Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Brooklyn High School of the Arts
High school 15K656
345 Dean St.
Brooklyn
NY 11217

Principal: Daniel Vecchiano

Dates of Review:
March 9, 2017 - March 10, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Marion Wilson
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Celebration to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Focus to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as Additional Finding. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

Brooklyn High School of the Arts serves students in grade 9 through grade 12. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
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<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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<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 Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

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<tr>
<th>Area of Celebration</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults

3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations

#### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

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<tr>
<th>Additional Finding</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products

3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community

4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection

4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning

5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Finding</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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<td>Additional Finding</td>
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Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 1.4 Positive Learning Environment | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

School leaders and faculty have a well-defined approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional support for students that is informed by their theory of action. There are strategic structures in place to coordinate guidance, advisory, and attendance for students.

Impact

The safe, conducive, and inclusive school culture at the school allows for meaningful student voice in decision-making and school improvement efforts. Well-organized and personalized supports provide for every student to be on track for graduation with sufficient credit accumulation.

Supporting Evidence

- The school’s administration has enacted personalized supports for students as there is a dedicated guidance counselor for each grade level. These counselors move up with students every year deepening the student and counselor relationship. As a result, there are few students who are missing the needed credit for each grade. Furthermore, the school faculty targets students who are missing or have failed one or more core subjects and provides them with strategic intervention support to allow them to be on track for graduation. School leaders also recently developed a tool entitled, Intervention Measurement for Progress and College Tracking (IMPACT), which monitors and tracks select students who have failed one or two courses. This tool has been instrumental in helping teachers across the vast majority of the school to make strategic decisions that impact students’ academic and personal behaviors. For example, both teachers and students alike shared that they have been able to become better organized in maintaining their arts portfolios, following through on deadlines, collaborating with their peers, and self-regulating their behavior resulting in minimal disruptive incidents. Students shared that with the new administration the culture of mutual trust and respect amongst adults and students fosters a conducive learning environment where learning is valued and helps them think more like adults and make better decisions.

- Student-led town hall meetings allow students opportunities to speak and discuss issues and items of importance to them on a weekly basis. The school’s theory of action states, “if we listen to our students and keep our doors open and respond to their needs, they will perform better in the classroom.” Students shared that a Saturday program began as a result of students petitioning the principal to provide additional programs to help them prepare to take college entrance exams. Student voice also established the creation of many new clubs including the chess club and natural hair club, among others, that has helped students express their individuality and student choice of activities creatively outside of academics. Students shared that the principal has an open door policy and responds to their needs and there is always an adult available that they can turn to for assistance.

- There are organized support services including the high functioning School Implementation Team (SIT) to assist students inside and outside of the classroom. There are also dedicated advisors who provide daily check-ins with students and who coordinate the Very Important Priority (VIP) students’ program for students who maintain an 85 or above average allowing them to receive special privileges, all of which help to contribute to the safe and orderly school environment. Additionally, there are strategic social-emotional and academic counseling sessions on a regular basis. As a result more students are on track for graduation and accumulating the necessary credits beginning in the ninth grade. The school boasts a low student to teacher ratio to ensure that students have someone who will coordinate and provide support for their academic success.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 2.2 Assessment | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

Across most classrooms, there are rubrics, checklists, and a uniform grading policy that is aligned to the school's curricula and the Common Core standards. Common assessments are used to determine student performance and progress across grades and subject areas.

