

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**Cobble Hill School of American Studies
High school K519**

**347 BALTIC STREET
BROOKLYN
NY 11201**

Principal: Anna Maria Mule

**Dates of review: November 14, 2011
Lead Reviewer: Catherine M. Powis**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Cobble Hill School of American Studies is a High school with 693 students from grade 9 through grade 9. The school population comprises 72% Black, 22% Hispanic, 3% White, 2% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 41% of the students enrolled and girls account for 59%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 80.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders engage all stakeholders in developing school level goals that are evident in school planning documents and are beginning to guide second year school-wide improvement plans thereby improving college and career readiness. (3.1)
 - As a second year transformation school, school leaders enlist parents, students and faculty to form a transformation team that engages in a general review of data which includes scholarship data, curriculum audit, progress report and quality review results. Matching action plans in the school's Comprehensive Education Plan and transformation documents are linked to trends, accomplishments, and barriers to success as per 2010 Quality Review, and State accountability data. As a result, students in cohort 2011 show more progress in first quarter course pass rate than students in cohort 2010, and teacher turnaround is lower than last year.
- Families are informed of student performance and use online tools to access student information leading to an increased understanding of academic and social-emotional expectations. (2.4)
 - Families share that teachers reach out to them or are always available via email, phone, or a visit to the school to discuss their child's behavioral and academic successes and challenges. Additionally, parents benefit from their daily access to a school-based electronic system for checking attendance, grades and homework to further understand and monitor progress. Therefore, stronger home-school connections and greater communication with parents promote collaborative efforts to increase student support and improve learning.
- School-based programs and external partnerships cultivate a nurturing school environment that supports youth development and improved learning for students. (4.4)
 - A peer leadership program engages students in the college experience through visits to colleges. For example, seniors visited Yale University for four days and those who attended agree with one student's comments, "We learned a lot about college expectations from the college coaches on that trip." Selected peer leaders shared that they planned an "SAT Jeopardy contest to get lower grade students hyped up about college." Additionally, CUNY College Now provides a collaborative program to help prepare students for high school graduation and success in college. As a result, over 93% of the 2010 cohort graduates applied and were accepted to CUNY colleges.
 - Partnership for Children, a community-based organization, provides an after school program to strengthen attendance, social-emotional skills and behavior, and credit accumulation for identified students. Advisors empower students with skill sets for success in high school and beyond. Consequently, the program is successful in supporting struggling students by improving attendance, grades, and self-esteem and behavior at home and school. Student attendance is on track to be higher than last year from 76.5% to 82.1% to date.
- Faculty benefit from emerging professional collaborations that provide them opportunities to develop pedagogy together and make key curriculum decisions that improve student outcomes. (4.2)

- o All teacher teams meet more frequently this year. For example, 9th and 10th grade teachers now meet four periods per week to engage in lesson study, analyze data, and look at teacher tasks and student work. A budding practice of collaborative inquiry cycle is beginning to support curriculum mapping processes and alignment to the Common Core. Master teachers are empowered to facilitate the work of teams intended to improve student outcomes. Team meetings are emerging as the core of professional development that moves the school forward in student progress and performance.
- School leaders and faculty are more deliberate in using data organization tools that enable them to capture and track student data leading to data-informed curricular and instructional planning. (2.3)
 - o An online assessment management system provides school leaders and staff the capability to organize, analyze and track student achievement and progress data. Teachers create electronic spreadsheets of their grade books to capture the progress of students. Administration uses the same online grading tool to gather and organize student data to determine trends in graduation and diploma eligibility through customized reports. This information is used to inform decisions related to student programming, academic interventions, and lesson planning.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop consistency in teachers' capacity to create rigorous tasks that align to key standards resulting in higher levels of cognitive engagement for all learners. (1.1)
 - o The school participated in the 2010-2011 NYC Department of Education Performance Assessment Pilot Program. Ninth and 10th grade teacher teams received support in developing academic tasks that enables students to think critically and gain higher order skills. Ninth and 10th grade English curriculum maps reflect a vertical alignment to key standards in content and text complexity. However, assessing and norming the rigor of academic tasks against research-based measures and unit of study rubrics by teams is not yet purposeful and consistent. In turn, review of student work products revealed misalignments between the lesson's objectives and the use of instructional resources that encourage critical thinking to achieve the intended outcomes. Additionally, expansion of the work to different grades and subjects is not yet consistent. As a result content area maps such as Global History are imprecise thus hampering student achievement in Regents passing rate especially for students with disabilities and English language learners.
- Improve teacher practices and academic tasks so that all lessons are challenging, differentiated, and extend student thinking to maximize learning for all students, with particular attention to students with disabilities and English language learners. (1.2)
 - o Teachers engage students in a variety of learning experiences aligned to the school's curriculum. However, projects and tasks are not inconsistently differentiated to ensure the multiple opportunities for comprehension for all learners. Furthermore, questioning techniques and lesson planning do not always reflect the lesson study work being done by the 9th and 10th grade teacher teams. Student notebooks are generally unorganized and note taking is inconsistent with little evidence of what learning takes place during lessons. Consequently, students not performing at proficiency tend to produce work that does not expand their thinking or show evidence of the basic understanding of the grade level curriculum content and skills intended to be taught. As a result, English language

