



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Brooklyn Collegiate, A College Board School

23K493

**2021 Bergen Street
Brooklyn
NY 11233**

Principal: Amonte Sias

**Date of review: January 21, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Richard Cintron**

The School Context

Brooklyn Collegiate, A College Board School is a high school with 387 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 86% Black, 11% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 26% special education students. Boys account for 58% of the students enrolled and girls account for 42%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 83.0%.

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	Focus	Developing
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	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	Proficient
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	Developing

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	------------------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

High expectations are consistently communicated to staff via the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and professional development opportunities. Leadership and staff offer ongoing feedback to families supporting student progress toward high expectations connected to college and career readiness.

Impact

Collaboration and support between staff, students, and families fosters high expectations for all and prepares students for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of the school's faculty handbook clearly outlines all staff professional responsibilities and expectations regularly reviewed throughout the school year to ensure familiarity and relevance. Topics include the school's expectations for interactions between staff and students, the school uniform policy, and expectations for delivery of instruction.
- Professional development topics, identified collaboratively by the administration and teachers, are aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, as well as, the schools instructional focus of improving student's literacy and vocabulary skills. For example, professional development focusing on instructional stations was designed to support teachers with the Frayer Model of teaching vocabulary, using technology to help differentiate support to all students, and teaching non-fiction text. Additional topics include literacy using close reading, Discovery Education, and Lesson Planning.
- Parents spoke to how the school offers a wide array of workshops to support them in understanding student expectations and ensuring that they understand the progress their teens are making towards them. For example, parents mentioned how workshops on how they could use Skedula, the school's online grading system, to communicate with staff members, check their child's grades, attendance or transcripts, and how they could use the system to receive regular updates on upcoming tests and school events has allowed them to understand what is expected of their child and work with teachers to make sure they stay on track. Additional topics included Common Core Learning Standards, Higher Order Thinking, Graduation Requirements and Understanding the College Application Process.
- During a student meeting, students spoke to how the school-community challenges them to take advantage of opportunities such as Advanced Placement (AP) classes, and regularly remind and encourage them to model the expectations of an "Urban Scholar". Students and parents spoke to how the staff models high expectations for them and provide them with regular support to own their individual educational experience. Students spoke to how they regularly set goals in all classes and are responsible for monitoring their progress and in seeking out support from teachers. Students felt that this process has allowed them to become more responsible and integral to their learning.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Curricula alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards across all subject areas is developing, and academic tasks inconsistently emphasize rigorous higher order thinking skills across grades and subjects.

Impact

Students are inconsistently challenged with high level tasks that push student thinking and promote college and career readiness for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of student work products and accompanying end of unit tasks examined by teachers inconsistently demonstrate high levels of rigor or alignment to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards.
- Conversations with the school leadership, as well as, a review of curriculum documents revealed that the school is still in the process of aligning curricula in all core subject areas to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards, integrating the instructional shifts and making purposeful decisions to build coherence across grades and core subject areas. Curricula and academic tasks indicate limited coherence and emphasis of rigorous habits to consistently push student thinking at high levels. Although a review of the schools professional development calendar did reveal planned support for teachers focusing on Common Core expectations, rigor in the classroom, multiple access and entry points, and designing culminating tasks for units, these supports were not scheduled until the month of February.
- The school's instructional focus on improving student literacy and vocabulary skills was seen in some of the subject area curriculum documents. For example, unit plans reviewed in social studies, math, and science showed limited evidence of purposeful planning of instructional strategies and assessments regarding these focus areas.
- Lesson plans are inconsistently written to cognitively engage learners and challenge them with higher order tasks such as requiring students to cite evidence to support a claim, analyze information, draw conclusions, and apply concepts to solve real-world problems. While most lesson plans did include intended Common Core Learning Standards that teachers were planning to address in-class tasks were inconsistently aligned to these intended standards. For example, in an English class, although the teacher listed that students would be citing strong textual evidence to support analysis of the text being used, the task students actually worked on did not ask them to do this.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide entry points into the lesson. Student discussions reflect uneven levels of student understanding.

