



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Brooklyn Preparatory High School

High School K488

**257 North 6th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11211**

Principal: Noah Lansner

**Date of review: May 5, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Steven Strull**

The School Context

Brooklyn Preparatory High School is a high school with 494 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 55% Black, 40% Hispanic, 2% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 20% Students with Disabilities. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. 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	Additional Findings	Proficient
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	Focus	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	Additional Findings	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	Celebration	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

All teachers are engaged in multiple teacher teams that consistently utilize an inquiry approach tied to the school's instructional focus of rigorous reading, writing, and discussion.

Impact

Collaborative structures empower all teachers to support school goals, resulting in teacher practice which is increasing performance levels of students learning to read, write, and discuss in all of their classes.

Supporting Evidence

- The 9th grade team uses an inquiry process to review student exit slips from the 9th grade science foundations course. The analysis reveals that Habits of Mind practiced in the English Language Arts class transfer to the science class. Students developed the required habit of restating the question presented in the task. As a result data indicates improved performance in science.
- Successful pedagogical techniques developed and shared in teacher team meetings transfer to other teams throughout the school. For example, the 9th and 10th grade teams piloted the use of planners as an organizational support for students. They produced the desired positive results for the students. Planners are now provided to each child and the expectations for the use of the planners are laid out in the "habits of work" expectations document that was created.
- Teacher teams, led by teacher leaders who also are members of the school's instructional cabinet meet weekly. Meeting agendas reflect that issues such as, problem-solving, evaluation of school-wide professional development, and decisions regarding system-wide structures are addressed. Additionally enrichment classes, student punctuality improvement plans, and the implementation of the school's STAR program, a student benefit system based on student behavior and academic metrics have been established.
- Grade teams developed a "Habits of Work" document with expectations for how students should approach their academic tasks. They use the acronym "ROPES" which stands for Resourcefulness, Organization, Perseverance, Eagerness, and Self-Awareness. There are expectations articulated in the document for both teachers and students with specific expectations for the current academic year. Grade team leader meeting minutes reflect the use of the document.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

A school-wide grading philosophy developed by the administration and staff accounts for student growth and mastery of Common Core Learning Standards, Habits of Mind, and Habits of Work. Teachers adjust their practice based on continuous assessment of student understanding.

Impact

School's adoption of a philosophy as opposed to a policy results in a continuous approach to assessment rather than rigid metrics based on percentages of content achieved. Students, across the spectrum of learners, as yet are not totally engaged in further developing the school's assessment philosophy.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has a portfolio review process conducted in January and June. Students select the work to be included followed by a presentation seated within a circle of peers and their advisor. This process provides students the opportunity to reflect on themselves as a student, their learning process and how their work aligns to future college and career goals. The process is continuous and one rooted in revision and articulation with student voice as the primary focus. There is a rubric students use during their advisory period to reflect on their work based on the four Habits of Mind: perspective, analysis, connections, and expression.
- Approximately 2 – 3 times each semester, students engage in performance tasks in each of their classes, one of which ultimately gets selected for their portfolio. These performance tasks are rigorous in nature and designed around specific targeted Habits of Mind and skills developed through level 3 and 4 on the school's rigor matrix. The school's grading philosophy ensures the following are in place for every performance task: 1) clarity and focus, 2) content alignment and rigor, 3) student engagement, and 4) fairness/access and opportunity to learn. As yet, students across grades and subjects are not fully involved in ownership of the assessment of their portfolios. Grading of the portfolio is teacher directed.
- Teachers continually check for understanding throughout daily lessons through the individual use of student white boards and exit tickets. The white boards are for lesson formative assessment, while the exit tickets are used as daily summative assessment tools. As an example in a math class, students complete problems using the white boards so the teacher is able to glance across the room and determine the level to which each student is understanding the concept being taught.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school has aligned the Common Core Learning Standards to their Habits of Mind Learning Objectives Framework. Curricula and lesson plans provide multiple entry points for a variety of learners.

Impact

Teachers choose key Habits of Mind objectives to emphasize during each lesson, unit, and semester creating cohesive unit plans using a customized unit plan template resulting in all students being provided learning experiences that are rigorous and engaging.

