

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

The Brooklyn Transition Center

K753

**510 Clermont Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11238**

Principal: Yvrose Pierre

Dates of review: January 29-31, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Nina Pitton

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Then Brooklyn School for Career Development/P.S. K753 is a special education high school with 249 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 75.90% Black, 19% Hispanic, 3% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 94% special education students. Boys account for 75 % of the students enrolled and girls account for 25%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 63.05%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's highly customized curriculum, aligned across grades and subject areas offers a wide range of engaging experiences and choices, including career education and technology, supporting student learning. (1.1)
 - The school has created in depth curricula that are purposely aligned to key CCLS standards (Reading, Writing), and units of study includes the instructional shifts (academic vocabulary, a balance of literature and informational texts) selected based on student needs identified across all grades and subject areas to support the academic and functional development of a diverse student population. The school uses a data-driven process to review and refine the curriculum to consistently assure that it is rigorous and aligned to students' needs. A variety of vocational programs, including Auto Repair, Media Arts, Cosmetology, and Barbering tailored to students' interests and needs are offered, which leads to students being motivated to learn and well-equipped to solve real word problems. The matching class syllabi and pacing calendars provide instructional coherence and rigorous sequenced expectations for a wide range of structured experiences to empower students for college and career readiness. Subsequently, sample projects reviewed in Global Studies and Architectural Design classes emphasize real world application of critical thinking skills involving non-fiction reading and writing and interdisciplinary themes. Academic Vocabulary is woven throughout the curricula to support English Language Learners (Ells) and the school's focus on job acquisition and internship opportunities. The result is a marked increase in outcome opportunities for all students and a higher rate of credit accumulation at all grades as per student data reviewed in the school's two year credit accumulation comparison chart.
 - Teachers make appropriate adaptations to units/syllabi/lessons during structured team meetings that ease student access to grade level concepts in core academic subject areas. This work has led to quality projects such as architectural design and building that emphasize consistent use of higher order questions aligned to the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) that challenge students to demonstrate their thinking in scale drawings and three dimensional models. Additional programs and resources including Empower 3000, Wilson and I-Zone are used to supplement the curriculum based on data-driven identification of student needs to deliver appropriately challenging academic opportunities. A range of innovative courses are offered and include Architectural Design, English through Films. The curriculum is further varied to include the following specialized shops: Auto Repair, Media Arts, Cosmetology, and Barbering. As reading intervention programs, the school implements Empower 3000 and the Wilson Reading Program across a wide spectrum of the student population. Pedagogues using the programs include a speech teacher, an ESL teacher, an English teacher, a work study teacher, the school librarian, and the media specialist. Empower 3000 has engaged students in standards-based reading for information activities. The integration of technology has augmented student engagement while improving their overall comprehension skills; forty-

eight students log-in to the program on a regular basis. A group of twenty students participate in blended learning sponsored by the iLearn/iZoneNYC program and two-period per week students engage in differentiated self-directed web-based learning related to the previous day's lessons. Research frames scaffold and allow students to access informational texts via the Internet and extract information in response to learning prompts. As a result of the work products and demands of tasks, there is increased student thinking and academic progress as evidenced by a 9.8% increase in the number of students graduating with a local diploma in 2012.

