Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Brooklyn Studio Secondary School
Secondary School 21K690
8310 21st Ave.
Brooklyn
NY 11214

Principal: Andrea Ciliotta

Dates of Review:
March 7, 2017 - March 8, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Michele Ashley
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


School Quality Ratings

### Instructional Core

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

### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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 Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings

The school’s approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional learning centers on the importance of building relationships with students. School structures, including *Know Thy Student* meetings, support teachers in knowing each student well.

Impact

Culture building activities, personalized supports and consistent opportunities for students to share their voice ensure that students play a role school improvement efforts and that there is a school culture that positively impact students’ academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- The school outlines behavioral expectations and consequences in the 2016 – 2017 Student Handbook and Code of Conduct. The handbook includes a welcome letter from the principal and introduces students to all staff members and highlights their offices or room numbers. A section on student life and safety shares schoolwide positive behavior goals and expectations for dean to student relations. This section states that deans are expected to listen, not be judgmental, and offer fair solutions. This handbook also outlines the academic and personal behaviors required for students to participate in extracurricular activities. The results of a student 2016 – 2017 School Culture Survey reveals that 90 percent of students feel safe in school.

- Leadership and staff have established structures to support student voice and celebrate the diversity of the school community. School leadership leads a monthly Consultation Council meeting with students to address issues and share ideas related to school culture. Each month, the school celebrates a different culture represented within the school population on Culture Day, with activities and information compiled and led by groups of students and staff from representing the designated culture. This year the school has celebrated Russian and African American culture as well as Women's History Month and International Day led by English Language Learners (ELLs). Students also write reflections after leading or participating in Culture Days. In addition, feedback from students have led to new student club choices and improvement in the condition and behavior in student restrooms.

- Faculty and staff personalize services to support students including an attendance team that reviews attendance data and identifies students with 80 to 89 percent attendance for one to one support. Team members meet with these students individually to make a plan for improvement and check in with students regularly to monitor attendance. Subject teams hold monthly *Know Thy Student* meetings with deans and guidance staff to discuss students who may be at risk academically or emotionally and plan interventions. Teachers shared that there have been improvements in student attendance, communication skills, and work habits in response to *Know Thy Student* interventions. A review of student data also reveals that there has been a decrease in the number of school incidents from 40 to 28 compared to 2015 - 2016. Student participation in school events and club activities has increased and the school is maintaining a 90 percent attendance rate.
### Findings

Teachers consistently use questioning and observations to check for student understanding. Across most classrooms, teachers use rubrics and grading policies aligned to the curricula and provide written feedback on students' next steps; however, this practice does not yet offer a clear portrait of student mastery of skills.

### Impact

Teachers use rubrics and formative assessments to provide students with actionable feedback and make effective adjustments to instruction. A limited portrait of student mastery, impacts teacher feedback and hinders some students’ ability to make meaning of their learning and be aware of their next learning steps.

### Supporting Evidence

- A review of student work and portfolios reveals that teachers use rubrics and written notes on student work to provide students feedback on where they fall on the rubric and the next steps required to improve their performance. Student work samples and drafts demonstrated that students use teacher feedback to make revisions to their work and improve their performance on specific tasks. Although most teachers provide students with actionable feedback that can be applied to specific tasks, some teachers also provide feedback on the underlying skills that can be transferred across subjects. For example, a math teacher reminded a student to always label their graphs and diagrams and use their interactive notebook as a reference. However, teachers have yet to consistently provide students with meaningful feedback on their level of mastery on targeted skills that can be applied within and across content areas.

- Across classrooms, teachers consistently use teacher questioning and observation to assess student learning during student activities. In an English as a New Language (ENL) classroom the teacher used questioning to assess students’ interpretations of the text and a graphic novel version of *The Metamorphosis*. The teacher added visual representation of the same content and then asked students to explain what is the same and what is different and which version they feel is more powerful. The teacher’s questions and the visual support of the graphic novel encouraged student discussion and prompted students to return to their texts to support their opinions.

