



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Brooklyn School for Music and Theatre**

**High School K548**

**883 Classon Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11225**

**Principal: Pamela Randazzo**

**Date of review: March 13, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Marjory Matthieu-Kodjovi**

## The School Context

Brooklyn School for Music and Theatre K548 is a high school with 382 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 83% Black, 16% Hispanic, 0% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 31% of the students enrolled and girls account for 69%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 89.0%.

## School Quality Criteria

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

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in professional collaborations to strengthened teacher instructional capacity and student progress. Teacher teams consistently analyze data and student work for learners they share or on whom they are focused.

### Impact

As a result of teacher engagement in inquiry-based collaborations there is an increase in their instructional capacity, implementation of the Common Core Standards and student progress.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly, monthly and twice a month depending on the team. One's of the school's focus is to conduct frequent cycles of formative and evaluative classroom visits and provide meaningful feedback and next steps for teachers to improve their practice to enhance student outcomes. For example during our visit, the 10<sup>th</sup> grade inquiry team met to evaluate student data on interim assessment; tracking progress of students by comparing pre-assessment data to current data and revise June goals based on current data. Teachers meet every week and twice a month they extend that common time to an afterschool session where they work deeper with the curriculum and horizontal and vertical alignment. The results of the action research are shared with the school community.
- Administrators shared and teachers concurred that, that coaches from New Visions work with the teams to fully support the inquiry process and train the teacher facilitators in effective facilitation strategies. Teachers state that meeting with their colleagues provides them with insight and best practices to teach all students. They expressed that their team work provides a sense of community and consistency. Teachers stated they felt supported by their colleagues and that all ideas were welcomed and valued and that administration visits team meetings
- Teachers spoke enthusiastically about the value of daily, structured time for collaboration with fellow teachers. According to administration and teachers interviewed, teams maintain an outcome based approach utilizing student data and student work and tracking is done via Google Docs within teams. Teachers shared that team meetings have enabled them to use data to monitor progress and plan targeted interventions, look for patterns and trends in student work, periodic assessment, and other exam data. Their alignment of curriculum to the Common Core Learning Standards, has fostered meaningful conversations around teaching strategies, and promoted a data driven approach to planning. For example, administrators and teachers articulated the progress they have made in improving student writing, as evidenced by the measures of student learning (MOSL) and the English language arts (ELA) Regents' pass rate school-wide.
- Administration shared that in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade "Regents" track due to students' skill deficiencies and lack of working at complex problems (productive struggle), the team along with the Assistant Principal reviewed and selected a program called *Transitions to Algebra*. The team continues with the above work for all other grades and will push the Transitions curriculum into the 10<sup>th</sup> grade Regents track next year if the data analysis shows an improvement in students' basic skills.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies are beginning to reflect an articulated set of beliefs and alignment to curricula that engages students in high levels of thinking and participation through peer to peer discourse and is reflected in meaningful work products.

### Impact

The Danielson Framework for Teaching informs teaching practices; however, across classrooms visited, all students were not yet consistently engaged in tasks and classrooms discussions, resulting in uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

### Supporting Evidence

- In classrooms observe, some teachers employed strategies to facilitate high levels of student thinking and participation in classroom discussions and work products. For example, in 11<sup>th</sup> grade ELA class students were asked to answer the following questions: “How does Othello put himself in danger? Why do you think Othello acts the way he does at the end of the play? How do we organize our essay?” After answering the questions, students were assigned color numbers, and then asked to enter the stage and begin to act on the scene. Students sat in groups and engaged in rich conversation using the rubric. However, in a 9<sup>th</sup> grade math class, students were given a system of equation and asked to determine the point where the line cross by solving the system algebraically, five students dominated the lesson whilst others sat silently with questions asked and repeated for the class by the teacher.
- The majority of classrooms observed had classroom discussions that were teacher–student or student–teacher in pattern, with dialogue typically being teacher-student- teacher thus providing limited opportunity for most students to demonstrate their thinking.
- During a 12<sup>th</sup> grade earth science lesson observed, students were directed to work together in groups to complete a task. However, all students, including students with disabilities (SWDs) and English language learners (ELLs), were assigned the identical worksheet and when asked about the task some students were unable to clearly formulate what the activity entailed.
- Lesson plans, unit plans and student work and tasks displayed in the hallways across all subject areas were aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and content standards. In most classrooms instruction reflected multiple entry points and attempts to engage students with disabilities. There was, however, inconsistent evidence of attempts to engage higher-level learners. For example, during a discussion session, in a math class students were pushed to expand on their thinking while in another class, students who understood and completed the problems early were not provided with enrichment. The use of extensions, and opportunities to engage higher- level students were not consistently seen across classrooms, or within lesson plans.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and curricula and academic tasks are planned using student work and data.

