

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Brooklyn Preparatory High School

High School K488

257 North 6th Street

Brooklyn

NY 11211

Principal: Noah Lansner

Dates of review: May 13-14, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Aimee Horowitz

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Brooklyn Preparatory is a high school with 451 students from ninth through grade 12. The school population comprises 56% Black, 40% Hispanic, 1% White, 2% Asian and 1% other students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 86.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's strategic organizational and programming decisions and key partnerships are well aligned to the school's goals resulting in meaningful student work products. 1.3
 - The school's array of partnerships complements its focus on graduating students who are academically and emotionally college ready. Partnerships include City University of New York at Home in College, The Leadership Program, the Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI), Institute for Student Achievement (ISA), Junior Achievement High School Heroes, and New York Cares. Coupled with the advisory program, portfolio process, and two full time counselors, these partnerships support the school's vision and mission of graduating students able "to succeed in a challenging college program and fulfilling career" by actively engaging them in inquiry, reflection, and collaboration." As a result, students touted the support from advisory, their teachers, and fellow students, as well as the school's portfolio process and high expectations in academic classes as excellent preparation for college, giving them the courage to achieve what they thought was impossible, and to continually set and achieve new goals. Parents stated, "Students at Brooklyn Prep experience a metamorphosis; they become independent thinkers who have high expectations for themselves."
 - The school's schedule meets the needs of all students while providing extended time for teachers to engage in inquiry and team meetings. Through advisory, students engage in additional authentic learning experiences as evidenced in a partnership with YPI, where 10th grade students experienced what it meant to advocate for an organization, create a media campaign, be a grant maker, and prompt social change. Through this experience students worked in groups to research and select a community based organization they believed worthy of a \$5,000.00 grant. They then created and presented a media product to persuade people of the merit of their organization. Additionally struggling students are strategically programmed for enrichment courses, taken simultaneously with core courses, to support work in basic skills. Stronger students take advanced topics courses to extend their learning. As a result, scholarship and grades in core courses have increased as have Regents passing percentages and college readiness indicators. During term one of the 2011-12 school year 42 students were on honor roll, 17 students were on high honor roll, and three students were on the principal's list while during the 2012-13 school year 60 students were on honor roll, 39 students were on high honor roll and 13 students were on the principal's list.
- The school's environment and culture fosters students' academic and social emotional growth and empowers students in making school wide decisions. 1.4
 - As a result of the school's commitment to college and career readiness and the development of inquisitive, self-directed learners, students and

adults benefit from a standards-based education. In addition to systems that support student academic and social-emotional growth, such as advisory, justice panels, student government, portfolio presentations, and parent communication and involvement, the administrative team constantly analyzes data and addresses areas that could be improved upon. This was evidenced by the development of the Teaching Assistants Program in order to provide students with leadership opportunities, allow them to explore teaching as a career, and enhance classroom instruction. The program empowers students to partner with a teacher to assist during class, strengthening academic support for students in need. As a result, credit accumulation for students in the lowest third increased. Furthermore student and parent voices are heard through the School Leadership Team (SLT), student government, and Parents' Association. Participation in these venues and communication with student leaders led to implementing initiatives aimed at increasing student achievement and developing a supportive and respectful school culture. Specifically, Justice Panels, Principal for a Day, Show Your Spirit Days, and weekly pizza parties for students who arrive on time have increased motivation, engagement, and self-regulation while leading to a decrease in suspensions and recidivism.

- Each student belongs to an advisory, ensuring that every student is well known by at least one adult. Advisors liaise between families, students, and teachers; they are the point person through which all academic and social emotional communication is routed. Advisors develop goals with students, and using a common rubric evaluate student progress towards the Habits of Work (HOW) which includes resourcefulness, organization, perseverance, eagerness, and self-awareness), implement curriculum to support students' social-emotional growth, address relational skills, and are integral to each student's social emotional and academic growth. Advisors support students in preparing for twice yearly portfolio presentations and engage students in activities including team building, mediation circles, student self-awareness, academic support, and goal setting. As a result, despite increasing enrollment, suspension rates have decreased, weighted diploma rates have increased, and 77% of returning students' scores on the HOW rubric have increased as compared to June, 2012.
- Assessment practices aligned to the school's curricula provide consistent progress monitoring and facilitate adjustments to instruction in order to improve outcomes for all students. 2.2
 - To evaluate student learning and progress towards mastery of the Habits of Mind (HOM), which includes perspective, analysis, narrative, imagination, and connections, the school implemented a grading philosophy and uniform HOM/ Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) aligned rubrics to assess tasks that measure the same skills. The grading philosophy reflects the importance of students demonstrating mastery of HOM through the completion of performance tasks and reflections evidencing how they applied the HOM and progressed towards mastery. All teachers collect evidence and monitor students' progress with regard to the CCLS aligned HOM and HOW. Student portfolios are maintained throughout their high school careers; actionable feedback is provided to students during conferences; and advisory conferences target students' progress towards their individual goals and HOW, facilitating student

awareness of next steps and progress towards mastery. Results of performance tasks, Regents item analysis, 8th grade scores, scholarship data, Skedula anecdotes, and teacher feedback drive instruction and determine which students are enrolled in enrichment and advanced topics courses. Students state, “Our school is preparing us for college. Our HOM and HOW teach us to think and analyze, to be independent learners and problem solvers. We are resourceful and organized. We need those skills to be successful in college.”

