

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

William E. Grady Career and Technical Education

High School K620

**25 Brighton 4th Road
Brooklyn
NY, 11235**

Principal: Geraldine Maione

Dates of review: November 29-30, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Jacqueline Grossman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

William E. Grady Career and Technical Education High School is a high school with 956 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 74.9% Black, 14.0% Hispanic, 6.9% White, and 3.2% Asian students. The student body includes 3.1% English language learners and 22.7% special education students. Boys account for 78.0% of the students enrolled and girls account for 22.0%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 81.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Academic and technical curricula both place an emphasis on college and career readiness, simultaneously orienting and preparing students for their futures.(1.1)
 - Teachers, both individually and in teams, design individual lessons, tasks and units of study that reflect the shifts required for the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Emphasis in these units builds in opportunity to do such things as support ideas and arguments from text-based evidence, unpack increasingly complex texts, and develop writing skills. In both academic and technical classes, there is an emphasis on using resources and materials that are suitably challenging and expose students to texts, both literary and informational, that require them to engage in close reading. In addition to academic classes, all students have a technical or trade program they have selected that is highly engaging, and all students are offered music or art. Both aspects of a student's education are prioritized, enabling students to choose their paths to college or career in a well-informed manner. All social studies and English classes are programmed back to back and teachers integrate their curricula, ensuring content and curricular cohesion that have contributed to steadily rising pass rates for students.
 - Rigorous tasks in academic classes are designed with appropriate entry points for special needs students and English learners to ensure that all students are able to gain access to the increasingly demanding curriculum. For example, there is an emphasis on developing vocabulary in content areas throughout the school and it was evident in every classroom visited. In addition to advanced placement classes as well as remedial sections in nearly every class and subject area, curriculum is well supported through the use of technology. In trade classes, students perform complicated tasks such as constructing electrical splice boards or diagnosing and repairing automobiles and computers. These skills require interpretation of highly complex text and the ability to solve challenging mathematical problems in order to meet the professional standard. As a result, all students are experiencing, daily and in multiple venues, cognitively demanding tasks that are continually building their college and career readiness skills.
- All school resources are distributed effectively towards meeting the school's goals, enabling teachers to ensure that students' needs are met. (1.3)
 - Despite a decline in enrollment, the school has managed to maintain key structures that have proven successful in raising student achievement. Over the last eighteen months, prior to the impact of Hurricane Sandy, attendance has significantly increased, and lateness has significantly decreased as a result of the strategic decision to program all students for either one of their technical classes or physical education during first period, and to free up all

academic teachers for collaborative meetings during this time. The academic departments meet at least weekly and often more than that, to craft CCLS aligned units of study, engage in inquiry and problem solve around student needs. In addition to better attendance, scholarship reports show a significant increase in student achievement over this same marking period in the prior school year. Infusions of technology, used in many classrooms, and robust partnerships with college oriented organizations, social services agencies, and other educational institutions help enrich the opportunities for both students and teachers to grow and meet individual needs. For example, to express their belief in the value of providing least restrictive environments, the school collapsed its separate special education department and immersed special education students into all of the academic departments. They created a collaborative, push-in model that integrated students with special needs into all classes. To support this, the staff was given extensive training by various partners, in the teaching of special needs students, many of whom openly express an expectation that they will attend college alongside their peers.

- The school's strong belief in the value of personalized education is reflected in myriad structures that successfully support academic, social and emotional growth for students and adults. (1.4)
 - The school has both formal and informal structures to ensure that every student is known well by at least one, but usually more than one, adult. In addition to inquiry teams "adopting" students and taking responsibility for them, the school has invested heavily in guidance supports. Students in each cohort year have a counselor assigned to them and that counselor remains connected to them for all four years, getting to know the students and their families well. When asked whom they can turn to for help academically or in a crisis, many students readily referenced their counselors, coaches, shop teachers and administrators, who they report always have their door open and will stop whatever they are doing to help them resolve an issue. Student suspensions are down considerably, and there is a strong student government that provides advocacy on a wide range of school issues and helps to promote a warm and serious environment. Students are very supportive of another because they see this kind of support modeled by the faculty, who are constantly checking in with students about anything, from issues at home to whether or not they have submitted their college applications. Extensive clubs and after school opportunities, including support groups for girls and one for black males, help anchor students to role models. As a result, many students who were previously disconnected from their education have found meaning in school and have made positive decisions about their futures.
 - Students have many opportunities to experience tastes of professional life, take part in pre-college summer programs, and interact with experienced practitioners of their chosen technical track. The school is determined to keep students and their families connected to school and their futures. Families describe in vivid terms how the school has opened doors that were previously considered out of reach for their

children. As a result of these opportunities, alongside the work the school has done to keep teachers abreast of the changing demands of a 21st century education, many students are pursuing both their technical certifications as well as possibilities for college.

