IEP goals that are aligned and connected to the CCLS in order to plan instruction that meets the individual needs of each student. The use of Unique curriculum across all classrooms is helping to ensure the differentiation of instruction across the school. There is an emphasizes on key standards in reading and writing to meet the citywide instructional expectations and the administration is focused on integrating key standards and the mastery of IEP goals into service learning projects across the school community. Teacher teams look at student work and data using the monthly data tracking form and differentiated rubric to make instructional decisions. The administration is focused on providing professional development in order to develop teachers' questioning skills to promote higher order thinking and the generalization of skills in and outside the classroom. However, there is inconsistency across all learning environments with regard to the level of challenge presented to all students, thus hindering the school's capacity to close the achievement gap.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 373 - Brooklyn Transition Center	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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?			X	
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?			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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			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	
1..4 Integrate child/youth development, guidance/advisement 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, with particular attention to the CCLS?			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
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