- Strong professional collaborations enable teachers to develop curriculum, improve teacher practice and leadership skills which results in increased student achievement. 4.2
 - Grade teams evaluate students using the HOW rubric, and focus on a habit identified as a deficiency as determined by looking at student work products. To strengthen student performance in the focus habit, teachers identify a strategy that is implemented across the grade, as classroom inter-visitations are conducted to observe enactment of the approach and provide feedback. The teacher team then analyzes data and student work with a lens on the strategy, to evaluate its effectiveness to improve student achievement. Additionally lesson study supports teachers in the delivery of curricula and lessons through a focus on a series of questions. Each team then develops its own inquiry question to research. For example, the social studies team is studying, “How does this task support our goal that students will be able to analyze how a person or an institution’s actions influence history?” In this context the department is focused on how they can increase students’ use of relevant and meaningful text based evidence and through the use of a protocol, the department debriefs the lesson and looks at student work resulting from the task. As a result, freshmen now incorporate textual evidence into both their narrative and analytical writing resulting in increased levels of the quantity and quality of students’ use of relevant evidence in argumentative writing across disciplines.
 - The Leadership Team (LT) comprised of teachers that lead department and grade level teams, voice teacher concerns and problem solve as well as serve as key partners in school goal development, the revision of the portfolio process, progress monitoring, and decision making. In addition to weekly meetings with administration, LT members convene during the summer in collaboration with the ISA, to reflect on the previous year’s work, provide feedback for the upcoming year in order to set goals, devise initiatives to improve student achievement and school culture, as well as create and revise action plans, while regularly assessing progress towards goals. As a result of the school’s intentional and embedded structures to develop leaders, teachers actively partner with administration to set goals and make decisions, are empowered to provide one another with feedback, and support each other in effectively moving students forward.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine curricula and academic tasks to increase coherence so that all students are cognitively engaged and challenged. 1.1

- The school aligns its curricula with State standards and has extended this work to reflect increased rigor in tasks, expanded levels of higher order thinking, supports to increase students' abilities to read and comprehend complex texts, as well as engage students in the production of CCLS aligned written products, across all grades and subjects. For example, in a unit on the Middle Ages the performance task required students to interpret and analyze sources to defend a characterization of medieval society. Accordingly, students state that they are being prepared for college. However, spiraling content and skills across grade levels and content areas is not yet embedded in curriculum, limiting the school from maximizing its ability to close the achievement gap.
- Teacher teams plan and refine unit plans and performance tasks based on analysis of formative and summative assessment data, through looking at student work, and using the anecdotal data in Skedula, a web-based teacher portal for managing student data, facilitating teacher sharing of information about shared students. While this has resulted in higher order student work products and extended written pieces that include relevant contextual evidence, not all academic tasks include targeted scaffolds and enrichments to support and extend the learning of SWDs and ELLs, as well as high achieving students. Thus, some students are limited from consistently engaging in tasks that are cognitively challenging.
- Enhance instructional practices so that lessons and tasks consistently engage students in order to challenge all learners to think critically and achieve at high levels. 1.2
 - Instructional practices, informed by the Danielson framework, have included creating units of study that engage students in authentic performance based tasks, problem solving, and presentation and are beginning to reflect the school's beliefs about how students learn best. Culminating written performance based tasks generally require students to read and analyze text, to work individually or collaboratively to solve a problem, to take a position and support it with evidence, and to present their findings. However, discussions and formative tasks do not consistently engage students in critical thinking and evidence based discourse, thus leading to uneven levels of student thinking and participation, limiting opportunities to cognitively engage some students and challenge them to higher levels of achievement. (a)
 - Teachers use graphic organizers, film clips, works of art, charts, graphs, and leveled texts to provide multiple entry points for students with disabilities (SWDs), English language learners (ELLs), and struggling learners. However, as these are not yet used strategically, classrooms discussions often reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation. Teacher questioning does not consistently engage students in higher order thinking, in evidence based discussion, in asking high level questions of one another, or facilitate student to student dialogue. Teachers do not maximize students' learning by strategically removing scaffolds or by challenging higher achieving students with extensions to deepen their learning and push them to higher proficiency. Thus, not all students are presented with learning scaffolds that challenge them to reach their potential.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Brooklyn Preparatory High School	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?		X					
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?			X				
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?			X				
Systems for Improvement							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?				X			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed