

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**Brooklyn School for Global Studies**

**15K429**

**284 Baltic Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11201**

**Principal: Joseph O'Brien**

**Dates of review: May 8 - 9, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Aimee Horowitz**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Brooklyn School for Global Studies is a middle /secondary school with 342 students from sixth through grade 12. The school population comprises 55% Black, 38% Hispanic, 4% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 29% special education students. Boys account for 57% of the students enrolled and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 86.3%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Strategic organizational, resource, and scheduling decisions are aligned with student learning needs and support improved student outcomes. (1.3)
  - Based on scholarship reports, periodic assessments, and lowest third data, targeted middle and high school students are provided with double periods of math and English language arts (ELA) instruction. Further, weekly inquiry meetings provide opportunities for teams to target instruction to meet students' needs. As a result, credit accumulation increased, graduation rates increased by 8% in the 2011 school year with this year's projected increase to be 5%. In addition, the pass rate on the ELA Regents increased by 7% to 83% with 65% of students with disabilities passing. The high school has already made adequate yearly progress (AYP) in ELA for students with disabilities, English language learners (ELLs), and for students in the Black subgroup. Through weekly department meetings curriculum for courses culminating with Performance Based Assessment Tasks (PBATs) have been redesigned to align with Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and to have skills needed to complete PBATs embedded into the course. Students now begin PBAT completion prior to their senior year. This has increased PBAT completion rates and improved PBAT quality.
- Effective programs and collaborations provide learning opportunities that support students' social emotional and academic needs. (4.4)
  - The school's guidance and college counselors, deans, and social worker in collaboration with community based organizations and higher educational institutions effectively support students' social emotional and academic development as well as advisement for college. Juniors and seniors meet individually with the college advisor, who is also focusing attention on creating college experiences for students in lower grades. Students and families articulate that students are attaining college readiness skills for post secondary success and are college bound. A wide range of collaborations including partnerships with The Roundabout Theatre Company, CUNY At Home, The After School Corporation, Catholic Charities, Long Island College Hospital, Urban Ambassadors, and CAMBA strengthen academic growth, support a college going culture, provide real world learning experiences, and bolster social emotional growth.
- Students and families appreciate the school's focused effort on maintaining a safe and inclusive environment that supports students' academic and social emotional growth. (1.4)
  - Analysis of the Learning Environment Survey (LES), attendance data, and incident reports guided the school in implementing a guidance approach to behavior such that deans in addition to the guidance counselors also counsel students who violate the Discipline Code so that they reflect on their behavior and how to avoid repeating it. At Town Halls students are educated about the Discipline Code, respect for diversity,

anti-bullying, and issues pertinent to school culture. At Town Halls students' academic achievement, attendance, and citizenship are celebrated. During Respect for All week students created anti-bullying buttons and student government created an assembly program to engage students in conversations about bullying through drama. Motivation Week Town Hall meetings aided students in learning what they need to do successfully to complete high school. Each student wrote a pledge explaining what they would do to be successful. Students state, "We all have goals and we are constantly encouraged to achieve our goals and set higher goals." As a result, incidents have markedly decreased. For example, in the 2011-2012 school year as compared to the 2010-2011 school year hallway incidents decreased from 69 to 40, classroom incidents decreased from 94 to 89, gymnasium incidents decreased from 19 to 5, and cafeteria incidents decreased from 35 to 8. Further, attendance has increased from 84% to 87%, and Regents passing and PBAT completion has increased as has credit accumulation.

- Students engage in school wide decision making through student government and indicate that school leaders seek, welcome, and are responsive to their suggestions on how to improve the school. As a result of students desiring additional course offerings, the school now has a music program, Advanced Placement English, drama, an Internet and Computing Core Certification (ic3) course, and an SAT preparation course. To build campus unity, students organized a dance with their co-located school and are planning to organize additional events. Students state, "Teachers push us to do our work and to graduate. They know us personally and are always here to help us before and after school, during lunch, and on Saturdays. We are like a family, we are a community."
- Through the use of a framework, focused observation feedback provides clear expectations, strengths, and next steps to improve teacher practice and increase student learning. (4.1)
  - The principal, assistant principals, and teacher mentors engage in frequent, focused classroom observations and analysis of student work providing teachers with actionable Danielson aligned feedback. Feedback in observations is based on strengths, areas of need, and next steps. Teachers are then prescribed targeted professional development from the ARIS Best Practices Library. Coupled with the rubric and the extensive professional development around the Danielson domains, short frequent snapshots provide a common language around expectations and feedback that furthers teachers assessing their own progress, understanding their own needs, and setting goals to improve practice to increase student achievement.
  - Special and general education teachers are intentionally paired to support teacher development, to collaborate to enhance their practice, and to support student progress. Strategic teacher assignments target student need. For example, to improve pedagogy in high school integrated team teaching (ICT) classes, a special educator moved from the middle school and now hosts a model ICT classroom, which other teachers visit. As a result scholarship in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade Global History and in 11<sup>th</sup> grade United States History classes has increased.

