

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Brooklyn School for Global Studies

Middle-High School K429

**284 Baltic Street
Brooklyn
NY 11201**

Principal: Dawn Meconi

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The School Context

Brooklyn School for Global Studies is a middle and high school with 243 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 54% Black, 40% Hispanic, 5% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 60% of the students enrolled and girls account for 40%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 86.0%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
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	Additional Findings	Proficient
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	Focus	Developing
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	Additional Findings	Proficient
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Celebration	Well Developed
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the community and provide training to staff while expressing expectations connected to a path to college and readiness and successfully partner with families.

Impact

The school provides high expectations which results in students being supported toward progress toward those academic expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- High expectations are messaged through monthly newsletters and the staff handbook that covers instructional expectations. The “Classroom” and “Paraprofessional” handbooks outlines expectations and guidance for paraprofessionals regarding instructional support during the “Do now”, mini lesson, guided practice, group work and closing activities in lessons. The Individualize Education Plan (IEP) handbook shares more expectations for supporting staff to effectively prepare for IEP meetings, how to navigate Special Education Student Information Systems (SESIS), monitoring caseload and other resources to support students with disabilities. Incoming students receive an orientation packet that provides students with school expectations for promotion, graduation, the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, school-wide rules and other resources.
- A detailed professional learning plan was created for the year and the school leader shared the Danielson Framework for Teaching focus on questioning, collaboration, designing coherent instruction. These focus areas were implemented through the use of “Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, Reading” or WICOR strategies, including vocabulary for English language learners (ELLs), students with disabilities and Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) partnership. The professional-learning plan is aligned to Danielson Framework for Teaching and needs are included as a rationale for all activities. Inter-visitations allow staff to view exemplary practices by their peers and school leaders use this venue to refer teachers following observations to view strategies of colleagues in other classrooms. Lesson study is done by using the professional learning time on Mondays to plan lessons and visits are conducted on Tuesdays, followed by debrief session at the end of the day.
- An AVID elective class in grades 6 and 9 creates a college-readiness culture by infusing AVID methodologies and best practices school-wide. This class teaches students study skills and organizational skills supporting students through peer tutoring. All students are expected to have a loose-leaf binder, use an agenda, and use the Cornell note-taking system in their classes. College pennants hang in the hallways and in classrooms because all of the students are college bound.
- As an AVID school this partnership is an extension to the College Bound Initiative (CBI) Program that provides the school with a full-time college counselor that takes senior students through the entire college admission’s process helping them secure financial aid and scholarships. Student government allows for student to be involved in decision-making. The college counselor also presents workshops to families during PTA meetings on topics such as “Getting into College” and “Understanding Financial Aid”. The college counselor also runs an annual Career Day and Alumni Day.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best. Teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points and high quality extensions for students.

Impact

The school's set of beliefs about how students learn best is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. Instructional practices lead to uneven demonstration of higher order thinking and challenging tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- The instructional focus this year is to use the partnership with AVID to create a college-readiness culture through a unified set of beliefs about how students learn best. Students learn best when they are actively engaged in their own learning and are given tasks that promote inquiry and collaboration. This is supported by the use of the workshop model lesson planning template and the AVID WICOR strategies. The incorporation of AVID WICOR strategies into daily lessons supports the integration of the instructional shifts across all subject areas and reinforces the qualities of effective teachers as indicated by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. During one of Monday's Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings, departments met and decided which WICOR strategies they could commit to using on a daily basis. Students shared that the typical lesson includes the "Do now" or warm up to reflect on past learning and the practice problem to see what they know. They shared that they use accountable talk prompts to help with discussions.
- During a grade 7 ICT English language arts (ELA) lesson students were using iPads as they participated in a blended learning lesson on point of view using the program, LightSail. Students worked in partnerships on the tasks as teachers circulated among groups. Sentence starters were used to support some students as students looked for evidence in text. In a grade 6 ICT math lesson students were working with a partner to solve problems from EngageNY and were charged with creating a frequency table of a given data set. Teachers had students turn-and-talk about some questions. However in a grade 6 AVID classroom students were working in pairs and all were provided the same task. Although this lesson included accountable talk and students were working collaboratively, some students were early finishers while others struggled, revealing uneven engagement of challenging tasks.
- In a grade 10 ICT mathematics lesson students were simplifying rational expressions. Although the teachers asked many questions and dominated the lesson by maintaining full control of the learning, there were opportunities to engage students to come to the board, solve the problem and explain their thinking. In a grade 11 ICT ELA lesson, the task sheet was tiered as the teacher provided sentence starters as prompts for one group. Most students worked collaboratively and were engaged in the lesson and were annotating texts while teachers listed comments made during the share, asking clarifying questions to ensure understanding of content. Some tasks were scaffolded to make it more manageable for students. Although accountable talk stems were widely used by students, students did not ask high-level questions to push their own and other's thinking.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order thinking across grades and subjects for all students.

