

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

DBN:	13K616
School Name:	Brooklyn High School for Leadership and Community Service
School Address:	300 Willoughby Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11205
Principal:	Georgia Kouriampalis
Accountability Phase/Category:	Improvement (year-1) - Comprehensive
Areas of Identification:	English Language Arts - All Students; African American Students and Economically Disadvantaged Students Mathematics - All Students; African American Students and Economically Disadvantaged Students Graduation Rate
Dates of On-site Review:	February 14-15, 2012

PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT

“The mission of Brooklyn High School for Leadership and Community Service is to provide a student-centered, challenging and personalized educational experience that empowers overage and under-credited high school students to obtain their high school diploma and become fully participating community members, leaders and lifelong learners. We will also work with students to provide planning for post-secondary success, either through college or a career.”

PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS

- This transfer school was established in partnership with a community-based organization (CBO) whose staff provides intensive supports to students, including all mandated counseling. The CBO counselor advocates see students daily, call students each morning to encourage punctuality and attendance, and secure paid internships as a part of the Learn to Work Initiative. School leaders collaborate with several other CBOs to provide additional material and human resources to at-risk students.
- Students view the school community as a safe haven where everyone knows and supports each other. Students stated that teachers make themselves available before, during and after school to provide tutoring and individualized academic supports as requested.
- The school has purchased a computer-based system to allow parents to monitor student progress at home or on computers at the school.

- The school building was clean and well maintained. Posted student work, art, and welcoming signage indicate that the school is academically oriented and student-centered.

PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA

FINDINGS:

- Informal assessments, such as the recording of conference notes in student folders, are not consistently used to inform instruction.
- There is insufficient evidence that formative data is used to inform lesson planning and delivery to improve instruction for all students in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics for which the school has not made Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Teachers should consistently use informal assessment data, including conferring notes, to support student skill acquisition within their areas of need and inform instructional next steps.
- The school leaders should seek professional development (PD) from the Network in using and applying formative data to develop lessons and improve instruction for all students in ELA and mathematics.

II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS:

- Differentiated instruction was not consistently implemented in the classes observed. There was little evidence to indicate that data was used to group students, to match activities to the differing ability levels or learning needs of all students and the other identified subgroups, i.e., African American students and economically disadvantaged students.
- A review of student work indicated that rubrics are not consistently used to assess student learning. Some teacher feedback was neither specific nor concise. Rubrics did not clearly indicate actionable next steps for students to improve their work.
- Although the use of exit questioning was identified as a schoolwide strategy for assessing student learning, teachers did not consistently use exit questions to assess student understanding.
- There is inconsistent evidence within the ELA classes that students were engaged in inquiry-based research. Student research topics were determined by teachers that limited student independent skill acquisition to conduct inquiry-based research.

- In mathematics classes observed, teachers relied on the use of handouts and did not use textbooks for reference or to reinforce learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should provide PD opportunities for teachers on a variety of instructional strategies to promote differentiated instruction. The focus of the PD should include using data to plan lessons and instruction to meet the needs of all students in ELA and mathematics. Teachers should consistently collect and use informal and formal data to differentiate instructional activities and materials. School leaders should regularly monitor teacher lesson plans and observe classes to ensure lessons meet the needs of identified subgroups in all classrooms.
- Teachers should develop rubrics that include consistent expectations for learning. Rubrics should be task specific and used to plan and assess student work. School leaders should provide PD activities that focus on the development and use of rubrics to facilitate teacher and peer feedback and enable student self reflection. Rubrics should be reviewed with students prior to the start of an assignment to ensure that students understand both the task and how they will be evaluated.
- Teachers should consider the use of exit questions as a strategy to assess student learning. This informal assessment technique should be consistently used to monitor student acquisition of higher order thinking skills.
- Teachers should encourage students to initiate self-selected inquiry-based research topics using their own hypotheses and interests. Teachers should provide students with criterion for selecting a robust and meaningful topic that can manifest into a fully developed and complete project.
- Mathematics classes should incorporate the use of textbooks, as well as other reference materials to provide students with additional opportunities for practice and application of mathematical skills and procedures.

III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

FINDINGS:

- The school leader conducts all formal and informal observations of teachers. However, there appears to be no clear structure or expectation for the content of observation reports. The school leader uses several different report models to provide teachers professional feedback and recommendations for improvement. However, observation reports reviewed do not contain a clearly defined description or focus that identifies instructional strengths or areas in need of improvement.
- Based on a review of the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP), Academic Intervention Services (AIS) for at-risk students are scheduled during zero period. However, school leaders identified the zero period as having the poorest attendance.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leader should develop a consistent format for teacher evaluations. The evaluation form should be developed using a research based pedagogical evaluation methodology. Teacher evaluations should include suggestions for instructional improvement and set clear expectations for all staff. The continuous cycle of feedback and evaluation should include incremental next steps for instructional improvement which are monitored through formal and informal observations.
- School leaders should measure the impact of services for students within the current AIS configuration. Based on the results of this analysis, the school leaders should reassess the school's programming to provide AIS at a time of day when the maximum number of students are present and can benefit from AIS.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

FINDINGS:

- Attendance at Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings is low. School leaders, the CBO partner and the parent coordinator have not developed a process to effectively involve parents or independent students in PTA meetings.
- The School Leadership Team (SLT) has only one parent member on the team. The school leader has not been effective in engaging parents to participate on the School Leadership Team (SLT).
- Student attendance is a significant challenge at the school. The average daily attendance to date was 68.7 percent as reported by the New York City Department of Education.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The school leaders, the Network, CBO partners and the parent coordinator should explore additional strategies to improve parent attendance at PTA meetings.
- The school leaders should ensure that the SLT membership includes additional parent representation. School leaders should seek assistance from the Network, the CBO partner and parent coordinator to conduct outreach for parents to inform them of the importance of their participation as SLT members within the parent-school partnership.
- School leaders should work with school support staff and counselor advocates to develop and implement programs to improve student attendance. Attendance data should be disaggregated in order to identify attendance patterns and trends. This information should inform the development of a schoolwide attendance plan. Current outreach efforts to improve attendance should be continued, evaluated and modified to improve student attendance.

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS:

- PD activities are not consistently selected through collaboration between teachers and school leaders. Feedback forms are collected at every PD session, yet there was no evidence that adjustments are made to PD offerings based on teacher feedback.
- The current PD provided to staff does not focus on the development of effective teaching strategies for students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should use the feedback forms that are collected during PD sessions to adjust the PD plan to meet the changing needs of teachers and students. School leaders should evaluate the PD plan throughout the school year to ensure that teachers' needs and suggestions are incorporated within and addressed by the plan.
- School leaders, with support from the Network, should review the current PD program and include sessions on instructional strategies that effectively meet the specific learning needs of students with disabilities and ELLs. The PD provided for teachers of students with disabilities and ELLs should be followed-up through on-going monitoring to identify next steps for improvement and to identify what additional teacher supports are needed.

VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

FINDING:

The school is housed in shared space which limits storage; unused textbooks are being stored in classrooms.

RECOMMENDATION:

School leaders should work with the other school leaders in the building to identify alternate storage locations within the building.

PART 4: CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The findings and recommendations noted in the report are intended to guide the school's inquiry, planning, and the development of the CEP for school year 2012-13. The school should also continue its efforts in the implementation of the following Regents Reform Agenda initiatives: P-12 Common Core Learning Standards, Data Driven Instruction and the Annual Professional Performance Reviews for teacher effectiveness.