- Most teachers check in with small groups and encourage students to help clarify statements made by peers and define academic vocabulary that might be a challenge for some students. In an English class, the teacher used questioning to help clarify terms for students. The teacher asked students to clarify what types of evidence is strong evidence as well as define the terms anecdote and study. Following this clarification, students refined their selections of text-based evidence. Across most classrooms visited, teachers used questioning as a formative assessment tool, consistently resulting in student reflection and revision. However, high level questioning was not observed in some classrooms, limiting opportunities for some students to reflect and become aware of their next learning steps.
Findings
School leaders and faculty create unit and lesson plans that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate academic vocabulary and writing from sources. Lesson plans consistently emphasize higher-order questioning with planned questions and opportunities for students to analyze text and cite evidence.

Impact
Common lesson plan components and the integration of instructional shifts build coherence and align curricula to Common Core Learning Standards.

Supporting Evidence

- Faculty create unit and lesson plans that include key components to build coherence across content areas. Lesson plans reviewed include instructional objectives, guiding or pivotal questions and academic or content-specific vocabulary and align the identified learning objectives with specific Common Core Learning Standards. School leaders and faculty vet curriculum documents three times per year in September, February, and June to purposefully revise and adjust plans based on teacher observations of student performance as well as formative and summative data. A review of 2016 – 2017 unit plans reveals adjustments to the unit format to include Common Core Learning Standards, Webb’s Depth of Knowledge questions, student supports, and specific tasks that require students to include text-based evidence.

- Faculty create unit and lesson plans to incorporate aspects of the schoolwide instructional focus, STORM. Based on STORM, teachers incorporate student to student interaction, text-based evidence, ongoing checks for understanding, rigor using questioning and multiple entry points. Across unit and lesson plans reviewed faculty plan opportunities for students to provide text-based evidence to their claims and opinions. For example, a social studies lesson requires students to compare and contrast the views of suffragettes using quotes from selected texts. Students are required to explain the meaning of the quote and how it supports their claim.

- Across unit and lesson plans reviewed teachers identify a variety of guided and essential questions that align to various levels of the Webb’s Depth of Knowledge. Guiding questions typically build from lower levels to higher levels of thinking and teachers use essential questions to push student thinking further or prompt discussions. In a math lesson guided questions included, “Can you write equations when slope and the y-intercept are given in different forms?” and “How do you determine whether two lines are parallel or perpendicular?” The essential question asks, “How will I use writing and graphing linear functions in the real world?”
**Additional Finding**

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

Teaching practices align to the curricula and an articulated belief that students learn best when engaged and teachers make thinking visible. Across classrooms, teachers provide opportunities for students to share their thinking and participate in small group activities and discussions.

**Impact**

Teaching practices across most classrooms engage students in challenging tasks that reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms visited teachers engaged students in tasks using planned and on the spot questioning. Students across classrooms responded to teacher prompts and questions at high levels and used new information gathered from discussions to enhance their work. During a physics lesson the teachers pushed students to apply what they have already learned about magnets and magnetic fields to their current experiment. When students shared their responses to the lab questions with the whole class, the teacher posed the question, “Is (s)he right? Explain.” Students used information added to refine their responses.

- Teachers across classrooms also used visuals and real world examples to help students make connections and share their thinking. In an English Language Arts (ELA) classroom the teacher played a video presentation of police responses to Civil Rights Movement protesters. The teacher then asked students to share their noticings and explain how the video relates to current events. Students made connections to recent civil protests. Students then participated in station activities in which they explained the impact of a variety of Civil Rights events on the Civil Rights Movement and society as a whole.

- Across classes visited, teachers assigned students to small group and partner activities and used questions and prompts to encourage students to share their thinking in discussions and work products. In a history class, the teacher assigned students to partner groups to answer the question, “What happened to the USS Maine?” The teacher provided students with articles that presented opposing views on the issue. Each partner read and annotated their article and took notes. Partners shared their opposing views and then worked to come to consensus on what they believed happened to the ship. Across classrooms, questions, activities and tasks encourage students to participate and share their thinking at high levels.
Findings
School leaders provide training and consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff via a staff handbook, observation feedback and Happy Friday emails. Teacher teams and staff consistently communicate high expectations to students and offer student support before, during and after school.

