



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

**Brooklyn High School for Leadership
and Community Service**

High School 13K616

**300 Willoughby Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11205**

Principal: Georgia Kouriampalis

**Date of Review: November 20, 2014
Lead Reviewer: LaShawn Robinson**

The School Context

Brooklyn High School for Leadership and Community Service is a transfer high school with 211 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 71% Black, 26% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 5% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 58.0%.

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	Developing
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	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	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

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

The principal ensures that teachers engage in ongoing professional collaborations in the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts that are aligned to the school's instructional goals.

Impact

Teacher collaborations are promoting improved teacher practice and helping to make progress towards achieving school goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet frequently by content areas. During teacher team meetings, teachers share best practices, analyze Regents data and student work products, develop appropriate interventions to support learners and make adjustments to curricula. These collaborations have yielded increases in Regents scores in English, United States History and Living Environment from the January 2014 to the June 2014 Regents administration periods. Additionally, students with disabilities performed equivalent to or higher than their peers on January 2014 and June 2014 Regents examinations.
- Teachers use protocols to analyze student work and make instructional adjustments. During a teacher team meeting, teachers were observed utilizing a protocol to review student work, describing their noticings and then prepared to begin a discussion about the implications for instruction.
- Through the work of the teacher teams, the school determined that they needed to focus on literacy across all content areas. Teachers created reading and writing stamina rubrics, and administered performance assessments. After conducting a review of this data, teachers noticed that counter claims were not evident in student work products. As a result, teachers began to refine curricula maps for the second instructional cycle to support all learners in this area.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

The principal has developed structures to strengthen teacher pedagogy in questioning and discussion techniques and supporting literacy across content areas. Teaching practices across classrooms are emerging in questioning and discussion techniques, supporting students in writing for stamina, and providing appropriate scaffolds and learning extensions for all learners.

Impact

The school is in the beginning stages of working on literacy strategies, annotation, writing stamina and student discussion. Consequently, all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners, and advanced learners are not yet receiving the level of instruction that is consistently cognitively challenging and elicits high levels of student participation.

Supporting Evidence

- The school believes that students learn best by being exposed to culturally responsive pedagogy that incorporates literacy strategies. The principal articulated that the school addresses curricula and pedagogy through a “community based, strength based social work approach” that seeks to build relationships and trust. While it is evident that teaching practices are supportive, there were limited opportunities for student to student discourse and high levels of student thinking.
- The quality of student work products and discussions varies across the school. There was evidence of writing in four out of the seven classrooms visited. However, the writing observed ranged from a one sentence journal entry to an argument based paragraph, displaying incongruence between the school’s goal of improving writing stamina and current instructional practices. Most of the lessons observed were teacher centered and discussion trends were teacher-student-, thereby hindering opportunities for students to articulate their thinking with their peers.
- The principal articulated that the instructional focus for the school is literacy. For this reason, they are focused on annotation, writing stamina, and discussion as key strategies across classrooms. In one history classroom, students were asked to predict how actions taken after the Reconstruction Period would negatively affect the rights of African Americans. In the Living Environment class, students completed the Reaction Time Lab where they had to determine the difference in reaction time between visual, oral, and tactile stimuli. In an ELA class, the teacher worked to engage students in a discussion about environmental injustice. While these planned activities were culturally relevant or based upon student interest, there were missed opportunities for students to annotate, make evidence based claims, cite evidence from text and synthesize their learning in written and verbal forms, thus limiting opportunities for students to consistently engage in rigorous classwork that result in high levels of student thinking as evidenced by discussion and meaningful work products aligned to CCLS.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school's instructional team is engaged in ongoing refinement of curricula in order to align instructional tasks with Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts.

