



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2015-2016

**Brooklyn Collegiate: A College Board School**

**High School K493**

**2021 Bergen Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11233**

**Principal: Heather Newman**

**Date of review: April 5, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Gary Knight**

## The School Context

Brooklyn Collegiate: A College Board School is a high school with 310 students from grade 9 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 86% Black, 11% Hispanic, and 0% White students. The student body includes 1% English Language Learners and 25% students with disabilities. Boys account for 61% of the students enrolled and girls account for 39%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 79.1%.

## 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 <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , 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>Developing</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>Celebration</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

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

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training for those expectations. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

### Impact

School leaders have a system of accountability for staff regarding high expectations and are joined by staff to offer ongoing feedback to help families understand student progress toward those expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders expect that students will be provided with a curriculum that is rigorous, relevant and differentiated within a nurturing, validating environment. These expectations are communicated to staff in a myriad of ways including, but not limited to, emails, instructional notes, professional development, and by modeling for teachers. For example, a review of the school's professional development calendar indicates separately scheduled school-wide workshops focused on topics such as, the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* Domains, differentiation, Advanced Placement writing strategies, and student engagement.
- Teachers are held accountable for implementing in the classroom whatever information is shared via the various forms of communication and modeling for staff. School leaders conduct routine observations to evaluate practices implemented in the classroom and provide immediate feedback. Also, as evident in an instructional note from principal to staff, based on a walkthrough, teachers were reminded that every lesson must include multiple entry points for subgroups of students and that teachers were to identify strategies to assist these students.
- School leaders and staff use Skedula, an online interactive grading system as a means of communicating with families regarding student progress. Families also receive communication via mail, during one-on-one scheduled time, open house and parent meetings. In addition, the school has developed a focus group for families where information regarding school updates is shared and parent surveys are administered. Curriculum night also presents an opportunity for faculty and staff to interact with families, address expectations, and discuss curriculum. Lastly, the school has college week in which families and students are supported by college awareness workshops and the college application process.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Also, across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

### Impact

Teaching strategies lead to uneven engagement in appropriately challenging tasks and uneven demonstration of higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms visited, there was some evidence of multiple entry points into curricula such as strategic grouping. For example, in a social studies class, each student group was assigned a variation of a task related to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The tasks included the development of logical arguments, the use of graphic organizers to compare and contrast and to show cause and effect, and critical analysis of Japan's actions. Students were also provided sentence starters. While some scaffolds were provided, the work products varied. Although it was a group activity, several students were not engaged with their assigned group or did not have a role; some students had blank sheets; some completed the task early with no additional supports or extensions into the lesson; two groups continued to work on the activity as another group was presenting.
- In an English class, students were to analyze a primary source document to understand cultural, social, and legal contexts of the novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The entry assignment was to create a word cluster for the Jim Crow Laws. Students were provided graphic organizers with thinking notes. The teacher modeled how to use thinking notes to help construct a word cluster in preparation for their pre-determined group activity. The teacher incorporated an entry assignment, mini-lesson with guided practice, and group work. However, there was an opportunity to clarify a student's lack of clarity when he posed a question regarding whether or not Jim Crow was a real person. His question was not addressed.
- In most classes observed, the level of questioning was a Level one on Webb's *Depth of Knowledge*. For example, in a math class, the students were asked, "What trig ratio are we going to use to solve?; Which is the hypotenuse?; And which is the opposite?" During group work, the student work products varied. One student said, "I don't know any of this." Throughout the activity, teacher support was not provided to this student.

