



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

West Brooklyn Community High School

High School K529

**1053 41st Street
Brooklyn
NY 11219**

Principal: Gloria Rosario Wallace

**Date of review: May 5, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince**

The School Context

West Brooklyn Community is a high school with 207 students from grades 10 through 12. The school population comprises 15% Black, 58% Hispanic, 18% White, and 9% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 57% of the students enrolled and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 72.0%.

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	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	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 have established effective and targeted systems of communication for staff. School leaders and staff set of high expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness for all students.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability ensures that school leaders and staff contribute to the establishment of high expectations where administration and faculty support students' progress toward graduation and college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers set long-term goals at the beginning of the year and keep a log of professional development they have attended related to these goals. Professional development is consistent and is used to build knowledge of the Common Core Learning Standards, the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and Webb's Depth of Knowledge as evidenced in meeting agendas and logs.
- The principal communicates high expectations through a variety of methods. Frequent classroom observations, peer visitation, and feedback from classroom visits hold staff accountable for meeting expectations. School leaders provide teachers with detailed feedback and outline the support (including mentoring and coaching) that is available to them to improve their practice. Teachers are commended for implementing strategies that they had learned in professional development sessions and school leaders provide them with next steps.
- The school has made a commitment to establishing partnerships to support students' progress toward college and career readiness. There is a weekly newsletter, which announces workshops and dinners for students and families. The school has developed an *Advocate Counselor Program* for students not on track successfully to assist with all hurdles. There is also a post-secondary program called *Life after West Brooklyn*, where graduating students have several conferences with the College Access counselors.
- The school has a partnership with Good Shepard Services that is unique to the community and has a shared leadership model the school principal and Good Shepard director work together to inform school wide decisions and plan strategically for the needs of the school community. This partnership provides retreats, community celebrations and a commitment to a proactive process on student to student issues, supporting high expectations through a restorative justice plan that the students respect and honor, as was affirmed by students.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Teacher pedagogy is developing around a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Common Core Learning Standards and the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Across classrooms, teaching strategies (including questioning, scaffolds in English and/or native language where appropriate and routines) inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Due to a lack of coherence in teaching strategies, there is uneven engagement in appropriately challenging tasks and uneven demonstration of higher-order thinking in student work products and discussions, including the work of English language learners and student with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- In some classes visited, students were engaged in small group work, but this was not consistently observed across classrooms. In the Global History class, students analyzed President Hoover's approach to government. Students worked in groups annotating the article, *On Rugged Individualism*, by H. Hoover. Students circled key words and put question marks by words or sentences they did not understand. In summarizing key ideas, students were asked to make connections and comments regarding prior readings. In a Literacy Intensive class for struggling learners and students with disabilities, the teacher reviewed definitions, and students filled in blanks on work sheets. Instructions were given to the whole class, leaving some students unclear as to the expectations. The tasks did not align with lesson objectives and the instructional activities were conducted in a whole group with little evidence of in-depth learning opportunities to support student sub-groups and struggling learners.
- The quality of questioning was inconsistent across classrooms, limiting the opportunity to think critically, have discussions to maximize learning, and create high level work products. In a grade 10 English language arts class on *The Lord of the Flies*, the aim of the lesson was "How do we identify and analyze a character's external and internal conflicts"? The teacher directed students to review class notes before completing a worksheet. In this class, the teacher's directions were directed to the whole class and unclear, and there was limited opportunity for student to student interaction.
- Across classrooms, there was inconsistent use of multiple entry points and scaffolds for struggling learners. In an Algebra class, students were expected to complete equations, with some students easily mastering the work and waiting to move ahead. In this class, students responded to the question "How did you get to these points?", or "Find the Y Intercept", and copied information that was provided on the board. At one point, a student asked a clarifying question, and the teacher missed the opportunity to respond.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

School Leaders and faculty are in the process of aligning the curriculum to Common Core Learning Standards and integrating the instructional shifts. Planning for rigorous tasks and higher order skills is inconsistent across grades and content areas and for all learners.

Impact

Academic tasks do not consistently push student thinking and learning aligned to the instructional shifts and college and career readiness. Students are not consistently engaged in rigorous tasks across grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- The school is in the process of aligning the Common Core Learning Standards into all lesson planning. There are unified curricula, and a teacher developed common assessment system. With support from Good Shepard Services, teachers are encouraged and supported to conduct individual and group learning opportunities to refine their curriculum and revise teaching practices to address the instructional shifts.
- There are weekly department meetings during which teachers are beginning to incorporate the instructional shifts and rigorous habits to deepen cognitive engagement for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities. For example, there are *Planning Jams* at the start and end of each trimester where teachers review upcoming cycles. Teachers are beginning to embed these practices into their lessons.
- The math department is in the process of updating their curricula maps and course sequencing, and is moving towards including more open-ended questions. This team has work with a consultant from ReDesign to bring the instructional shifts and the use of more open-ended questions into the lesson planning. The Science department has participated in training on higher order thinking skills and has developed a *Thinking Like a Scientist* plan that includes discipline-specific skills and a writing rubric assessing student's literacy skills in the area of Science.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that aligned with the schools curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine progress toward goals.

Impact

Consistent assessment systems provide actionable feedback to teachers and students regarding student achievement. The schools' systems to monitor progress through data analysis guide adjustments in units and lessons.

Supporting Evidence

- A new assessment system has been introduced to the teaching staff through a weekly data meeting facilitated by two teachers within the school. Teacher teams have created new baseline and summative assessments in Global History and new diagnostic Regents performance indicators for math.
- Teachers use rubrics aligned with the school's curricula to provide actionable feedback to students regarding success and challenges. Students affirmed that they use peer-assess rubrics and know to ask to have something restated, cite evidence or provide details. Teachers analyze mock English Language Arts exams results and exit and entrance slip responses to assign students to needs-based groups and to provide differentiated academic tasks based on the students' level.
- Assessment norms were created by the teachers and administrative team at the school. Using formal assessment, skill baseline assessments, cumulative information and mock Regents information, teachers have updated curricula maps and included feedback forms for teachers to use in guiding lessons to meet all student learning needs.

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

The majority of teachers engage in structured professional collaborations focused on aligning practice with the Common Core Learning Standards and analyzing assessment data and student work. A distributive leadership structure has been implemented.

Impact

Teacher team collaboration strengthens teacher practices and promotes student achievement. A distributed leadership structure builds teacher capacity and provides teachers with a voice in instructional decisions.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly and engage in collaborative inquiry that supports goals and strengthens teacher capacity. The meetings are embedded weekly in the programming. A team was observed looking at student work/data analysis and identifying next instructional steps. For example, student writing samples were examined to determine if students included evidence to support claims. Teachers shared that these collaborations are improving instructional practices to build student progress.
- Teachers are given autonomy in the development of curricular units of study and teacher leadership and decision making is therefore promoted. Teachers have identified literacy and numeracy skills aligned with various disciplines, and discuss academic behaviors to promote perseverance in classrooms. Teacher leaders plan professional development for teachers based on feedback around the greatest areas of instructional need, and develop strategies in the classroom to promote student success. All teacher teams use regularly compiled data sets from bi-weekly and bench mark grades, attendance rates, and credit accumulation and teacher surveys to address the highest leverage areas of need towards meeting the instructional expectations outlined in the Common Core Learning Standards.
- Teachers participate in peer-intervisitation, share best practices, and provide in-house mentoring. In addition, teachers participate in off-site professional development and turn-key the training for the colleagues. Staff members assume responsibility for implementing programs. For example, an advocate counselor initiated a Youth Summit program through which teachers identified an area of growth for the school community and steps to address it.