Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Brooklyn High School for Law & Technology

High School K498

1396 Broadway
Brooklyn
NY 11221

Principal: Dr. Hasan Shafiq

Date of review: April 23, 2015
Reviewer: Shenean N. Lindsay
The School Context

Brooklyn High School for Law and Technology is a high school with 596 students from grade nine through grade twelve. The school population comprises 71% Black, 24% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 61% of the students enrolled and girls account for 39%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 91.0%.

School Quality Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<th>School Culture</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<th>Systems for Improvement</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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Area of Celebration

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate expectations to the entire staff, and provide training to meet those expectations. School leaders and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of expectations for all students that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

The culture of the professional community is one of mutual accountability and ownership of high expectations. Students own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- Several teachers that teachers are responsible for supporting one another through conducting inter-visitations and sharing best practice. Another teacher stated, “They allow us to develop ourselves.” As a result, there is mutual accountability for meeting expectations set forth by the administration.

- The staff has established a culture for learning that results in a positive and nurturing environment for students. High expectations are communicated through student conferencing, progress reports in between report cards, rubric based feedback, and peer tutoring. As a result, students receive guidance and support that help them prepare them for the next level. For example, one student stated, “There is a focus on individuals and how they can adjust to high school and prepare for college at the same time.” Another student said, “Instead of suspension, there is a youth court in our school which looks like a real courtroom. Students from our school are trained to act as a judge and jury. We decide what consequence is best when students get in trouble.”

- Students are prepared for college as a result of experiences presented to them through a career and financial management course. Students also have an array of career readiness opportunities through internships. The guidance counselor supports students with resume writing and places students’ resumes on Google Drive so all students can access them at any time. A member of the teacher team stated, “There is also a rubric for creating resumes.” One parent stated, “The school took my daughter on a trip to Yale University. She also attended a college fair so she can start thinking about college now while my daughter is in the ninth grade.”
## Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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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 across grades and subjects.

### Impact

Curricular coherence promotes college and career readiness and provides for a high level of rigor in tasks for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school has made purposeful decisions to select curricula that integrate Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. In English, the school is focusing on the instructional shifts of citing textual evidence based answers, identifying themes, analyzing complex characters, and determining meanings of words. In math, there is a focus on constructing viable arguments, critiquing the reasoning of others, and reasoning abstractly and quantitatively. A review of curricula maps across grades and subjects revealed all maps include the instructional shifts and promote college readiness skills. For example, the grade 9 English curriculum map includes the instructional shifts of academic vocabulary, text-based answers, and writing from sources.

- The curricula provide consistent opportunities for students to participate in rigorous instruction that promotes high levels of critical thinking. For example, students who take English II are expected to participate in oral presentations and conduct literary analysis projects. Students in grade 12 are expected to participate in units of study that include topics such as *The Individual vs. Society, Gender Roles, Dystopia, and Personal Narratives*. A review of student work displayed provided evidence of students’ using varied writing styles and citing strong textual evidence.

- Tasks for all learners, including English language learners and special education students, enhance students’ critical thinking skills. For example, students in a grade 9 English class were provided with graphic organizers and a range of political cartoons based on skill level. Lower-level students provided with a *What I know-What I want to know-What I learned* (*KWL*) chart prior to completing the task. Additionally, lesson plans include the assignment of clear roles for students engaged in group tasks such as summarizer, vocabulary enricher, illustrator, and questioner.
Additional Findings

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Teaching strategies offer multiple entry points into the curricula, and student discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

All learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products. Teaching practices engage all learners in challenging tasks and require all students to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers provide diverse learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities, with multiple entry points into lessons. For example, in a grade 11 integrated co-teaching Global History class, students worked with one teacher in a small group while others worked with peers in small groups. Students working with one teacher engaged in a question and discussion based on the question, “How did John F. Kennedy respond to continuing challenges of the Cold War?” Another group completed a quick write based on the question, “Imagine your biggest enemy moves into the house next door to you and you have heard they plan on harming you, how would you feel? What would you do? Explain”. Another group worked on vocabulary words related to the lesson using a dictionary, defining the words, and writing them on chart paper while discussing the text with one of the teachers.

