

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**BROOKLYN SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR
COLLABORATIVE STUDIES**

Middle-High School K448

**610 HENRY STREET
BROOKLYN
NY 11231**

Principal: Alyce Barr

Dates of review: November 7-8, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Tamika Matheson

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Brooklyn Secondary School for Collaborative Studies is a secondary school with 680 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 37% Black, 48% Hispanic, 9% White, 3% Asian and 3% Native American, Pacific Islanders and multi-racial students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 30% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 90%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well-developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school ensures curricula alignment to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), and instructional shifts, emphasize rigorous habits, higher order skills and access to content for all learners. (1.1)
 - The school designs comprehensive curricula across grade levels and content areas based on New York City Outward Bound Schools (NYCOB), Expeditionary Learning (EL) curriculum design aligned to CCLS and *The Danielson Framework for Teaching*. Further, the school contracted staff developer services from Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and College Preparatory Math (CPM) to integrate rigorous English language arts and math instructional habits within the curriculum. Each year teachers submit an Assessment Planning tool which incorporates long-term learning targets, differentiation, benchmarks and formative and summative assessments; to school leaders for feedback and revision. Performance Based Assessment Tasks (PBATs), units of study and lesson plans incorporate learning targets, case studies, expeditions, assessments and rich math problems to deepen and accelerate student learning. Curriculum guides are constantly revisited and adjusted. The school analyzes data of student performance, and classroom observations, to modify curriculum. For example, middle school teachers focus on procedural fluency; generate grade specific learning targets and mastery checklists based on an item analysis of the spring, 2013 New York State Math assessments. Additionally, the school continues to focus on quality lesson planning to increase student learning, and teacher growth along the Danielson continuum and instructional shifts. As a result, students graduate college and career ready evidenced by the school's four-year graduation rate of 86.7%. Additionally, nine students have been selected for Posse full tuition scholarships, thereby, closing the achievement gap for all students including minority students.
- Teaching practices across classrooms reflect a set of coherent beliefs aligned to the curricula that is reflected in high levels of student engagement and student work products. (1.2)
 - The school embraces Expeditionary Learning principles and core practices as a roadmap to its thoughtful planning. Across classrooms teachers blend rigorous academic habits and character development strategies within day-to-day instruction. Classrooms are print rich with teacher made visual aids, writing and reading prompts, leveled texts, supplemental resources and posted student exemplars with actionable teacher feedback. Furthermore, teachers and students deliberately monitor progress toward mastery and chart Habits of Work and Learning (HOWLs). Classroom activities and Performance Based Assessment tasks “contextualize issues in the bigger world” aligned to learning targets framed as “I can...” statements. For example, “I can analyze and show clearly how my evidence is connected to my idea,” I can explain how cell

organelles help the cell respond to stimuli,” “I can communicate through speaking, diagramming and text, with a variety of audiences about my work” and “I can justify a mathematical statement, draw valid conclusions, and construct a mathematical generalization.” Additionally, instructional practices and strategies include case studies, learning expeditions, and multiple entry points to content. Teachers also embed scaffolding techniques, accountable talk stems, extended response questions, reflection journals, tiered grouping and Socratic Seminar protocols in lesson and unit plans. Moreover, teachers routinely assess comprehension by utilizing exit tickets, HOWLs tracking sheets and assessments rubrics. During class visits students chart mastery of learning targets, use visual aids and graphic organizers to gather evidence and write extensive responses. Additionally, in a middle school English language arts class, the Second Language Acquisition teacher pushes in three times per week to facilitate small group mini-lessons aligned to overarching learning targets. Teachers engage in collaborative pedagogical activities such as common planning, analyzing data and looking at student work to inform instructional practices and curriculum and lesson design. Thus, teachers embed high quality supports to increase student engagement and promote higher order thinking skills as demonstrated by student writing samples, high levels of student discourse and student citation of evidence on academic tasks. (1.2)