Impact

The results of common assessments are used to regularly adjust curricula and instructional practices across the school; however, English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities are not demonstrating increased mastery across subject areas. Teacher feedback to students is actionable and provides data in core subject areas, but is not always meaningful to help students reach higher levels of student achievement across all grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- Most of the school's assessment choices are aligned to the Common Core and/or content standards in the curriculum. Assessment data is captured sometimes daily, weekly, monthly, and/or periodically to help teachers improve their instruction and provide actionable feedback to students. For example, the school utilizes the New York State Regents Examination rubrics to help students with criteria similar to the one shown on the test. In the student meetings, most students shared that the feedback they receive, both written and verbal, helps them to better understand the areas in which they need to improve on corresponding to part three of the Common Core English Language Arts (ELA) Regents exam. Students were able to share that they needed the most work in their analysis of the central idea and the analysis of the featured text. Additionally, teachers review the results of performance tasks and add elements of the rubric into their own school created rubric to further enhance students' familiarity with the rubric. School administration continues to streamline the use and alignment of rubrics across all subject areas to better align to the curricula.

- Departmental common assessment tools such as mock Regents exams, teacher created tests, rubrics, checklists, performance tasks, and grading policies are used to monitor student performance in relation to the standards. These tools are utilized by school staff to track student progress towards goals in most subject areas and help teachers to make informed instructional decisions. An online data-warehousing tool contains information on tests, quizzes, assignments, essays, and portfolio information for each student. Teachers utilize this information to track and monitor the progress of various students between marking periods. While portfolio data and spreadsheets indicate groups of students making progress, particularly in ELA and the arts, not as many students are demonstrating mastery across other core subject areas as indicated by the data presented.

- Most teacher teams utilize benchmark and baseline assessment data, performance tests, units, and tasks across most subject areas to determine student progress towards goals through the use of a cross-curriculum Regents based tool. This data tracker is analyzed by most teacher teams in order to help students and teachers track student progress. The data is a compilation from multiple sources and is used to measure students’ progress and learning needs relative to the standards and identifies students on the borderline. However, this tool has not yet resulted in schoolwide coherence of assessment practices leading to mastery of goals for groups of students.
## Additional Finding

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

Curricula tasks and lesson plans consistently reflect higher-order skills and rigorous habits across grades and subjects for English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Performance tasks and lesson plans are planned and refined using student work and assessment data.

### Impact

Written curricula documents are accessible for a variety of learners and planned to ensure that there are scaffolds and supports planned for students. Tasks are refined and adjusted in response to student learning needs and are cognitively engaging.

### Supporting Evidence

- Rigorous habits and higher order skills that are present in most written curricula plans across grades and subjects require students to create their own meaning, integrate skills into process, and solve real world related problems. Unit plans incorporate multiple means for student engagement, representation, and expression, through differentiated tasks. In a sample ELA task viewed, students had to mark and annotate text by writing in the margins and then summarize key details, ideas, pose questions and comment about the author’s writing strategies. A modified graphic organizer included each section broken down by the central idea, citation, and elaboration, in order to support students’ with disabilities to take coordinated notes on a structured note-taking tool. In a similar theatre arts lesson plan, students were required to analyze the technique of Lester Horton, dancer and choreographer, while developing their own artistic creation through dance literacy. For this task, students had to utilize tools previously learned to demonstrate their competence and understanding of the featured artist. The unit plan also included differentiated versions of the routine that included simplistic and complex versions.

- Curricula and academic tasks in most subject areas require students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities to think critically, consider multiple meanings and interpretations, support positions, and engage in disciplined inquiry and thought. Habits of mind including questioning and problem posing, thinking interdependently, and applying past knowledge to new situations is evident in tasks. For example, a sample literary unit required students to cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support text analysis and draw inferences. The plan included a section to pair one student with another student to help support their writing. There were scaffolds listed in the written plan to support students such as sentence starters, transition word lists, and other visual cues and aids to utilize during the writing process. In science plans, specific reference is made to the Next Generation Science Standards that expose students to more hands on activities as well as provide inter-disciplinary case study-based concepts and connections across the four domains of science including engineering and life science.