- Across classrooms, student work products reflect high levels of student thinking and participation in rigorous tasks. For example, students in a Pre-Calculus class engaged in a gallery walk. In this class, students were strategically placed in groups based on data, and were tasked with solving assigned problems on chart paper. Afterwards, students from other groups walked around to each chart using a problem-solving rubric given to them by the teacher to score each groups’ task. The teacher conferenced with each group and asked members to explain their problem solving techniques. At the end of the lesson, students from each group were encouraged to reflect on their experience with peers.

- Across classrooms visited, students were engaged in high-level discussions. For example, students in an Advanced Placement Language class participated in a gallery walk in which all students in groups were assigned a task. Students assessed peers on areas such as diction and language, or posed questions to presenters. One student served as facilitator and kept the group focused on the task. As the facilitator of each group posed questions from the chart, responses were tracked on a discussion checklist. The teacher walked around the classroom listening to student discussions and asking probing questions.
Quality Indicator: 2.2 Assessment  Rating: Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula. Teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding, student self-assessment, and peer to peer assessment.

Impact

The school’s assessment practices ensure that all students receive meaningful feedback. Teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students’ learning needs, and learners are aware of their next steps.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade 10 English class, the teacher assessed students through question and discussion. For example, after the class silently read a short summary, the teacher asked text-specific questions. As students posed responses based on the text, the teacher asked follow-up questions such as, “What strategy did you use to answer the question?” In a Pre-calculus class, students were asked, “What stuck with you today?” Students wrote their responses on post-its and posted it on the board with a corresponding number for the teacher to identify the author. This practice of teachers making effective adjustments and students’ awareness of their next steps was observed in most classrooms visited, and it is evolving school-wide.

- Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics to assess student work and provide feedback on student tasks. Rubrics with teacher feedback were displayed alongside student work in every classroom. One student stated, “We get a rubric which shows what I did well and how I can improve.” Another student stated, “Work is tailored on where I need to improve.” These adjustments have resulted in greater student pass rates in courses as evidenced by a review of student scholarship data across three marking periods.

- Across classrooms, students engage in peer-to-peer assessment. For example, in a grade 9 physical education class, students used a rubric to assess playing skills in the game of hockey. Additionally, during a grade 11 science lab, students were given a rubric to assess how effectively they could transfer heat with a partner. Students in a grade 11 Pre-Calculus class used a rubric for peer assessment during a class gallery walk.
Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based partnerships in which they consistently analyze student work and data. A distributed leadership structure has been established.

Impact

As a result of professional collaborations, instructional practices are strengthened, and teacher leaders have input into school-wide instructional practices.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders provide weekly opportunities for teachers to meet by department and grade. Teachers meet three times a week in department or grade-level meetings. Teachers use a Tuning Protocol to examine student performance on tasks and assessment results. The chairperson of the department prepares and maintains the agendas, sign-in sheets, and minute, which are reviewed by the assistant principals. One teacher stated, “As a result of teacher team meetings, when students don’t get it, we modify instruction and try a different strategy.”

- During a teacher team meeting, teachers used a Looking at Student Work protocol to examine the results of a mathematics task that required the use of a quadratic formula. Teachers reviewed student work from the sample selected for inquiry work, and discussed the strategies students used to solve problems. As a result of trends and patterns observed, the teacher team decided students needed to use two other formulas for problem solving besides the quadratic formula.

- Members of the teacher team are provided opportunities to take ownership of their professional growth. One teacher stated, “The principal allows us to develop ourselves”. Another teacher stated, “The principal is open to suggestions. I can be open and honest. He makes us comfortable.” Teachers are held accountable for meeting regularly to review student work. This was evidenced through reviewing agendas, minutes, the professional development plan, and protocols used during teacher team meetings.