- A climate of purpose and aspiration, connected to the school's relentless commitment to improving students' lives, holds all stakeholders accountable for maintaining high expectations (3.4)
 - The school's administrative team prioritizes high expectations, both academically and behaviorally, for students above all else, and in turn staff transmit those expectations to students. A key venue for the communication of these expectations is the school's online communication and grading system, which all teachers and students access daily and which holds them mutually accountable. Teachers are given specific and very immediate feedback, especially with regard to student behavior and classroom instruction. Teachers also engage in self-reflections that are responsive to the feedback they have been given and the increased academic expectations. These reflections help teachers connect directly to the success of their most struggling students, creating mutual accountability for student achievement.
 - The school has successfully built upon their long history of readiness for careers in their technical fields to do the same for college readiness, by extensively exposing all students and families to the possibilities for higher education and supporting them heavily through the application and financial aid processes. Ongoing trips to colleges, both in and out of the city, including specific trips to some historically black colleges, have opened up worlds many students previously did not imagine. Recent immigrants and special education students in particular, spoke of the eye opening nature of these trips and of the intensive support they have received throughout the college application process. The addition of advanced placement classes has afforded many students the chance to experience true college level work. Younger students can participate in College Now, which enhances their current set of courses, with opportunities to explore college life. Families appreciate the wide range of options that their students are exposed to, from learning a trade to attending college so there is strong support for the dual mission of the school. Students acknowledge that the main expectation of the school is for them to attend college and they are committed to doing so.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to work towards a unified, normed understanding of best pedagogical practice so that every teacher engages students and maximizes opportunities for development of higher order skills. (1.2)
 - Some teachers are making a successful transition to the kind of pedagogy necessary to meet the demands of the common core, but in a number of classrooms, improvement in instruction has not kept pace with increased curricular expectations. In some classrooms, there is meaningful intellectual discourse and a chance to do research and writing tasks that are highly engaging. For example, in several math classes, students were asked open ended questions

regarding whether certain algorithms or theorems are accurate, and challenged, both in writing and orally, to prove their perspective to one another. They were also given manipulatives if needed, and a great deal of time to think before responding. Similar practices were observed in some English classes, where students assisted each other in editing their writing or preparing oral presentations. However, these kinds of practices are not pervasive across all subject areas. In some science and social studies classes for example, rapid fire questioning with little or no wait time did not provide the appropriate scaffold for all learners. Several classes still rely heavily on a lecture-oriented approach with students taking minimal notes and engaging in little higher order thinking. As a result, although teachers are assessed using a research based teaching framework, and are being held accountable to it through ongoing classroom visits, students are not engaged vibrantly in all subjects, and certain practices have not become the norm as yet throughout the school.

- Ensure that formative assessment in academic classes is used to help inform teacher practice, promote student reflection, demonstrate authentic student learning, and help students set goals for themselves. (2.2)
 - Teachers are aware of and use the results of summative assessments, such as state exams or Regents, when doing initial planning for their classes, and in some classes, such as a creative writing class and advanced placement history classes, they have skillfully incorporated self-reflection and formative practice. However, the use of both common and formative assessments in all academic classes is inconsistent. In addition, while there is a school-wide grading policy that allows for some content or process flexibility, there is not yet a fully articulated understanding of what constitutes excellence in every content area. This contributes to a lack of reflectiveness on the part of groups of students, who may understand if they are or are not doing well, but are sometimes unable to explain why that is the case. Teachers are expected to provide students with rubrics, and this has been a major undertaking for the school, but as yet the rubrics themselves are unspecific and not understood by the students. These practices are in sharp contrast to the technical and trade classes, where feedback is always measured to the industry standard and nothing but perfection is acceptable when learning even the most basic technical skill, enabling teachers to engage in immediate differentiation and lesson modification. Students are easily able to identify every small step they need to accomplish in order to meet a goal in these classes, whereas many speak in vague and general terms about improvement in a number of academic classes, limiting possibilities for improvement. In some classrooms, teachers do take notes during conversations or classwork, but it is unclear how this information is then transmitted to the students. Similarly, while a "do now" and "exit tickets" are common practices, their utility is not clear in some classrooms. As a result, students receive uneven levels of feedback throughout their classroom experiences, creating two distinct set of expectations for personal best.

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Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: William E. Grady Career and Technical Education 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