Impact

The faculty and school leaders have created coherent curricula through purposeful decisions to promote college and career readiness for all students. There is an engaging, rigorous, and coherent curriculum in all subjects that is accessible for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The middle school grades use Code X with a blend of EngageNY for ELA and CMP3 for math. The high school uses a combination of EngageNY with their current curricula units. Social studies and science follow the New York City scope and sequence and have made purposeful decisions to embed literacy across content areas. There is a focus on close reading strategies, making claims, citing text based evidence, academic vocabulary and annotating texts to address the shifts. All subject areas incorporate reading and writing and the citing of textual evidence into their lesson by using Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization and Reading (WICOR) strategies. LightSail, an online reading program that is used to support independent reading whereby the program matches students' Lexile levels and includes built-in supports, language translations, and assessments.
- Atlas Rubicon, an online curriculum database is used to house units created by teachers. Teachers create maps and use data to plan and make adjustments to units and lessons. A review of a unit plan for grade 8, on "The United States between Wars" includes ELA standards along with social studies standards. Essential questions, literacy skills, research and geography are also included. Assessments are built in this unit and the learning plan has all the lessons that will be taught. There is an area for how the unit was modified to afford differentiation to meet the needs of all students. A unit plan for grade 7 Code X follows the same structure and the lessons reflect standards, lesson goals and objectives, "Do now", mini-lesson, vocabulary, and includes a rubric aligned with the unit of study, differentiation that includes tiered groups with names of students to provide access for all learners, as well as an exit ticket.
- Teachers design tasks and ensure rigor and scaffolds are built in to promote access for all students. Depth of Knowledge (DOK) is used along with Costa's levels of thinking to check for rigor in tasks. Teachers use data to develop tiered tasks and groups in classrooms. Teachers shared that they model their questions after those in EngageNY and make sure they expose students to higher-order and rigorous questioning during lessons. Socratic seminars are planned in units and Cornell notes help to prepare students for college by supporting organizational skills. Teachers commented that the AVID WICOR supports students with college readiness along with college prep classes, resume building, college visits, student organization tools and engaging students in Common Core-aligned tasks.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use and create common assessments, grading policy, and rubrics that are aligned to curricula and used to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subjects. Assessment practices consistently reflect ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

The teachers offer actionable feedback to students regarding their achievement. Teachers use data to make effective adjustments to curricula and instruction meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers and administration created an assessment calendar to guide their work for the year. This document is divided into weeks and outlines periodic assessments, unit tests and benchmark assessments. New York City performance assessments were broken down into traits and the use of NYC SchoolNet, an online data warehouse, for benchmark assessments provides item analysis, using state standards reflecting overall average percentage for individual students. Teachers focus on standards that most students have difficulty mastering and plan additional lesson and group work to address these skills.
- The grading policy is developed and adhered to school wide and reflects assessments, classwork, participation and homework. Jupiter grades is in an online system that allows parents and student access to see current grades. Parents can log in from home, see their child's grades, and communicate directly with teachers.
- Data is used during the AVID team and teacher team meetings to check on student progress. Data from benchmarks, "Do now" tasks, unit assessments and performance assessments are used to determine student progress. A "Student Success Plan" is created every marking period for all students and uses data to develop action plans for mastery of skills.
- Student work reviewed during the small group interview was scored using a rubric and had feedback and clear next steps. For example, the teacher feedback stated, "You organized the essay well by categorizing each theme and point of view. But in order to get a level 4 score on trait 6 you must employ a formal tone in your argument with a level of objectivity." The teacher continued to cite a sentence from the essay directing the student to make sure it is addressed throughout the essay. Students shared that many teachers provide the rubric at the onset of lessons or tasks.
- Teachers use exit tickets across subjects and grades to plan and fine-tune lesson and modification to curriculum maps and identify areas to reteach groups of students. School leaders and teachers created a protocol to ensure that all teachers are committed to using exit ticket data to inform their teaching. Each teacher tracks "checks for understanding" data using spreadsheets and during the time allocated on Tuesdays, teachers assess the data and plan or modify lessons. In a grade 7 lesson the teacher asked students, "What point of view does your text represent?" and "How does that impact the details that are included or left out?" Students wrote the responses on the iPads and all responses were accessible to the teacher. Stop-and-jots are used along with turn-and-talk to check for understanding during lessons.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The majority of teachers participate in structured collaborative inquiry. Distributive leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Through participation in teacher teams, teachers’ instructional capacity is developed and teachers have an influence in decisions across the school to promote the instructional shifts and school goals. Distributive leadership provides teachers a voice and input into decisions that impact learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Common planning time allows teachers to work together, as a small learning community. For example, an ICT teacher may have many partnerships with teachers across the school and it is necessary to have time for them to articulate about students’ achievement, instruction and curricula. School leaders visit team sessions and provide feedback as needed. The AVID site team meets weekly and includes teachers, administrators, guidance counselors and the parent coordinator. Teams used “Looking at Multiple-Choice Item Data Protocol” created by Teaching Matters to look at student work and use roles such as recorder, timekeeper, facilitator and presenter as well as developing goals for teams. Teachers shared that they scaffold instruction to ensure students engage in high-order thinking through exit slips, differentiated word problems, visuals, and modified or tiered assignments.
- During professional learning time teacher teams enhance academic tasks using student work and data and teams follow a specific cycle when they meet on Tuesdays. For example the middle school team creates, modifies, or uses existing common interim assessments for CodeX, CMP3, and EngageNY units. They teach skills and standards, administer the assessment and conduct an item analysis by standards. Teachers develop an action plan to address the areas where the students did not demonstrate mastery and use exit tickets, formative assessments and student work to monitor progress. Teachers shared that working with peers has increased their repertoire of strategies. For example the support from the English as a Second Language teacher helps them develop their knowledge of language acquisition and strategies to improve oral language skills in students.
- Distributive structures include the AVID team that works afterschool to develop and enhance WICOR strategies that will be implemented school-wide. This venue provides a voice for teachers and demonstrates that teacher leadership is encouraged and valued at the school. Teachers were given choice to select the AVID strategy they would focus deeply on this year in their classrooms. Lesson study has empowered teachers to take a leadership role. The ELL teacher works on the ELA lesson study team and supports teachers with entry points and scaffolds to ensure access and support for ELLs. Teachers had input and a voice in deciding on the core curriculum options, and as members of the planning team for professional learning they create and deliver professional development for peers.