- Students and families are aware of the school's high expectations and of the many supports available to ensure students achieve them. (3.4)
  - Teachers, social workers, deans, guidance and college counselors, in conjunction with school leaders consistently convey high expectations to students and their families for academic achievement, social emotional growth, and that students attend college after high school. Students state, "Here a "B" is not good enough. We need to get "A's"; we need to graduate with good grades so we can get into good colleges. Our roundtables (PBATs) prepare us for college. We have to do research, present our work, respond to questions, and write a cover letter to accompany our roundtables explaining our struggles, challenges, successes and what it has meant to us in terms of the school's mission of 'understanding ourselves, the world, and how to make change'." Parents report that they are constantly informed of the school's expectations at the PTA and School Leadership Team (SLT) meetings as well as being invited to Town Hall Meetings. They are supported in helping students meet expectations through workshops including how to help their children with homework, how to prepare them for college, and with programs to either study a second language with their child or to learn English.
- The school analyzes a wide range of data to surface school wide trends and inform curriculum so that instruction is targeted to meet students' needs. (2.1)
  - The administration analyzes mock and regular Regents item analysis, scholarship and attendance data, State exams, Periodic Assessments, PBAT completion results and other formative and summative data. The results are used to target instruction to meet identified needs of the school and subgroups. An analysis of math data revealed that students in all subgroups had difficulty with slope and intercepts and in solving inequalities. As a result, the math team has worked to vertically align curriculum, to explore and use new strategies, and to continuously spiral back to these concepts providing students with many opportunities to gain proficiency. Last year's low senior PBAT completion rate led the school to infuse PBAT's throughout the students' high school education, to have students present projects when they complete them, and to redesign PBAT courses to be project based with skills needed for PBAT completion, infused throughout the course. Accordingly, 85% of current seniors have completed all PBATs. Further as a result of targeted English instruction, as of midyear, students with disabilities, ELLs, and students in the Black subgroup have made adequate yearly progress.

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

- Establish consistency in higher order questioning, providing extensions, and differentiating resources so that all students can access learning materials and participate in learning at high levels. (1.2)
  - While professional development around Danielson focused on effective questioning and creating CCLS aligned tasks, not all teachers engage students in higher order thinking through questioning and writing tasks. Teachers scaffold activities so that struggling students have access at their instructional level however, accountable talk, student to student discussion, meaningful student collaboration, and extended student

responses are minimal. Students are not yet pushed to generate thought around their own high level questions. While high school students are engaged in research, they mainly produce reports of information. Student research is not yet based on student generated high level questions. Consequently, not all learners are pushed to think and write at high levels and self guided inquiry is limited as evidenced in student to student discourse and student work products.

- Increase consistency of rigor to facilitate critical thinking, evidence based discourse, and higher order work products to ensure that all students are cognitively engaged. (1.1)
  - Some teachers plan learning activities that include tasks requiring the use of manipulatives and incorporate the use of visuals, which make some lessons relevant with real world applications. However, questions and tasks that facilitate higher order thinking are not incorporated across all content areas and grade levels. Further, learning tasks are not consistently aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to support a rigorous curriculum. As a result, the lack of curriculum maps designed to consistently target higher order tasks that cognitively engage all students in problem solving and higher order thinking limits opportunities for students to produce extended responses to text with evidence based discourse that integrate CCLS to promote post-secondary readiness.
- Use ongoing checks for understanding consistently and provide students opportunities to self assess and determine next steps for growth. (2.2)
  - While the school consistently uses Acuity, Performance Series, common midterm exams, mock Regents data, exit tickets, and other formative and summative data to analyze student performance and identify students' needs, progress is not yet systematically tracked to inform instructional decisions and adjust curriculum maps in order to support achievement of sub groups.
  - While some teachers employ the post-it method or exit tickets to check for understanding, use of ongoing checks for understanding during lessons was limited. This impedes teachers' ability to gather information to make "on the spot" adjustments ensuring they are meeting all students' learning needs. Further, opportunities for students to self assess are limited, hindering their awareness of next steps to advance their learning.
- Develop structures to consistently engage families and students in regular cycles of feedback and reciprocal conversations so they understand and are aware of student progress towards meeting expectations. (2.4)
  - Some teachers use Skedula to track class grades and all students receive individual progress reports each marking period. However, systems and structures are not in place to provide parents and students access to, and support in using this system to engage in a shared dialogue with teachers. Thus, the absence of structured support systems to provide families with information on student progress towards meeting class and school expectations in a timely manner lessens their ability to understand their children's performance and provide support for their growth.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Brooklyn School for Global Studies	UD	D	P	WD
<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>	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?		<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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			<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>	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?				<b>X</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?		<b>X</b>		
<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.</b>				
<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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			<b>X</b>	

<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?			<b>X</b>				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
4.4 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?			<b>X</b>				
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>