

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

The Brooklyn Academy Of Global Finance

School: Designation: K688

**125 Stuyvesant Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11221**

Principal: Dannielle Darbee

Dates of review: October 29 - 30, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Leslie Miller Chislett

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Brooklyn Academy Of Global Finance is a high school with 176 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 77% Black, 19% Hispanic, 3% White, 2% Asian, 1% American Indian students, and 1% not reported. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 81.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal aligns the use of resources and makes hiring and other organizational decisions to support the school's instructional vision and goals. (1.3)
 - Working with the community coordinator and prominent members of the NYC business community who serve on the school's Advisory Business Board, the school leverages partnerships to enhance finance course offerings and to provide students learning experiences aligned with college and career readiness such as career exploration for ninth graders, on-site guest visits, trips to businesses, and internships. Some of these partnerships include the National Academy Foundation, the Kingsborough Community College business department that matches its college students with the high school students; Pencil Business Partnership Program that arranged for Deloitte and Touche financial consulting firm volunteers, and Marriot Hotels. Space that is devoted to a "trading room" for business classes is equipped with networked computers, Smart Board, and a stock tick ticker with a lighted running report of the prices and trading volume of various stock exchanges. A school-based option (SBO) vote, permitted student early release time on Mondays, making it possible for teachers to engage in weekly "group professional development" structured as whole faculty, grade-level or department meetings and common planning time is built into teachers' schedule three times a week. Thus, with input from partners, and teachers engaged in curriculum and instructional planning regularly, courses are being refined to support the school's global finance vision for a college and career-related curriculum and student work products are beginning to reflect the Common Core shifts.
 - Seeing the need to effectively review and monitor individual education plans (IEP's) and flexibly schedule students with disabilities in less restrictive environments, wherever possible, the principal hired a special education coordinator who now meets regularly with the academic intervention service team to review cases and plan effectively to each student's needs . Additionally, to support struggling learners, academic intervention support (AIS) was added during ninth period and Regents preparation courses were created for students that are not on track for graduation. A newly hired guidance counselor oversees and provides mandated counseling, reviews transcripts, provides college advisement and mental health services, and monitors transfer school admissions for those students at-risk for failure. Two deans were hired to ensure safety and respond to student behavioral needs. In addition, teachers were thoughtfully assigned according to their expertise to increase continuity and quality in business courses. These decisions have resulted in increased coherence between the school's unique vision, and students' programs and services, thus improving progress towards graduation and producing a decrease in escalated incidents leading to suspensions.
- Teaching strategies are emerging across classrooms to provide a diversity of learners' entry to aptly challenging tasks and are improving levels of engagement and thinking as demonstrated in student work products. (1.2)
 - During the past several years, school leaders and faculty have been working to build coherence in instruction across classrooms by targeting strategies derived

the Danielson Framework for Teaching with their particular focus on questioning and discussion techniques to deepen student discussion and participation in challenging tasks. At the same time, the school is working to prioritize the instructional shifts of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in literacy by emphasizing evidence from text to support reasoning and claims. In all classrooms observed, teachers presented a mini-lesson, problem, or idea, and then structured activities for students to discuss or work out their responses, while questioning the students to assist them in processing the content or the problem at hand. For example, in one Integrated Algebra class observed, the teacher had students explain their order of operations and then asked “Why?” after each step to encourage them to justify their chosen method for solving equations. As called upon, other students were encouraged to state if they agreed with their classmates. In an twelfth grade English language arts class, the teacher drove the literature analysis with probing questions that required students to infer what was beneath the characters’ behaviors, interpret various passages, and occasionally cite the text to support their ideas. Students then worked as a group to answer a writing prompt and located textual evidence using an exemplar as their guide. Conversations in the majority of classrooms volleyed between teacher and students probing student understanding. In a global history class students were asked to make connections between the Egyptian after-life image of a field of reeds and their knowledge of the geography. Consequently, teaching practices across classrooms are beginning to reflect adoption of research-based question strategies, and emphasis on the CCLS instructional shifts in literacy, thus working towards increasing student participation and building understanding.

- The impact of questioning, scaffolds, and routines, resulting in students accessing challenging tasks and demonstrating higher-level thinking, vary across classrooms. Most teachers use common routines that establish clear expectations and a climate conducive to learning, such as starting the lesson with a Do Now, posting the lesson’s aim and essential question and requiring Cornell-style, two-column note taking or graphic organizers during lessons. Numerous teachers utilize group or partner work and frequently pair struggling students with those they view as having a stronger grasp of the learning goals. Sometimes group roles are assigned for cooperative tasks. For example, a global history class grouped students cooperatively to put together puzzle pieces that featured terms and historical events from the French Revolution. Students drew meaning from differentiated texts and generated cause and effect explanations between events in preparation for a class presentation and a written assignment allowed them to construct understanding of the connections between unit concepts. One special education class challenged students to work together to find examples of motifs throughout their novel. In a Living Environment class for students who have not passed the Regents, learners were referring to a text or diagram while constructing a model of the cell that identifies its components. Scaffolds and other methods to vary student access to academic tasks are being developed, and higher levels of student thinking are becoming evident in discussion and assignments throughout the school.
- The principal observes teachers by using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of student learning gains to elevate pedagogy and devise strategies that promote professional growth and reflection. (4.1)
 - A calendar that is established ensures the scheduling of required Measures of Teacher Progress (MOTP) conference-planning, pre-observation, and end-of-year conferences; evaluative and formative observations, and scholarship conferences, and is transparent so teachers understand what to expect.