### Impact

Across most classrooms, a diversity of learners, including SWDs and ELLs, have access to the curricula and tasks allowing students the opportunity to be cognitively engaged and take steps towards college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- Based on a review of curricular documents and resulting student work, school leaders and faculty made the decision to move to have teachers trained in a tiered method on the Hochman writing method. One teacher was trained with the assistant principal last year and became the resident expert. Four teachers attended monthly professional development sessions with Baruch to work with teachers across the city on the Hochman method and the Inquiry process. The entire staff was trained this year and receives ongoing support of the method in inquiry and in professional development regarding the technique. Teachers have weekly exposure to the Hochman resident expert for assistance in using the technique across all curriculums. For example, some of the work they have done this year focused on the Staircase of Complexity, specifically ELA Shift 3 and closed reading.
- The school made the decision to embed tasks that promote higher order thinking skills and provide additional access points for all students including struggling learners, ELLs and SWDs. For example, selected complex texts from the previous curriculum were kept and additional opportunities for guided reading for struggling readers and for ELLs were embedded in curricula and lesson plans. For example New Visions Math, ELA and Inquiry coaches work on site with teachers to plan and implement Common Core Learning Standards aligned units and performance tasks; and lead teachers work with staff on creating Common Core aligned curriculum and performance tasks.
- School leaders and teachers explained that the practice of looking at student work impacts curricular decisions. For example, during a teacher team meeting, teachers explained that after implementing a writing unit, teachers meet to see how students have applied key skills and concepts. Adjustments are then made to the unit to address areas of need. The 12<sup>th</sup> grade team uses the Hochman writing system to produce high impact interventions such as: identifying and correcting fragments, creating sentences with proper punctuation and capitalization as well as subject-verb agreement, and writing paragraphs that have all the sentences in them aligned to the topic sentence. To make sure the students were able to master subject-verb agreement they teach mini-lessons in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade English classes and then solidified the work by making it a focus in their other core classes such as Economics.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school's curricula. Progress monitoring data informs the school of student progress toward goals.

### Impact

Systems are in place to monitor progress through data analysis in order to provide feedback to students and guide adjustments in units and lessons to meet students' learning needs.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms teachers use periodic summative assessments such as midterms, finals, mock Regents, unit tests, informal observations and formative assessments, including do nows', exit slips, individual white boards and 'thumbs up thumbs down' as ongoing tools to check for understanding. Students report that rubrics and student checklists are also used with end of unit tasks, projects and presentations, and writing to self-monitor. Teachers and administrators shared that these types of assessments lead to more targeted intervention and individualized instruction for all students.
- Across classrooms, student work was posted with teacher feedback aligned to rubrics that gave students feedback regarding next steps. For example, next steps to a 12<sup>th</sup> grader read, "Make sure to break up paragraphs with different events using Hochman." During a student meeting, students spoke about how they use teacher feedback to improve. For example, one student stated, "When I have a writing assignment, I use the rubric and reread the essay to see how well I am doing on a task and how I can make it better." Another student shared, "The use of the graphic organizer helps me better organize my thoughts."
- Teachers shared that teams analyze student work and use assessment data to adjust instruction and curricula, "We use item analyses of Regents exams, performance tasks, and other assessments to determine areas of strength and needs." Furthermore, teachers use Skedula, an electronic grading and parent outreach tool, as a tool for students to self-assess overall class progress. For example, one student stated, "with our teachers , we pull up the work on the Skedula, I look at how I am doing, and comment on it and this shows me what I need to work on to improve."
- Teachers explained that they engage in frequent data talks to review data from common assessments. Based on this review, goals are developed to address academic concerns and teams collaborate to make necessary adjustments to curricula and instructional practices. For example, instruction for SWDs across grades was modified to place a greater emphasis on increased stamina in reading and writing, and Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) students and students receiving Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) who were not performing at level were regrouped.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

School leaders and staff communicate high expectations to students and establish a culture for learning through ongoing feedback to students and families.

### **Impact**

School has structures in place to provide ongoing feedback to students and families based upon a set of expectations resulting in a clear path to increased student achievement and college and career readiness.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- During a parent meeting, parents shared that teachers provide ongoing progress reports on their children’s progress and have offered them suggestions as to what they can do at home to help their children along. Parents and administration also shared that the school has an open house in the beginning of the year for the parents to meet the parents where teachers shared syllabi and meet with parents.
- Parents and students indicated that they use Skedula to keep parents informed of real time grades and any anecdotal issues that arise throughout the school year. Skedula allows parents and students to contact teachers and administration directly and to access assignments.
- School leaders and teachers explained that teachers offer ongoing feedback to students through written rubric-based comments and next steps and through ongoing one-on-one conferencing. Posted student work includes rubrics and teacher comments that give a rationale for the score and next steps for improvement.
- In terms of college and career readiness, the school provides students with numerous work-based learning experiences including guest speakers, job shadowing, internships, site visits, career day and numerous in class college visits at Brooklyn College and Medgar Evers. During these visits, students have opportunities to engage in college research and career exploration by attending monthly students workshops held by colleges, programs and industry partners. Also students participate in resume writing, mock interviews, College applications, SAT, financial aid workshops held by New Visions, guidance counselors, Assistant Principals’ and the college advisor.