

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**Park Slope Collegiate**

**Middle High School K464**

**237 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

**Brooklyn**

**NY 11215**

**Principal: Jill Bloomberg**

**Dates of review: April 2 - 3, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Anita Skop**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Park Slope Collegiate is a middle-high school with 388 students from Grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 32% Black, 52% Hispanic, 6% White, and 9% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 84.2%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school's rich and coherent curriculum provides numerous opportunities for students to develop their skills in alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards. (1.1)
  - The school sees the Common Core Learning Standards as a key component in reaching their "college for all" goals and has worked extensively to integrate these standards into the curriculum. A strong emphasis on rubric based writing in all content areas and across all grades focuses on "claim and counterclaim," a surfaced gap identified by in-depth evaluation of student tasks. This alignment of curriculum is evident in all classes, for all students including special needs students and English Language Learners and is supported by the school's work with Universal Design for Learning. In addition weekly on demand writing with textual evidence in social studies and English classes, as well as extensive questioning as a protocol in mathematics and science classes reinforces this integration. This has resulted in expanded quantities of improved rubric based student writing and a deeper understanding of college level demands by students, faculty and parents.
  
- A culture of positive attitudes and ongoing support empowers all students to see themselves as having the potential to thrive academically and become successful in life. (1.4)
  - Responding to concerns raised in the school's 2011 Learning Environment Survey, the school had developed several protocols to ensure that students connect to staff and education in a meaningful way. Using a "Restorative Approach," and a teacher created curriculum, students meet weekly in "Circles" discussion groups. These meetings are designed with detailed protocols that give all students a voice and a venue to discuss powerful topics in a low risk environment. As a result, students have greater respect for each other, lowering the number of incidents. To quote one student, "Circles is cool, confidential, not forced; it helps you to know people and see what you have in common."
  - Students are well known to all teachers and consistently participate in daily morning and after school tutoring. These sessions deepen student-teacher bonds and develop collaborative understandings of student needs at both academic and social levels. Attendance is addressed through consistent routines and automated phone and email messages to parents, as well as parent conferences with the guidance counselors and principal as necessary. Thus, the school has a culture that does not give up on any student, custom-tailoring interventions to targeted needs and, ensuring that all students reach their academic potential.
  
- The principal strategically targets all resources and all organizational decisions to enhanced student capacity as the school's top priority. (1.3)
  - Addressing the needs of the whole child to ensure academic and social success has caused the school to prioritize guidance and college

admissions support. Two full time guidance counselors and a full time college advisor take the place of deans at this small school. Further, the school only has one assistant principal and one secretary so as to ensure there is funding for two full time Spanish teachers and an academic program that requires students to take four years of mathematics and four years of science. Decisions relating to student support are also made thoughtfully with a structure for 55 minute classes and an early morning support period; this enables teachers to meet in teams for embedded Friday afternoon sessions in addition to other team meetings. These structural decisions have resulted in a highly collaborative and cohesive culture where the faculty is deeply connected to the student body and sees their own accountability in helping even struggling students meet school wide goals. Consequently, teachers take real responsibility for student success and proudly cite the 81% six year graduation rate.

- The school's overarching belief that all students can and will attend college is shared by the administration and staff, and communicated continually to parents and students, raising expectation levels in the entire community. (3.4)
  - In line with the school's overarching goal of "college for all," students are mandated to complete four years of science and mathematics. In addition, seniors are required to maintain a full program, signaling to both parents and students that every year in high school prepares one for college. Further, the school's Brooklyn History course was recently certified by the Department of Education as a college preparatory course. As a result of these measures, the school's Progress Report College Preparatory Course Index has risen by 63.5% to 82.0%.
  - A full time college advisor works to ensure that students and families are supported throughout the entire admissions process. Students routinely tour colleges as juniors and then reflectively identify their options. Every stage, including the financial aid application, is supported by the advisor, who meets with each family and shares insights and advice. Student application essays are crafted as part of senior English classes, and acceptances are proudly listed by student on the school's bulletin board. Therefore, students see college as the expected next step schoolwide and parents now see this as a viable option for their children.
- Teacher led teams meet regularly to reflect on student work and instructional practices, deepening collegial support and leadership skills schoolwide. (4.2)
  - Weekly team meetings at both the grade and department level as well as the use of a school based option that provides extended times for Friday meetings, enable school staff to reflectively assess student work and target instructional changes to address delineated needs. Through the work of the teacher teams, the school was able to evaluate the Common Core Learning Standards English language arts task across grades and identify the need to strengthen the claim/counterclaim protocol in student writing. Using distributed leadership at the team level, teachers developed an ongoing series of instructional rubrics and practices that deepened the quality of writing schoolwide. Students were consistently held accountable for reaching this level of rigor, thus improving student achievement.