- Administrators make strategic organizational and scheduling decisions about resource allocations that are well-aligned to and support school's goals with a focus on improving instructional practices and student outcomes. (1.3)
 - The use of resources is strategic and aligned to the school's goals. The process of selecting teachers, programs to match with student cohorts reveal a conscious effort on the part of administration to constantly respond to students' varying needs, leading to structured support for individual and groups of students. The principal has carefully allocated funds to support consistent use of technology across the ten sites. There is a smart board in every classroom and a media room to engage students in interactive lessons as observed in the Empower 3000 classroom. The following range of new courses has been incorporated to meet students' interests and differentiated needs: Architectural Design, English through Films, Auto Repair, Media Arts, Cosmetology, and Barbering. A media specialist, a transition specialist, a job developer, and a common Core Learning Standards Coach have been added to the staff. The school has made thoughtful scheduling decisions so that teachers can meet in departmental and interdisciplinary teams. In addition, the daily teacher meeting during "zero period" is used to review trends in student performance data that informs curricular revisions and further supports the needs of students. As a result of this increased collaboration rigor is increased as evidenced by student work products.
 - Hiring practices, teacher assignments and student programs are driven by student-data analysis, and are in alignment with the school's instructional goal to increase vocational opportunities by 10% as evidenced in teacher program arrangements; a group of teachers is responsible for a cohort of students, and innovative courses, including Architectural Design, and Media Arts have been added the course catalog to further engage students. Teachers meet regularly to engage in inquiry, analyze student assessment data, review student work, gather and revise plans based on this exchange of data. The principal has strategically modified student programming from two terms to four academic cycles that each lasts 45 days to foster course completion stamina with shorter and frequent opportunities for credit accumulation. This structure has led to an increase in credit accumulation and graduation rate-17.8% of students graduated with a local diploma in 2012 compared to 6.3% the previous year. During cycle four of the 2011-12 school year, the school piloted a "7th period club," The result was increased student attendance. This year, the school has expanded its menu of clubs to include basketball, barbering, driver's education, jewelry making, baking, game room, technology, and art, the number of student participants doubled. These efforts have facilitated students' movement to less restrictive

environments in alignment with the Special Education Reform and greater individualization of students' experiences.

- School leaders' strategic use of frequent cycles of classroom observations with effective feedback, coupled with the consistent analysis of student work, support teachers' professional growth resulting in improvements to pedagogy. (4.1)
 - The Brooklyn School for Career Development is in its second year of the Teacher Effectiveness Program (TEP) pilot and uses the Danielson framework as a model for improvement of instructional practices, classroom management, and assessment practices. The administration conducts frequent cycles of informal observations that are aligned to the four domains and seven selected competencies of the framework. It is evident that school leaders and teachers collaborate to create individualized teacher developmental goals and provide meaningful feedback on those goals, capturing strengths, challenges, and next steps via conversations and the school's Aris Community. Professional development includes a range of internal and external opportunities to support teachers. School leaders conducts formal observations along with peer inter-visitations, coaching, mentoring, and collaborative meetings to further support teacher development, and mid-year and end-of-year conversations provide valuable opportunities for teachers and administrators to reflect on teacher practice, revise teacher developmental goals, and adjust instructional practices. Professional development during the "Zero period" focuses on increasing teachers' understanding of the Danielson Framework for teaching to further improve their instructional practice. Aris data is utilized to determine areas in need of improvement. For example, if a competency is consistently rated low, this information is used to guide alignment of professional development opportunities. Consequently, teachers exhibit an understanding of grade appropriate strategies and support one another as they implement new approaches, refine practices, and take on new initiatives designed to advance student learning, resulting in instructional changes as noted in student data.
- The school's strong culture of collaboration, respect and mutual trust is highly developed assuring all constituents' commitment to supporting the academic and socio-emotional needs of students leading to success. (1.4)
 - The school's exemplary approach to culture-building, discipline, Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) and support for student social-emotional is guided by a theory of action and the collaboration of a crisis team trained in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, a crisis prevention and management system that reduces the need to rely on high-risk interventions, resulting in the school getting off the persistently dangerous list and maintaining good standing status, and improved student attitude toward adults and peers. The team meets monthly to review safety data and identify trends and patterns of needs that inform professional development and adjustments to the safety plan. There are additional structures in place to monitor and revise, planning-cameras, counseling, and consistent staff monitoring of the hallways and exits. A "zero tolerance" for gangs combined with high expectations communicated in the student handbook at the beginning of the school year and reinforced through an advisory system and regular meetings with the guidance

