

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The Brooklyn Academy of Global Finance
High School 688

125 STUYVESANT AVENUE
BROOKLYN
NY 11221

Principal: Kavita Gupta

Dates of review: November 22, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Sarah Goodman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Brooklyn Academy of Global Finance is a high school with 152 students from grade 9 through grade 11. The school population comprises 70% Black, 27% Hispanic, 0% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 23% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 86.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's strategic decisions support the school's instructional goals. (1.3)
 - The new assistant principal, and several newly hired staff members, bring prior experience allowing them to successfully work with students who often face a variety of personal and academic challenges, leading to a reduced level of incidences in the classrooms and hallways. While addressing the climate of the school, actions taken continue to develop the Global Finance theme of the school, now in its third year. During the past year, the principal actively recruited educators that have the skills and experience to support the finance theme and build student achievement, a former college accounting instructor now teaches an accounting class at the school, and there is a new Mandarin teacher. In December, teachers from the foreign language and finance departments will use a new state-of-the-art language lab as well as a new classroom/trading center to further engage students in learning tasks directly related to the world of international economics.
 - Teachers' programs allow for grade team and content area meetings. English teachers, who work alongside a New Visions coach experienced in literacy and collaborative team teaching, work collaboratively to develop curriculum plans and assignments that are Common Core aligned. Through extensive revisions and teamwork, they have created a structured lesson plan format that integrates standards-based workshop lessons now utilized by more than half of the staff at BAGF, thus supporting the delivery of engaging lessons throughout the school.
- School leaders utilize a structured observation and data analysis system to develop teacher practice. (4.1)
 - As part of the Talent Management Pilot program, the principal, assistant principal, and United Federation of Teachers chapter chair receive professional development around the Framework for Teaching rubric developed by Charlotte Danielson. Monthly, administrators then turnkey their training to staff, concentrating on one aspect of the framework and they use that aspect as a focus for frequent observations that month. These targeted observations enable immediate feedback to teachers resulting in building coherence around clear expectations for instructional practice and more effective lesson plans. The principal also utilizes the formal observation process to convey high expectations around teacher tenure and guide retention decisions, resulting in more effective teaching in the building.
- The administration builds from a "theory of action" to set data driven goals that inform organizational decisions and support students both emotionally and academically. (3.1)
 - Based on a careful review of prior Regents' scores and scholarship data, teachers who instruct US History and Integrated Algebra are targeted for additional professional development and students receive additional small group instruction in preparation for the exams. In response to high incidence rates in classrooms and the hallway during 2010-2011, on-going professional development, teacher observations with effective feedback, and behavior management structures, implemented this year, work to support teachers to create a safer culture and classrooms that are conducive to learning.

- The school partners with outside organizations to provide services that support youth development. (4.4)
 - o The Brooklyn Academy of Global Finance, through its founding partnership with the National Academy Foundation, provides students with curricular support, career readiness training, and business partnerships for internships. Over the summer, staff who were introduced to a ladder of referral system for dealing with classroom disruptions, and trained by a neighborhood organization, SLATE, use strategies to address challenging youth behavior. The same organization provides a rites of passage program for targeted male students to address their history of performing below their potential. These new initiatives, combined with on-going support from the assistant principal and other staff, have led to a decrease by more than 50% in the number of suspensions and an increase in student scholarship reports.
- The administration regularly analyzes a range of data to assess strengths and needs to inform school level decisions. (2.1)
 - o To address student achievement, identified as a need through review of scholarship and Regents' data, the school has moved to a system of individualized programming, thus matching students with suitable coursework, as some students now take advanced science and/or math classes, while others are enrolled in Regents' prep classes. Double period classes that are now 50 minute support the ease of individualized programming, and increase student engagement while reducing student discipline problems. In addition an additional 37.5 minutes of instructional support time built into the middle of the day, extends learning for all students, leading to higher scholarship reports and a reduction in cutting rates.

What the school needs to improve

- Align curricular and task development to involve a diversity of learners in rigorous tasks. (1.1)
 - o Teachers across the school align their curricula to State standards. The common lesson plan format that many teachers use is beginning to support the integration of the CCLS and other key standards into lessons. However, while some teachers utilize data and work effectively to plan for individual student needs, including students with disabilities and English language learners, other teachers' lack of creating differentiated tasks and lessons limit opportunities for all students to be cognitively engaged in well-match lessons with suitable materials.
- Increase the use of effective teaching strategies to engage all students in activities that promote participation. (1.2)
 - o Some teachers at the school utilize hands on science experiments, projects, literacy scaffolds, and math games, to provide multiple entry points that increase student participation in class. However, effective questioning techniques and rigorous assignments that promote student-to-student dialogue and higher order thinking are inconsistent in classrooms, limiting the development of independent thinking and research skills necessary to succeed in college.
- Develop consistent and frequent assessment systems that provide information to support student learning. (2.2)

- o Some teachers, and teams of teachers, have developed checklists and rubrics that allow students to participate in self- and peer-assessments and checks of understanding within a lesson. However, while some students provided examples of the ways their teachers help them learn, several students expressed that they do not feel supported by their teachers, that they are not sure what they need to work on, and that they sometimes give up on homework because they did not understand the material in class. Additionally, inconsistent use of formative assessments throughout the school, with good feedback, leads to missed opportunities for students to know exactly what is expected and for them to be able to revise their work.
- Engage the school community in the process of understanding progress towards learning goals. (3.3)
 - o School leaders track a range of data to monitor progress towards school wide goals, and teachers' teams use a range of assessments to monitor student scholarship reports. However, periodic assessments that measure student progress towards developing specific skills and content mastery are not typically discussed across the school, limiting the ability to adjust plans to meet the needs of individual and subgroups of students. While parents and students are regularly informed if a child is in danger of failing a class, the information given does not always sufficiently provide insight into how a child can develop needed academic skills and review important content. Even though the school has started a homework help center this year, few parents and students knew about it or could describe any other opportunities for support or enrichment that were available to them to help towards higher levels of achievement.
- Develop systems to evaluate the effectiveness of professional collaborations to build distributed leadership capacity that can continue to address learning needs. (5.4)
 - o The committed teachers at the Brooklyn Academy of Global Finance regularly meet as grade and content teams, in mentorship pairs, and frequently connect informally to plan and support each other. The principal has a weekly meeting with each of the team facilitators to review the agendas for upcoming meetings. However, while the principal uses student data regularly to inform teacher hiring and retention decisions, she does not yet have a system in place to evaluate and support the teacher team process and their curricular and assessment products, limiting the development of effective teacher leaders.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The Brooklyn Academy of Global Finance	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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