Scholarship conferences allow the principal and teacher to analyze student work and data in light of a teacher's goals for student learning and the school goals related to credit accrual. Teachers use the Danielson Framework to complete the self-assessment in ARIS Learn and to create professional growth plans (PGP). Each teacher's PGP, comprised of two goals, references one for instructional practice based on the self-assessment and chosen domain of the Danielson Framework, and one for student achievement based on MOSL baseline data. Additionally, the principal has transitioned to the use of the Advance platform to document teacher selections for announced and informal unannounced observations and teacher Measures for Student Learning (MOSL) choices, and uses a color-coded spreadsheet to track the completion of each observation event. Formal observation reports and informal feedback samples incorporate low-inference evidence, strengths, and next steps for teacher growth. As the principal, lead teachers, and teachers explained, these practices are yielding professional growth, improved reflection and the implementation of strategies aligned to a common teaching framework.

- Through a review of teacher observation data, the principal chooses Danielson domains to focus on trends in teacher development. For example, it was decided that the focus for professional support needed to move from establishing a culture for learning to include planning coherent instruction using the Understanding By Design template and also the deepening of questioning and discussion techniques. To deepen their understanding of the Danielson competencies, teachers explored how these are evidenced in instruction during a faculty conference. Teacher support has also included modeling of strategies, targeted pairing of staff members for mentoring, faculty conferences, Association of Supervisors of Curriculum Development (ASCD) consultant coaching, instructional rounds, and network-sponsored workshops to address varying professional learning needs. Over the past several years, information gleaned from classrooms observations has informed tenure decisions and planning for distributed leadership. As a result, adult learning is focused and pedagogy is being elevated in light of the Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts demanded by the CCLS.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure planning, implementation and refinement of coherent curricula across grades and subjects aligned to Common Core and content-area standards to provide all students access to academic tasks that promote college and career readiness. (1.1)
- The school has begun to align its curricula to the CCLS by developing at least one unit map in all content areas using the Understanding by Design model. Most of the units include relevant CC and content area standards to be addressed, enduring understandings, essential questions, targeted content and skills, and assessment evidence including diagnostic assessments and a culminating performance task and rubric. Course scope and sequences are still in development. The principal and teachers explain that decisions to emphasize the CC instructional shifts in literacy in all content areas where possible have been made. For example, it was decided that the increased reading of complex non-fiction text, using evidence from text to support argument writing, and emphasis on academic vocabulary are curriculum goals. However, non-fiction complex texts and related text dependent questions for higher-level textual analysis and argument writing tasks with claims and counter claims in keeping with the CC literacy standards are not consistently included in the unit plans. Furthermore,

while the plans include some scaffolds that anticipate the needs of diverse or struggling learners, unit planning and refinement using analysis of student work is beginning. As result, academic tasks sometimes lack sufficiently high levels of rigor for students with disabilities. For example, one global history, unit plan shows the final product to be a presentation and written piece where general education students take a point of view and incorporate historical information related to nationalism; special education learners are required to only create a poster. Thus, as a consequence of inconsistent planning, some curricula still lack the potential to close the achievement gap and prepare all students to be college and career ready.

- Further support teacher teams to engage in consistent structured professional collaborations whereby data is used to strengthen instructional practices resulting in student progress toward goals. (4.2)
 - Teacher team use of an inquiry approach is being refined. For example, the special education team is beginning to use protocols that guide analysis of student work to generate scaffolds to support students with special needs with standards-based work. However, all teams do not yet consistently analyze student work and document the effectiveness of the implementation of the strategies they identify to advance groups of students towards attainment of goals. Therefore, the impact of teacher teamwork on instruction and student learning is not always measurable.

- Align common assessments and rubrics to curricula, establish checks for understanding, and incorporate analysis of data on student learning goals as a means of informing instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels. (2.2)
 - The school uses a common grading policy and assessments such as MOSL performance assessments, mock Regents in the content areas administered as interim assessments, and teacher-designed final exams. The principal has mapped the assessments in a planning calendar. CC and standards-aligned rubrics that provide feedback to students are becoming typical in classes for culminating projects and assignments. However, although there are common assessments the results are inconsistently used by teams to determine progress towards grade and subject-area goals, and adjust curricula and instruction. In addition, in the lessons observed, some teachers circulated to learn where learners needed support, revised questioning, and asked students to complete exits slips to assess learning throughout lessons, others did not. Consequently, assessment practices are not being leveraged to inform decisions at the class and team level, thus limiting student progress.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Brooklyn Academy for Global Finance	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