## 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 Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

### Impact

The school's staff make purposeful curricular decisions to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students. Higher order skills and rigorous habits are planned for across grades and subjects for all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school uses various Common Core-aligned curricula to emphasize rigorous work that include College Board Springboard for English, *EngageNY* for math, and *New Visions for Public Schools* adapted materials for science and social studies. Teacher team meetings and dedicated professional learning opportunities are provided for teachers to work collaboratively on curricular development and further build coherence. For example, close reading strategies to analyze fiction and non-fiction text as well as advanced placement and Writing is Thinking with Strategic Inquiry (WITsi) strategies across content areas. In addition, the school leaders have developed a suggested, school-wide lesson plan format.
- Curricular documents reviewed integrate instructional shifts in literacy such as text-based responses, academic vocabulary, and writing from sources. Similarly in math, shifts such as fluency, coherence and application were evident in planning materials. For example, a math curricular document required students to develop a logical argument to identify which trigonometric function to use depending on the information given in each exercise. Academic language included vertex, hypotenuse, and diagonal.
- The emphasis on rigor was evident through the use of Webb's *Depth of Knowledge* levels incorporated into planning documents along with essential and spiraling questions. A grade 9 Global History curriculum map infused essential questions such as, "How is power gained, consolidated, maintained and lost?", and "How does globalization impact institutions, nations, international relations, and lives of individuals?" An example of a spiraling question included is, "How do new ideas, innovation, and cultural diffusion contribute to the collective learning of regional, national, and international society?"

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

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are loosely aligned with the school’s curricula. The school is developing in their use of common assessments to measure student progress towards goals across grades and subject areas.

### **Impact**

Teachers’ use of assessments and rubrics provides limited feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. The administering of common assessments is in place; however, results are inconsistently used to adjust curricula and instruction.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Instructional staff create traditional assessments such as exams, quizzes, homework, and class work. Other types of tasks are also administered such as alternative assessments, quick writes, mock Regents, and pre- and post-assessments in U.S. History. Midterm and final exams are also administered across the content areas.
- Teachers use rubrics that include, but are not limited to, skills assessment and story writing. Although assessments are administered and there is some use of rubrics, there was limited evidence of feedback provided to students regarding achievement. Feedback was evident in some of the classroom walls and hallway bulletin boards where teachers highlighted parts of the rubric. For example, feedback highlighted on a science task read, “Student presents information in a logical sequence which reader can follow.” Actionable feedback to students regarding next steps was not observed on most classroom walls, hallway bulletin boards, or in student work folders.
- The school’s item skills analysis of English Regents results revealed a need to focus on writing across the content. The school leader and staff incorporate WITsi as a means of strengthening student writing across the curriculum. Student assessments in Algebra resulted in a double period for skill reinforcement. However, assessment-driven adjustments to curricula and instruction across all grades and subjects were not evident.

<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 majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have built leadership capacity.

**Impact**

The structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations have strengthened the instructional capacity of teachers and teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school has various teacher team structures in place that include grade 9 and 10 teams that focus on WITsi, grade 11 and 12 teams that focus on lesson and unit plans, and Regents data. Teachers review student work to develop strategies to improve student outcomes. A grade 10 team was observed as they conducted the inquiry process. The teachers selected student work of lower performing students on a Global History writing task from two separate classes. Teachers examined the work to identify if the “because, but, so” sentence starters writing method was applied in the work as an effort to encourage students to elaborate. The meeting began with a task explanation, followed by examination of student work samples, discussion of strategies for improvement, and next steps. Next steps included, distinguishing for students, the difference between general and specific statements and to provide students with supporting details and work with them to eliminate irrelevant details.
- Teachers articulated that being engaged in structured teacher teams has helped to develop ideas and share strategies as a result of the conversations. For example, a teacher shared that being able to better differentiate tasks for students with disabilities was possible as a result of the collaboration with colleagues, which was evident in plans. The teachers stated that the overall sharing of best practices has helped to improve their practice. Another example given was close reading strategies, specifically regarding planning with thinking notes for the English Regents.
- The teachers affect school-wide decisions in many ways. Some of the ways distributed leadership includes a peer-collaborative teacher who spearheads the school-wide training on WITSI, vertical and horizontal team leaders who facilitates intervisitations, conduct peer evaluations and assist in the development of the school-wide professional development plan. The lead teachers are responsible for ongoing professional development sessions. The school-wide lesson plan format was also teacher-created.