- Lesson plans across the majority of grades and subjects utilize student work and data to plan and refine curricula and tasks in order to cognitively engage ELLs and students with disabilities. There are data-based rationales included for identified areas of growth for most students that is consistent with the academic expectations for each grade level. A revised lesson plan was modified to incorporate a writing strategy to help students with writing a model essay after the teacher noticed that student essay were not including appropriate dialogued and text evidence. In addition, the task was revised to include a Cornell note-taking tool to assist students with taking notes during the lecture portion of the lesson. Math tasks have been adjusted to the school’s focus on numeracy and fluency to include links for Twig Carolina online resources to support math examples from real life perspectives to help students with cross-curricular learning, visual representation, and their differentiated learning needs.
Additional Finding

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

Across most classrooms teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Teaching strategies include multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement for students.

Impact

Teaching practices that are aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* across most classes ensure that students type a research paper, write and direct plays, and produce various visual art projects. Strategies utilized across most classrooms include visual aids, math manipulatives, translated text, dictionaries, and graphic organizers to support students in completing challenging tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- Learning activities in most classrooms visited are standards-based curricula driven and create learning situations for students to work cooperatively and make real world connections to their learning. School staff’s articulated beliefs include: all students can learn, students should have engaging hands on activities, learning should be relevant and connected to their life, and students should be given choice over their learning. This was evidenced in most classes across subject areas visited where teachers provided students with questions and prompts that help promote metacognition. Teaching strategies included building on students’ prior knowledge to launch a history lesson which included project-based learning activities, questioning, and discussions for students to make meaning of the content being taught. In another class visited, students were engaged in a Socratic seminar activity with the teacher facilitating and monitoring student learning. Students were posing questions, making text-to-self and text-to-text connections, all while being engaged in learning. Students were seated near one another to provide support as needed.

- Lessons and teaching documents represent content knowledge and an understanding of diverse students’ differences and needs with inclusion of available resources and supports to engage a diversity of students in cognitively challenging activities, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. Teachers’ strategies help to address students multiple learning styles by providing multiple entry points for learners into the lesson. During the majority of the classes visited, there were scaffolds, translated materials, needs-based groups, graphic organizers, visuals, imagery, technology, and academic vocabulary supports for students. For example, in a dance class visited, the teacher provided musical and visual cues to assist students. In a drama class, students had opportunities to participate in both sequential and sustained activities in various theatre forms to model proficiency in acting and demonstrations. Students with disabilities were able to participate with question prompts. Students were given an opportunity to work in different areas of theatre based on their ability and choice such as technical theatre, acting, and student directing.

- Across most classrooms visited, teacher practices reflect and support schoolwide beliefs about how students learn best. Both teachers and school leaders articulate those beliefs which are informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and are aligned to the school’s curricula. In a math class visited, students were asked to analyze scenarios in which relations can no longer become functions as well as create visual representations. While students had opportunities for repeated practice there were missed opportunities for students to analyze scenarios. While supports were present such as colored markers and highlighters, graph paper, step-by-step directions, pre-completed worksheets to assist students with disabilities and ELLs there were missed opportunities for a few students to work independently without direct adult assistance. In contrast, in a social studies class, students were analyzing political cartons in groups to make connections between women’s suffrage movement and the civil rights era.
**Additional Finding**

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

School leaders and staff ensure that parents receive various forms of communication on a continuous basis related to their children’s progress. Teacher teams systematically communicate a unified set of high expectations for all students in the school.

**Impact**

School leaders and staffs’ communications support high expectations for college and career readiness and support a partnership with all families. High expectations that are communicated to students through effective and customized guidance and feedback prepare them for college and the workforce.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Staff members communicate on a regular basis with parents and support them so their children are on track to meet the school’s expectations for graduation. Teachers send letters, emails, and communicate through online tools to ensure families receive feedback on their children’s progress towards meeting goals. There are some student led conferences where students are able to articulate the track they are on towards meeting standards and expectations. For example, parents expressed that having access to their children’s grades has helped them stay on top of deadlines, exams, and projects that are due and it has helped them support their children’s continued progress. Parents receive phone calls, emails, texts, progress reports, and other correspondence to keep them up-to-date with events happening at the school. Parents commented that the school’s lecture and guest series has afforded them opportunities to learn alongside their children. For example, they experienced a lecture series with a brain surgeon and accomplished playwright through the school’s coordinated efforts. Parents feel that the principal along with key staff members ensure that their children are fully aware of the college application and acceptance process. As a result, parents feel that they successfully partner with the school expectations of the Common Core and the progress their children are making towards achieving expectations.