learners and students with disabilities lag behind higher achievers in making adequate gains in achievement and reducing dropout rates.

- Strengthen organizational decisions to ensure that structures in place support instructional goals thereby leading to higher student outcomes. (1.3)
 - o A block program schedule increases and extends common planning time for teacher teams to meet. This time offers teachers an opportunity to further develop their collaborative lesson study process and inquiry work. to accomplish content course requirements and also carves out frequent time to improve student outcomes. However, teacher assignments, including those teaching collaborative teacher team (CTT) classes are not effective in meeting the needs of selected students for these classes. As a result student work products lag behind those of other grade level classes and progress is hampered especially for special education students.
- Strengthen the processes for classroom observations to ensure coherent effective feedback to teachers in order to improve instructional practices and student outcomes. (4.1)
 - o As part of the school's transformation plan a research-based rubric designed to norm expectations for teacher practice was implemented during the last school year. In turn, the principal and assistant principal joined by a mentor principal are working to create structures and tools for frequent, unannounced classroom observations. However, the provision of timely feedback to teachers relating to strengths, weaknesses and next steps, as evidenced in student work, is inconsistent. Additionally, a common understanding of feedback between school leaders and teachers that is explicitly aligned to the selected framework with clear expectations for improvement is inconsistent across supervisors. Consequently, across classrooms strengthening teacher practice is uneven thus hampering students' academic and behavioral outcomes.
- Ensure assessment practices at the team and classroom level align with curricula and provide ongoing identification of specific learning needs of students in order to make adjustments in instructional decisions resulting in improved student outcomes. (2.2)
 - o Teacher teams guided by master teachers are developing unit assessments across subjects. Regents-based rubrics and some task-specific rubrics to assess student work are evident on some classroom and hall bulletin boards. However, in most instances rubrics tend to lack rigor and direct alignment to curricula. Additionally, the use of rubrics by teachers and students to establish baseline criteria and benchmarks of progress is not yet prevalent across the school. Most students do not understand how rubrics tell them how good is good enough, since they are not explicitly taught how to consistently scrutinize their work against the appropriate rubric. This hampers the integration of more granular, ongoing formative assessment data into daily classroom practice in order to provide a clear picture of the strengths and challenges of student sub-groups, resulting in uninformed instructional decisions that impede student learning.
 - o School leaders and faculty are working diligently to put a school-wide system in place to improve formative assessment practices. Teacher teams as well as individual teachers are developing a range of techniques and checklists to monitor student progress. However, there is a lack of consistency across classrooms and subject areas in what data should be captured by teachers , how to incorporate frequent checks of understanding in lesson planning, and developing techniques for students to learn to peer- and self- assess their work. As a result, teachers do not

make timely adjustments in their lesson planning to meet the needs of all learners, especially English language learners and special education students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Cobble Hill School of American Studies	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		
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?			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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