- An extraordinary commitment to meeting the needs of the whole child has led to strong guidance and academic supports for all students and families, and an embedded culture of college and career readiness. (4.4)
  - In order to address the significant social-emotional and academic needs of students and improve student achievement, the school has provided professional development for teachers in the “4Rs” respectful behavior curriculum through the Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility. In addition, teachers are required to attend all disciplinary hearings to ensure that parents, students and staff develop a collaborative plan. Further support is provided by the consistent presence of the two full time guidance counselors and the college advisor, and partnerships with the Park Slope Family Mental Health Clinic, the Atlantic Theater Company and an extensive grant funded afterschool program as well as “Teen Battle Chef,” college tours, student government, a debate team and a school newspaper. As a result, students are exposed to a wide range of real world opportunities that accelerate academic and personal growth.

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

- Enhance the consistency of teacher pedagogy to ensure that all students are routinely engaged in higher order thinking. (1.2)
  - Teaching practices are consistently aligned to a coherent set of beliefs as to how students learn best, and the school has begun to work with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL). For example the school consistently encourages student discussion and utilizes rubrics to assess writing and define expectations in alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards. Additionally, complex text is first read aloud by the teacher to establish context and provide additional points of access for a range of students, a key recommendation of UDL. In addition, students are generally engaged in instruction and student work products reflect a growing level of understanding. However, classroom instructional practices such as literal questioning, seen in some content area classes, do not routinely challenge all students to reach higher planes of thinking in all subjects. Hence, student learning is not rigorous enough to impact achievement for all students in all disciplines.
- Deepen the level of assessment analysis to more closely define and address student trends in all subgroups. (2.2)
  - Teachers and teacher teams develop task specific rubrics and assessments that align to the school’s key standards and enable them to routinely appraise the progress and needs of each student at the classroom level. Because of the small size of the school, however, data analysis is typically targeted to improvement at the individual student level. Consequently, student trends are not as deeply reflected upon through item skills analysis for the Regents, state assessments and teacher developed evaluations. Additionally, ongoing checks for understanding are not yet firmly embedded in all classrooms. As a result, changes to instructional practices do not always sufficiently address overall student achievement.

- Ensure that feedback to teachers reflects documented next steps and a timeline for support and further review. (4.1)
  - The principal meets with each teacher and sets collaborative goals, determined by ongoing cycles of observations using a research based framework and reflections on student work. These goals then determine the targeted professional development aligned to teacher needs, especially for those new to the profession. The principal also conferences with teachers after these observations to discuss next steps. Despite the consistent oral feedback, written feedback that establishes a timely trajectory for targeted next steps and future follow-up is not routinely provided to teachers. As a result, there is no written protocol deeply embedded in the school's culture that routinely enables the administration to monitor teacher growth and reflect on prioritized teacher needs to ensure they are adequately addressed. This hinders teacher understanding of discussed expectations for improved classroom practice, and thereby negatively impacts student growth.
- Expand the use of all forms of student data to refine the systems that evaluate teacher effectiveness schoolwide. (5.4)
  - School leaders regularly evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams in developing schoolwide coherence and the consistency of curricular implementation through team visits, review of team minutes, and reflection on student work presented. However, protocols that utilize data to measure team success are not as firmly rooted in the evaluation process. Therefore, the direct correlation between team effectiveness and student growth is not as reliably measured, limiting the administration's ability to support teams and positively impact instructional practices.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

|   |           |          |          |           |
|---|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>School name: Park Slope Collegiate</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 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>   | <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, 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>   | <b>UD</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>P</b> | <b>WD</b> |
| 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> |