- Teachers and other staff conduct advisory, serve as mentors, and articulate high expectations by sharing information with students leading to their progress towards mastery of Common Core Standards and college and career readiness expectations. As a result, the school’s readiness index has shown improvement through their efforts. The school’s guidance team works strategically to ensure that all students, including high needs subgroups, create, maintain, and own their portfolio pieces as part of the college going atmosphere at the school. Students maintain portfolios and take ownership over the requirements for their arts’ portfolios throughout the duration of the time at the school beginning in their freshman year.

- Staff members have implemented a culture for learning that provides all students with effective feedback and clear next steps to prepare them for the next grade and next level. During both the student and teacher team meetings, it was shared that feedback, including, self-reflection, peer and teacher feedback on portfolio work samples helps students maintain a sense of pride, accountability, and ownership. Students expressed that their teachers consistently remind them that they have to be responsible for looking at their performance and work samples as it is something that will be expected of them when they enter the workforce or go to college. The Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program works closely with teachers at the school across grades to help instill the behaviors students need for continued academic success while helping them develop strategies to rise to the challenge of meeting secondary grade level and post-secondary expectations. The vast majority of students is knowledgeable about their career choices and feel that the school strongly supports and encourages them in the actualization of their choices.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

Teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations utilizing an inquiry based protocol. There are distributed leadership structures in place across the school.

**Impact**

The work of teacher teams has impacted student achievement, curricula modifications, and the improvement of teacher practices. Teachers have built leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across classes and grades.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Most teachers collaborate on professional teams where they develop schoolwide instructional practices. These teams implement the use of various protocols for looking at student work. As a result they are able to strengthen their capacity to identify and teach strategies to help students improve their performance on part three of the Regents examinations. During the teacher team observation, teachers were examining data using the Student Work Analysis Protocol (SWAP), reviewing January Regents’ assessment data along with samples of students’ argumentative writing to support claims in a text using reasons and evidence. The team was mainly focused on the types of evidence students were using noting that 13 students had failed this portion of the task. The team noticed that students did significantly better compared to a similar time period one year ago. Teachers discussed strategies to further enhance students’ use of outlined worksheets and how to help students strengthen their use of idea, citation, and evidence (ICE) strategy when writing essays by providing a graphic organizer tool which would give students hints to support text analysis, real world examples, and personal observations.

- Teachers have multiple opportunities to volunteer or ask to serve initiatives. Teachers participate and play a critical role on hiring committees, the selection of new staff members, as well as volunteering to be a part of professional development team. Teachers initiated the idea for cross grade and departmental planning meetings to help plan professional learning opportunities in collaboration with administration. During the question and answer sessions, teachers shared that they are able to participate in intervisitations, offer suggestions for strategies to be used across disciplines and grades, and serve as leaders on teams and help to facilitate meetings. For example, when faculty members from the science department noticed that students were not doing as well in their classes, they decided to collaborate with teachers in other departments who also serviced the same student. As a result, there has been a slight increase in shared strategies and collaboration across teams.

- During the teacher team meeting, teachers shared that they are able to contribute to the school’s handling of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment practices. They shared that the principal has an open door policy that affords them numerous opportunities to contribute and share ideas with him on an ongoing basis. For example, teachers shared that they were able to implement the Praise and Polish feedback protocol in the arts department to mirror what was being done in the most of the core subject areas as it relates to glows and grows. Most teachers feel that they have opportunities to try new ideas and work in other areas outside of their comfort zone and continue to welcome opportunities that will bring about even greater teacher leadership across the school.