Impact
Professional development and the tracking of observation data holds teachers accountable for teaching and learning expectations. Ongoing support and guidance prepares students for their next level of learning.

Supporting Evidence

- School leadership provides weekly professional development that aligns with the schoolwide instructional focus on Danielson Framework for Teaching domain 1e, Designing Coherent Instruction. Topics are differentiated based on subject and grade level and leadership holds staff accountable for preparation and participation in these required professional development sessions. Happy Friday emails remind teachers of the weekly professional development sessions and expectations for participation. A January 2017 email to all staff states, “Remember we are working on 1e, Designing Coherent Instruction. Your assistant principals gave you the topics for each subject area…Please make sure that you bring all your materials and resources to the session.”

- School leadership outlines teaching and learning expectations via the Brooklyn Studio Secondary School 2016 -2017 Faculty Handbook and frequent observation feedback that speaks directly to the instructional focus for 2016 -2017. Leadership tracks teacher observation feedback and monitors trends across the school as they align to Designing Coherent Instruction and student engagement. A review of leader feedback to teachers revealed targeted feedback, next steps and recommendations that align to these domains. A December report celebrates practices observed that align to domain 1e and refers the teacher to Webb’s Depth of Knowledge materials to support growth in domain 3, Questioning and Engaging Students in Learning. Leadership uses observation feedback to hold teachers accountable for articulated expectations of teaching and learning.

- Teachers offer ongoing support and guidance to prepare students for the next level of learning, offering during and after school academic support and a variety of clubs based on student interest. Teachers monitor student progress toward credit accumulation via an online database that allows teachers to share ongoing progress with students and provide support as needed. Seniors receive fall and spring audits to help them meet graduation expectations. Seniors not meeting expectations participate in Seniorvention with school leadership and guidance staff to create a plan for success. At the time of the review, graduation projects were 83 percent in June 2017, 88 percent by August 2017 and 94 percent by 2018.

- Teacher teams and staff provide a variety of college and career readiness activities including but not limited to College Now courses, college trips, and fairs. At the time of the review 96 percent of the class of 2017 had submitted college applications.
Additional Finding

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured inquiry-based professional collaboration on subject teams. Teacher teams consistently analyze student work and beginning, middle, and end of year assessment data for students across cohorts.

Impact

Collaboration and the sharing of instructional next steps are resulting in improvements in teacher practice and progress toward goals for students across cohorts.

Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers are engaged in structured inquiry on subject teams. Teachers lead teams and follow protocols for the analysis of student work. Teacher teams look at student work samples to identify specific strengths, weaknesses and next steps for individual students and then draw conclusions and highlight trends across the content. Based on the trends identified, team members select overall strengths, weaknesses and next steps to apply across the content. During the foreign language team meeting teachers followed this protocol and identified grammar and presentation as areas for student improvement. Teachers planned to engage students in small group presentations and editing activities for a five-week implementation period.

- Teachers interviewed reported that collaboration on content teams has contributed to their planning and provided a vertical perspective to the development of student skills. Teachers shared that content meetings provide an opportunity to receive support from colleagues and share best practices. A review of individual observations and tracked teacher observation data demonstrates that teacher capacity is improving. Specifically, as of March 2017, sixteen teachers have made progress in the Danielson Framework for Teaching domain 3c, Engaging Students in Learning.

- Teacher teams consistently analyze formative assessment data and student work for students across the content area. Teachers participate in Know Thy Student and subject team meetings on a consistent basis. Subject teams review student work and use the feedback to make adjustments to planning. Teacher team work results in enhancements to teacher practices and progress for groups of students. Students across each cohort have demonstrated improvement in grade point averages from marking period one to marking period three, with increases between two and seven percentage points from grades nine through twelve. For the class of 2017, completed requirements for graduation increased from 81 percent to 89 percent in ELA and from 88 percent to 92 percent in social studies.