

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**Brooklyn Collegiate: A College Board School**

**23K493**

**2021 Bergen Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11233**

**Principal: Amote Sias**

**Dates of review: April 9, 2014  
Lead Reviewer: Safiyah Satterwhite**

## **Part 1: The school context**

### **Information about the school**

Brooklyn Collegiate is a high school with 387 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 86% Black, 10% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 58% of the students enrolled and girls account for 42%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 84.5%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is proficient**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal aligns the use of resources to support the schools' instructional goals and strategically programs students to promote college and career readiness. (1.3)
  - The school has established various goals noted in the School Comprehensive Education Plan including effectively embedding the Danielson Framework for Teaching in the school's systems, refining curricula materials to ensure multiple entry points and rigor, strengthening the work of teacher teams, implementing peer mediation and increasing parental outreach efforts. With these goals in place the school has additional ongoing commitments and action plans around literacy, attendance, technology and college readiness. The allocation of resources to support these efforts has aided the school in maximizing progress. For example, funds have been used to purchase new technology equipment including "mimeo" devices, and hiring additional technology staff to support teachers in using technology to further support college readiness for students. Partnerships have been developed with the Library, Sports & Arts in School Foundation, Graafics, a gang prevention program, Academics in Motion, Mentoring Matters and Counseling in Schools to support the socio-emotional needs of students. The principal has also allocated funding for Saturday Academy and Scholars Academy where 45% of students participating since December have moved up one reading level per Study Island data, a digital academic support program. Additionally, Skedula and Datacacion software programs have been purchased to reinforce the schools' commitment to data analysis. Brooklyn Collegiate has obtained an Intervention Dropout Prevention Grant to support attendance and dropout prevention initiatives and a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Grant, Out of School Time, to provide students with additional support in literacy and mathematics. Partnerships with colleges for College Now, college tours and prep classes are afforded to students for college readiness and English language learners, special education students and/or other students in need are programmed with double periods of mathematics or English language arts and receive school support aligned to their needs. Furthermore students take a minimum of 14 credits annually to ensure that they are provided the opportunity to take college courses resulting in 75% of high school seniors enrolled in one or more college level class. Through the schools' mentoring program teachers track the progress of individual students and ensure that all students, including English language learners and special education students, are progressing and on track to achieve college enrollment and success.
- School leaders and staff implement Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) aligned curricula with an emphasis on higher-order skills to promote college readiness for all students. (1.1)
  - With an emphasis on literacy development across curricula, Brooklyn Collegiate teachers create CCLS aligned curricula that embed the instructional shifts by using City and State high school curricula resources. Interdisciplinary planning of units aids the school in building

coherence and norming student experience and interpretation of the standards. For instance, teachers have begun to develop themes that are consistently embedded in other subject areas such as short stories, and various vocabulary words. In an English unit, under the short story theme, students were exploring universal themes and character types across a variety of authors. For History, students were to analyze a short story for two literary elements and attach an author's background that will include social, cultural and political climates of that time. Students were asked to cite strong textual evidence when discussing the texts and evaluate the plot structure. For students who needed another way of accessing the material they were given an opportunity to discuss a movie or television show. These moves across curricula artifacts have supported the schools focus of building coherence and providing rigorous material accessible to all learners. In addition to teacher crafted, traditional high school coursework, the school implements Advanced Via Individual Determination, (AVID), a college readiness system created to individually accelerate student learning. A model program that uses research-based methods of rigorous instruction. The principal uses resources from this system to evaluate the rigor of the tasks created by teachers across the school. Furthermore, Advanced Placement courses, College Now courses and various course aids and resources such as Achieve 3000, Study Island, PLATO, Teen Biz 3000, Rosetta Stone and others are offered to provide curricula access to all learners at their level. These efforts in addition to the implementation of the CCLS standards and instructional shifts have aided the school in using the curriculum to promote college and career readiness and emphasize rigor across grades and subjects for all learners, including special education students.

- Across classrooms teachers use common assessments to provide students with actionable feedback and determine progress towards goals that across grades and subjects result in adjustments to curricula and instruction. (2.2)
  - Across classrooms teachers use rubrics aligned with the school grading policy to provide students with clear, robust, actionable feedback and next steps for their work. Students spoke to this practice in student interviews and testified that this structure has aided them in being aware of their performance and of the expectations for their work. Curricula reviewed revealed that across the school teachers use a variety of assessments to measure student learning. Assessment practices noted in the curricula documents are a blend of formative and summative and include exit slips, polling, student self-assessments, classroom discourse, projects, Regents-based tasks, unit exams, monologues, student presentations, portfolios, writing assignments and others. Common assessments, such as Measures of Student Learning Performance Assessments in all content areas are administered three times per year. This data is used to plan and refine instruction to meet the needs of students. For example, recent Regents data analysis revealed that more than 65% of students are below grade level in literacy, thus prompting the school to incorporate a school-wide initiative to embed literacy in every subject and encouraging interdisciplinary planning. A math assessment revealed that students were performing well on multiple choice questions, but over 50% of the student body experienced deficits when answering open-ended mathematics questions. This prompted the mathematics department to incorporate additional open-ended problems in curricula and assessments. These moves over time have resulted in the school

experiencing mid-year gains in Regents pass rates, specifically showing a nearly 15% improvement in Algebra and United States History.