- School leaders strategically utilize resources and make informed and effective organizational decisions to support school improvement and promote college and career readiness. (1.3)
 - The school has been a member of Expeditionary Learning (EL) communities since 2001. EL engages the school in common core aligned curriculum planning, professional development, coaching, student engagement and character development. Additionally, the school partners with staff developers from Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and College Preparatory Mathematics “to embed high quality English language arts and mathematics instruction within the EL approach to learning.” Students in grade 6 through grade 10 engage in roundtables. Teachers receive staff development prior to serving as roundtable panelists which lead to cohesive planning. High school juniors and seniors support middle school students by conducting mock roundtables before actual middle school presentations are held. Furthermore, high school students receive extensive instructional scaffolds and supports to complete Performance Based Assessment Tasks (PBAT) in grades 11 and 12. There is one supervising PBAT teacher who engages students in practice PBAT demonstrations. PBAT academic intervention services are offered via PBAT labs; and a social studies and drama-communication teacher provide academic supports for students, specifically English Language learners and students with disabilities. Thus, resources and partnerships are strategically aligned to the school instructional goals which include “All teachers will plan and implement two high quality Learning Expeditions, case studies and/or rich math problems that are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards” and “All teachers will use learning targets and assessments for learning in quality lesson plans that help students engage in, reflect on, and take responsibility for their learning.” As a result, student work products reflect high levels of critical thinking and academic rigor demonstrated by the

use of claims, counter-claims, mathematical reasoning, and student portfolios across grades and content areas, roundtables and PBATs, thereby, preparing and building stamina for high school and post-secondary readiness and success.

- Strategic scheduling provides administrators and teachers with varied collaborative structures and opportunities. All teachers new to the school participate in weekly New Teacher Team meetings led by BCS lead teachers. Teachers participate in department team meetings to examine and adjust vertical curriculum alignment. During teacher team meetings teachers engage in discussion around the questions: “Does the use of learning target tracking affect student progress on the learning targets? ‘How does targeted small group instruction affect student growth on the Teachers College/English language arts PBAT rubrics?’ and, ‘How does use of peer critique protocols affect student craftsmanship?’ ” In addition to department team meetings, administrators and teachers collaboratively engage to address academics, socio-emotional development and school culture. For example, the Leadership Team, Pedagogical Leadership Team, Guidance Team, Culture and Character Committee and Cabinet meet with this common interest and purpose creating accountable collaborations. Each team meets weekly which results in improved instructional planning and targeted instruction aligned to common core, and accessible to all learners, including relevant subgroups.
- A strong culture of respect and trust exists among students and adults supported by academic and socio-emotional structures in place that positively impact student learning and promote adolescent development. (1.4)
 - The school embraces a theory of action as a compass to guide decision making, planning and implementation. BCS’ theory of action embraces core values and Habits of Work and Learning (HOWLs). Core values are driven by daily work expectations; “We are kind,” “We are open-minded,” “We are persistent,” “We are responsible,” “We are courageous” and “We are collaborative.” HOWLs foster the development of academic habits and college and career expectations. Additionally, students receive scores for HOWLs which are tracked in google docs and incorporated within the school wide grading policy. Academic grades and HOWL grades are routinely shared and reflected on with students during biweekly Crew meetings and communicated to parents. Every student is a member of Crew and is known well by at least one adult, the Crew leader. Crew meets five days per week. Crew leaders engage students in academic activities, character building activities, restorative circles, discussions, team building activities and student led activities. Students and parents explained the importance of Crew and how the Crew leader serves as the liaison to discuss attendance, academic and other concerns. During open school week parents and Crew leaders participate in student led conferences. Students present and explain their grades and work to their parents. Furthermore, the school created the position of Director of Culture and Character (DCC) and the Culture and Character Committee (CCC) to promote a positive school culture and to address disciplinary issues. Additionally, student representatives participate in monthly CCC meetings to increase student voice in school-wide policy and decision-making. The Guidance team meets weekly to discuss and monitor Behavior Intervention Plans for at risk students. BCS also partners with, Mentoring for Real, Partnership with Children,

Morningside Center, Mentoring USA and Young Men's Initiative to implement targeted interventions such as counseling, leadership development and college readiness for Black and Latino males. As a result of a cohesive theory of action, BCS has sustained middle school attendance at 92% or higher over the past 4 years and increased high school attendance from 83% in 2011-2012 to 87.6% in 2012-2013. To that end, parent and student satisfaction with BCS is reflected in the School Survey indicating 88% of students and 92% of parents express they are in a safe and orderly environment resulting, in an environment conducive to learning and improvement of academic and personal behaviors.