counselors result in students feeling supported in a safe environment. Structures to promote student voice include a student council; student participation in the School Leadership Team; and a mock courtroom. This allows students to actively participate in the school's decision-making process, and as a direct result, the school changed the single lunch period to a two thirty minute lunch period, which students report as being a more manageable structure that allows them to socialize with their peers. Also, a transition curriculum addresses students' transition to high school, team and culture building, college and career readiness, community service opportunities, and worksite behaviors. A college and career specialist has been added to the staff to complement the existing systems. Professional development for families is strategically aligned to the school's goals and is driven by needs identified via the school environment survey and school's initiatives. Workshops for families are regularly scheduled and offer information on curriculum and behavioral strategies, resulting in increased participation in activities, leading to a shared understanding amongst families and students of expectations leading to positive academic and personal growth.

- School leaders effectively communicate high expectations to all stakeholders about student learning, parent engagement and teacher practice resulting in all constituents partnering to ensure student progress. (3.4)
 - The school's participation in the Teacher Effectiveness Pilot (TEP) supports communication of high expectations to teachers. School leaders engage teachers in professional development goal-setting at the beginning of the school year and hold them accountable for tracking their progress toward attainment of these goals during mid-year and end-of-year conversations. School leaders use the information gathered from cycles of observations and frequent analyses of student work and performance data, including percent of students in each cohort on track to graduate, credit accumulation, and Regents/RCT exams pass rates, to plan professional development (PD) to address areas of deficiencies, providing teachers support via coaching in literacy, math, and classroom management. During common planning time and professional development sessions, teachers use the TEP resources in ARIS to develop their questioning techniques to improve students' engagement in lessons. As a result, schools leaders are observing lesson delivery that includes the use of multiple entry points into the curriculum for more students; more flexible grouping of students based on classroom level student data, and varied methods to assess students' progress and needs during lessons. In addition, the school wide grading policy and the school's rich curriculum from which detailed syllabi are created disseminate high expectations to students and parents, sustaining a culture of mutual accountability leading to higher levels of student achievement.
 - The school leadership uses multiple streams of communication to consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and to students and families. A multi-faceted system of outreach to absent students fosters their sense of belonging (early morning targeted wake-up calls, automated daily absentee evening calls and next day phone calls). A cohort approach to programming and counselor caseload management based upon common academic needs further empowers students. A College and Career Specialist partners with the Transition Coordinator to support students in developing personal and academic behaviors for college/career success through life skills and vocational training

opportunities. The school implements a new SAFE and SMART initiative to reinforce those desired behaviors and encourages students to submit their opinions and suggestions via the Student Mailbox following scheduled self-reflection to increase students' self-awareness. The school supports staff by fostering collaboration through weekly departmental meetings and interdepartmental collaboration through weekly professional learning community meetings. Subsequently, the impact of these practices has yielded the following positive outcomes: Improved 7th period attendance. Increased number of standardized students receiving local diplomas. Reduced SWIS referrals and OORS incidents, greater student awareness of credit accumulation and progress toward graduation.

What the school needs to improve

- Bolster the practices of providing targeted instruction to meet the needs of all students in order to increase academic performance. (1.2)

The school has an array of supports aligned to its belief on how students learn best, including Wilson, Empower 3000, Blended Learning, shop classes, and credit recovery programs to support students' academic progression. This provides groups of students with tailored programmatic support. However, some current student work portfolios reviewed did not demonstrate consistent evidence of student progress. Process charts and scaffolds were evident in most classrooms to support students' independence in their learning, although few students were able to articulate the importance of the lesson, showing a lack of ownership in their learning. Questioning techniques in most lessons observed reflected a variety of levels and methods, including teacher to students, student to student, small group discussions, and activities in Social Studies, Architecture, Science, and shops showed evidence of higher order thinking skills, but lesson delivery in a couple of classrooms were teacher directed with limited opportunities to engage all learners in high levels of discussion and engagement, preventing some students from attaining higher levels of achievement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name:	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