Supporting Evidence

- Professional development sessions focus on curriculum planning. Teachers looked at both day to day lesson plans and unit plans at a November professional development meeting. Teachers identified key Habits of Mind Learning Objectives that students would have to master in order to complete their performance task for each unit they planned. Teachers subsequently planned lessons based on addressing those objectives aligned to content standards.
- An accreditation committee made up of teachers from each discipline offer critical feedback on unit planning during the planning and revising stages. In a chemistry unit, the teacher received feedback around essential questions and development of the performance task. The committee found her plans were comprehensive and showed detailed planning. The cool feedback, however, indicated that the essential questions did not sufficiently allow for deeper student engagement, additionally, the performance task did not provide for real-further research, or extended experimentation. As a result of peer feedback, the teacher created multi-layered performance tasks aligned to the unit's essential question.
- Academic departments collaborate on unit plans to identify and emphasize key standards, especially when students take classes in combination with each other and/or in a specified sequence. 9th grade students take algebra simultaneously with a Math Modeling and Enrichment class. In the enrichment class, the class adds number sense problems and visual representations, while in the Math Modeling class students expand on concepts and ideas through hands on activities and extension activities such as reading an article and discussing the relevance of math to the article.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teacher pedagogy reflects a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn and perform best. Multiple entry points are provided for all students including students with disabilities.

Impact

In all classrooms, students are engaged in learning activities emphasizing rigorous reading, writing, and discussion tasks. Teachers deliver instruction emphasizing Habits of Mind and Habits of Work.

Supporting Evidence

- Students routinely read academic text and are expected to discuss the text with their peers and their teachers. In a 10th grade ICT Global History class, students rotated through 6 different stations utilizing multiple learning modalities discretely in each station. The stations included video clips, text/document review, and photograph analysis while teachers circulated through the classroom providing supports for groups of children at each station. All of the stations created analytic expectations of the students related to reading, writing, and purposeful discussion.
- Teachers use the school's reading, writing, and discussion protocols as a way of reinforcing coherent ways of scaffolding literacy instruction across contents and grades. Utilization of the same protocols across content and grade bands allows students to access similar strategies developed by their teachers. In a 9th grade science class, the novel The Immortal Life of Henrietta Locks was read before the unit on genetic disorders and diseases. The Habits of Mind specifically taught in the English Language Arts class were applied to the science class. Student exit slips captured the carryover from the discrete literature instruction to the science class.
- In an effort to provide a variety of learners with multiple entry points into rigorous curricula, teachers employ multiple differentiation strategies such as leveled text, flexible grouping, annotation techniques, and high interest articles. These pedagogical strategies are evident in all classrooms to the point where students know they are expected to annotate text as appropriate. In a 9th grade science class the students prompted the teacher for annotation instructions as he was conducting the lesson.
- For each unit that students completed teachers are expected to design a performance task that clearly demonstrates the learning. In a performance task from a Living Environment class students complete a food web and an informational writing task. Students receive differentiated assignments based on their previous performance level ensuring scaffolds are in place for multiple types of learners. Students who received the Level 3 tasks had fewer scaffolds and an additional data table to include.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

High expectations are consistently communicated by school leaders to all teachers and students concomitant to high expectations being communicated from teachers to students.

Impact

A positive school tone and climate has resulted due to the consistent communication of expectations to all stakeholders. A culture of mutual accountability exists both between teachers and administrators and teachers and students leading to individualized student advisement and supports.

Supporting Evidence

- The culture, tone, and climate of the school gives evidence to the realization of the goal of each child moving from “I have to go to school” to “I am a college-bound learner.” This was accomplished through the conscious effort on the part of administrators and teachers through a variety of programs which helped students to adopt a true college-preparatory mindset. Individualized programming for each student, a “STAR” program of increasing privileges based on academic and attendance data, an advisory program, as well as a credit bearing teaching assistance program were implemented to this end.
- To further promote students being ready for the next level, Advanced Placement classes and an Advanced Placement summer institute was offered. The success of these resulted in the development of an additional six different Advanced Placement offered. All students who are enrolled in an advanced placement class are also scheduled for a weeklong summer institute. The institute focuses on building students’ Habits of Mind and Work needed for success in college courses.
- A group of 12th grade students participated in learning to mentor other students. They were then paired with at-risk 9th grade students in an effort to provide one to one student support. Students were matched as mentor/mentees based on similar interests and used a leadership syllabus developed by the guidance department. 9th grade students begin to be prepared for this college bound culture as they begin their high school experience.
- In an effort to decrease incidents of negative student behavior a Justice Panel system was created to hold students accountable for their behavior rather than just punish them. The Justice Panel syllabus, created by the guidance department develops students’ abilities to work with their peers and facilitate the panel.
- The determination of administrators and faculty on increasing the academic environment of the school has led to a positive impact on student achievement. Based on an analysis of student grade point averages the number of students on the honor roll (85+ GPA) increased from 110 in the Fall of 2013 to 130 in the Fall of 2014. Additionally, the number of students with grade point averages of 75 or higher increased from 267 to 314 in the same time period.