Impact

Curricula are aligned to CCLS and across classrooms lessons are planned to emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet in department teams to create Common Core aligned curriculum with a focus on skill development. Curricula units follow the Understanding by Design (UbD) framework and include essential questions, enduring understandings, intentional groupings, and Universal Design for Learning considerations, thereby ensuring that curricula encompass flexible approaches to meet the needs of all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities.
- The school utilizes culturally responsive curriculum, which is aligned with the CCLS to meet the needs of its over-aged, under-credited transfer school student population. This curriculum was introduced to engage and empower students by making curricula relevant to their lives, thereby making learning meaningful to a previously disengaged student population.
- School leaders have strategically identified resources to assist in building curricula coherence across grades. In preparation for the school year, teachers attended the Children's First Network curriculum boot camps. The school also partners with the Transfer School English language arts Curriculum Project, and additional supports are provided by Generation Ready literacy specialists. These resources support the school in ensuring that planned curricula emphasize cognitively demanding tasks.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

School leaders and teachers articulate that the school community use benchmark assessments across content areas to adjust curricula and address skill gaps. Additionally, teachers analyze student progress and provide bi-weekly feedback to students and parents.

Impact

Though teachers create and administer five benchmark assessments per term, the results do not consistently measure student progress towards mastery of learning targets nor allow teachers to routinely make effective adjustments to meet the academic needs of all students. As a result, students' opportunities to receive targeted support are minimized, thereby limiting opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders articulated that English language arts teachers are in the beginning stages of working with a Generation Ready coach to develop rubrics to be utilized across all content areas. The school has also developed a grading policy and uses a range of rubrics and assessments. However, the grading policy is not clear to all members of the school community, and the rubrics are not consistent in providing meaningful and actionable feedback to students and teachers. During a meeting with students, many were unable to explain how their work was graded or their next steps to make improvements upon their work. In addition some students were not aware as to whether a rubric was used for their assignments. One student remarked that the rubrics were for the teachers.
- Teachers create and utilize benchmark assessments to assess student progress and provide feedback to students. However, it was unclear as to how rubrics are utilized to provide feedback to students or how assessment practices are normed across the school. Students in classes were not observed referring to task specific rubrics, and feedback on rubrics posted with student work consisted of comments such as, "Excellent" and "Good work". Feedback observed across classrooms ranged from numerical grades, to written feedback, to smiley faces, or check marks. In addition, teachers were not observed noting formative assessment data in classes, nor were they observed using formative assessments to make in class instructional adjustments. As a result of inconsistencies in assessment practices, teacher growth and student performance are hindered.
- In discussing assessment practices with teachers, it was articulated that after an analysis of the June 2014 post NYC performance assessment, there was a noticing that students did not demonstrate growth. As a result, teachers decided to focus on literacy for the 2014-15 school year. Teachers also noted that they are still working on evidence based claims and counterclaims.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The principal has developed partnerships with colleges, universities and business partners, increasing college and career learning opportunities for students, and created extensive opportunities for teacher collaboration and professional development.

Impact

The instructional supports and partnerships available at the school are fostering a culture of high expectations for all members of the school community.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate expectations for teaching and learning through frequent observations and continuous feedback from the principal, assistant principal and Generation Ready coaches. In addition, a plethora of on-going professional development supports are provided by the principal. For example, the school year began with a curriculum development boot camp facilitated by the CFN and will conclude with summative end of year conferences for each teacher. During these meetings, the principal and/or assistant principal utilize student achievement data and set goals for the ensuing year. The principal differentiates professional development opportunities for teachers by exposing teachers to internal and external learning opportunities and identifying resources on the NYC Department of Education’s ARIS website. For example, to support teacher in understanding the expectation of effective and highly effective within the Danielson domains, the principal shared video clips from ARIS that are aligned with Danielson domains. These practices foster accountability for improved student outcomes and support teachers in meeting the high expectations.
- The principal has leveraged extensive partnerships to prepare students for college and careers. The school partners with City Tech’s Robotics Engineering program, San Francisco University’s Environmental Literacy Program, Columbia University and New York University’s documentary film program, Pratt Institutes’ Arts Department, Medgar Evers’ College Now program and CUNY’s Black Male Initiative. These strategic partnerships build students’ skills and prepare them for the rigor of college coursework, thereby supporting post-secondary readiness. The school utilizes its advocate structure to communicate student progress to families. During the Parent Meeting one parent remarked, “...There is a focus on the student as an individual and letting the student know that he has the ability to succeed.”
- The school supports leadership development and career exploration by exposing students to internship opportunities through the Brooklyn Community Service Learning to Work program, Career Day activities and the Job Hunter Club. Further, student leadership is developed through service initiatives, student ambassador programs and student led initiatives.