- Across classrooms teachers employ a variety of instructional strategies, design assessments and use a school wide grading policy to provide students with feedback and effectively monitor and assess student learning. (2.2)
 - The school has implemented a work plan for this school year as a goal for all teachers to use “learning targets and assessments for learning in quality lesson plans that help students engage in, reflect on and take responsibility for their learning.” In September, every teacher generated and submitted an Assessment Planning Tool (APT) to administrators for feedback. APTs contain long-term learning targets, benchmark progress, formative and summative assessment and differentiation based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Additionally, baseline assessments are given at the beginning of each unit in English language arts, approximately four to six weeks. However, other teachers may use reading logs as well to track student progress. Middle school math teachers received training on how to use the Master Tracker. As a result, middle school students are programmed for regular math classes or accelerated math classes. The Master Tracker includes unit topics, learning targets, pre- assessment data and three columns labeled “date/percent mastery.” Students achieve mastery of learning targets once they have earned “at least one 80% on a master quiz.” The Teachers College Reading/Writing Project is adapted for high school English language arts classes, and there is an emphasis on summative writing tasks in science and social studies. There are also content area assessments leading up to PBATs which are the final assessments. The school provides professional development to teachers on how to scaffold skills taught in grade 6 through grade 12 to ensure that students learn skills to be successful on PBATs. Furthermore, teachers engage all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, in varied learning opportunities. Teachers monitor and assess student learning during learning expeditions, case studies, roundtables, and PBATs. During class visits teachers and students tracked learning and mastery progress, and adjust curriculum guides, unit plans and lesson plans based on formative and summative assessments. Thus, in 2012-2013, year one, 79.6% of students earned 10 or more credits, 83.7% of students in year two earned 10 or more credits and 62.9% of students in year three earned 10 or more credits. As a result, students graduate college ready evidenced by an 86.7% four-year graduation rate in 2013, which is 22% higher than the 2013 Citywide graduation rate of 64.7%; and 79.2 % of BCS’ students remain enrolled in college after 18 months.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the cycles of observation using the Danielson Framework to inform teacher practice, and goals and support teacher development resulting, in improved student work (4.1)
 - Structures are in place to collect and analyze observation data and to communicate frequent feedback to teachers on pedagogical practices and strategies. The school uses googledocs to record teacher feedback and teachers are expected to track their progress manually using googledocs. School leaders use observation feedback to inform the planning of professional development as evidenced by teacher development topics and teacher team activities and minutes. For example, administrators revised the Election Day Professional Development on teacher supervision based on observations and school data. Furthermore, during team meetings teachers stated that they submit lessons to administrators for feedback; and to ensure that they are maximizing adult-student ratios in integrated co-teaching (ICT) classes. Two thirds of the school's classes are ICT classes. Teachers explained how they are prepared for the use of Danielson evaluations and supported as they design and develop their professional goals shared with leadership during Initial Planning Conferences (IPC). Teachers added that they consistently receive Danielson aligned verbal feedback that highlights their strengths, and assists in planning the next layer of professional development. Teachers also receive Danielson feedback via Advance and google.doc threads. However, even as, administrators provide consistent effective feedback the school has yet to fully maximize Advance to provide routine formal feedback aligned to teachers' professional goals as needed, thereby, limiting instructional capacity to further augment teacher pedagogy to improve the quality of student work products and student achievement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Brooklyn Secondary School For Collaborative Studies	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 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?				X			
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the 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 supports 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 those expectations?				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 student 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 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?			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