- School leaders and staff successfully communicate college expectations to the school community as well as offer feedback and support to families to aid in the college preparation process. (3.4)
  - As a member of the College Summit, a nonprofit organization geared at increasing college enrollment rates for low income students, the culture of high expectations at Brooklyn Collegiate is apparent upon entering the building. The ceilings are filled with college flags and hallways are lined with students' college goals and acceptances. Motivational posters surround classrooms stating "We will succeed" and "Serious Students Only" as well as many reminders about the importance of respecting one another. The school implements a robust mentoring program to ensure that every student is connected to an adult that can personalize advisement supports to prepare them for college; students testify that going to this school means that they will go to college. To date, students across grades have visited at least seven colleges and have many other college experiences planned in the spring. These student experiences represent the intentions of school staff to champion the expectation of college enrollment for all high school students. School leaders communicate this vision to the entire staff through various professional development forums and follow up in evaluation conferences. Teacher team meetings also reinforce this focus and during the review teachers were observed discussing individual student progress and needs for support as well as performance on school-wide assessments. Teachers are provided professional development on topics including the Danielson Framework for Teaching, Common Core Learning Standards, Writing Across the Curriculum, Project-Based Learning and the implementation of the school mentoring program, all to support student college readiness skills for success. To further promote high expectations the school spearheads various 'culture' assemblies including anti-bullying assemblies and honor roll recognitions. The Brooklyn Collegiate Welcome Back barbeque and parent orientations are staple events that involve the parent community. On a monthly basis, teachers spearhead college readiness workshops to inform parents about student achievement and the college preparation process. Daily emails, phone blasts, the school website and Skedula access consistently provide avenues for families to understand and view student progress. All parents are asked sign a parental contract that makes commitment to a "2-way street", whereby as the school supports students the expectation is that parents will support students as well. The structures in place to support parents and students not only informs parents of the progress of their children but supports them in understanding what it means to be a Brooklyn Collegiate student and what it means to be college ready.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Deepen teacher pedagogy across grades and subjects to build consistent alignment of practice informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and promote high levels of student thinking and participation. (1.2)

- The school believes that students learn best when they know that they are in the presence of a caring teacher. Teachers are encouraged to not only just teach students, but also to make connections to their lives and to demonstrate that they are there for them. The instructional model preferred at Brooklyn Collegiate is the workshop model. Across classrooms some teachers were implementing this model and there was evidence of alignment to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. For example, in one classroom students were discussing with partners the text, *The Black Cat* by Edgar Allen Poe, and used concrete evidence from the text to support their reasoning. They were encouraged to ‘turn and talk’ with a partner. To summarize the lesson, students wrote a paragraph on what they learned from the story as an exit ticket and shared their thinking with the group. However, in the majority of classrooms teachers dominated the lesson providing students with few opportunities for choice and active participation. Furthermore, questioning strategies were not consistently rigorous in classroom discussions limiting teachers from being able to engage students in deep student-to-student interactions and high levels of participation resulting in inconsistent student engagement and work products that demonstrate high levels of thinking.
- Refine teacher evaluation systems to ensure that all teachers receive clear, effective next steps for improvement aligned to their professional goals and are supported in their practice by teacher peers. (4.1)
  - Thus far, school leaders have observed every teacher in the building at least three times and all teachers have received feedback about their progress aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the *Advance* system requirements. School leaders additionally have been working with teachers on several initiatives including technology and teacher evaluations have incorporated technology-centered feedback therein. In addition, teachers receive a brief low inference synopsis of classroom activity observed and then concrete next steps for practice. For example, one teacher received feedback about refining the timing of the activities planned to allow for adequate closing of the lesson. Another teacher received accolades for following the previously given next steps of grouping students for tasks based on data and organizing the room to better support group work. This same teacher was then provided a new next step of using the Costa house resource to ask higher level questions consistently throughout the lesson. This system of providing teachers with clear next steps aids teachers in being supported in their growth and development. To further support teacher growth, teachers set professional goals during Individual Planning Conferences (IPC), however, this system is not yet formalized and evaluation reports do not demonstrate effective actionable feedback being aligned to these goals. Furthermore, although school leaders frequently evaluate teachers, there is little evidence of teacher peers supporting teacher growth or providing one another with feedback through the lens of the Danielson Framework. In absence of these structures teachers are hindered from reaching the fullest potential to improve their pedagogical skills.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Brooklyn Collegiate: A College Board School	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<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				
<b>School Culture</b>							
<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				
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<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				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>