Impact

In most classrooms, limited facilitation of student-led discussions and active student engagement curtail opportunities to promote higher-order thinking and rigorous participation, thus hindering a diversity of students from demonstrating their thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms visited, students were purposefully grouped to provide peer support. However, not all students were actively engaged in the discussions within their groups and some students were unable to articulate the work of the group and show their understanding of the material being covered. For example, in a Spanish class where students were studying the present progressive, when asked several students could not explain why they were learning this material and how it would help them to become fluent in the language. In an English language arts class, students were working on specific vocabulary words, but were unable to explain how knowing these specific words would help them in future lessons.
- In classrooms visited, teaching strategies to encourage student discussion and have them defend their ideas were heard in only some classrooms. In a math class, when students did not immediately answer questions asked of the entire class, the teacher just provided the answer for them instead of rewording the question or asking another student to try to reword the question to start the conversation. In an English language arts class, when students had questions in their group concerning the assignment, the teacher just answered them instead of redirecting the questions back to the group or to other groups who were working on a similar task. In a math class, when students did answer questions directed to the entire class, instead of pushing student thinking by requesting other students to provide additional information, the teacher added the information and moved on with the lesson.
- During classroom visits some teachers asked only low level recall questions that did not call for students to strategically think or to extend their thinking. In one art class the teacher asked several questions only requesting students to recall the definition of specific words from a previous lesson. In a math class, the teacher asked several questions prompting simple answers and then summarized the student's answers for the rest of the class.
- Student work products inconsistently reflect high levels of student thinking. In an art class, all students were asked to design a hero and a villain using a computer program and to explain what they liked about the process. In an English language arts class, students were asked to explain what they found exciting and challenging about working at their learning stations.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

The school uses common assessments and rubrics in all subject areas to provide monitor student progress. Teachers regularly check for understanding and use the information to make instructional adjustments.

Impact

The monitoring of student progress at the teacher team level as well as the regular use of checks for understanding allows teachers to determine student progress towards goals and adjust instruction accordingly.

Supporting Evidence

- Students spoke to how they regularly use rubrics in class and with homework assignments and how teachers confer with them to provide feedback to improve their writing. Students also spoke to how they use rubrics during in-class writing assignments to peer and self-assess, and how this process has helped them to become better writers by being able to give other students feedback. Student work displayed in the classrooms and corridors included instructional feedback to students.
- In classrooms observed, teachers consistently used a variety of methods to check for understanding, such as, exit slips, one-on-one conferencing with students, and peer and self-assessment. A review of teacher's lesson plans revealed purposeful grouping based on notes from previous lessons regarding student work from exit slips and homework.
- Teacher supports to students during the lesson provided strategies for them to progress through the task. For example, in a science class, as the teacher spoke to students who were struggling with how to begin the task, she reminded them to go back and reread the directions and then discuss where they were struggling with their partner and how they might begin the task. In an English language arts class, the teacher reviewed a student written response and reminded them be sure to use evidence from the text to defend their answer by going back to the parts in the text that they had highlighted and ensuring that they are referencing this evidence in their answer.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Developing
---------------------------	---	----------------	-------------------

Findings

Teacher team collaborations inconsistently promote the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. The analysis of student work products used to make school-wide modifications to curricula materials is emerging.

Impact

Although teacher teams are regularly engaged in professional collaborations by grade and department, the work of the teams has been limited in strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers, thus hindering student achievement for a diversity of learners

Supporting Evidence

- Lead teachers have recently been identified for each content area and structures are being established to provide professional development to enable stronger facilitation of teacher team meetings.
- Teacher teams are engaged in structured professional collaborations to review student data and work products and strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers. Tasks created by teacher teams aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the implementations of the instructional shifts were inconsistently seen across classrooms.
- Teacher team work is at various degrees of implementation across the school. Some teachers on grade teams clearly articulated specific instructional strategies connected to targeted groups of students they are studying and the process they are using to track student progress. Other teachers on department teams were not prepared to do so and spoke to how the team was moving towards beginning to use results from student work samples to modify units for the spring semester.
- Although teachers meet in teams to develop instructional strategies to support groups of students that they work with, there is no structure in place for how improvements to teacher practice connected to those strategies is tracked.