

# Quality Review Report

## 2017-2018

**Brooklyn Community Arts & Media High School**

**High school 13K412**

**300 Willoughby Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11205**

**Principal: James Obrien**

**Dates of Review:  
May 3, 2018 - May 4, 2018**

**Lead Reviewer: AJ Hepworth**

## 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 Community Arts & Media High School (Bcam) 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

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area	Rating
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 Finding</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 Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	<b>Area of Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</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 Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## School Quality Ratings continued

<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Rating</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</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>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Rating</b>
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	<b>Area of Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</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 Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.3 Leveraging Resources</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

Resources and organizational decisions are well-aligned to support the instructional goals and long-range action plans connected to increased student achievement and strong social-emotional support evident in strategic hiring practices, teacher assignments, and development of student advisory.

### Impact

Organizational decisions contribute to students producing meaningful work products and access to college and career readiness for all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- An instructional goal is to develop students' social-emotional support through a variety of professional development opportunities leading to improved student achievement. All staff actively participated in two professional development sessions and training workshops specifically related to restorative practices. Furthermore, a team of teachers meet regularly on Tuesdays to make meaningful schoolwide recommendations addressing improved learning for all through social-emotional and positive learning approaches. The approaches are embedded into the advisory program and instruction across content area classes. For example, teachers have aligned their teaching to conduct weekly check-ins with students leading to improved relationships between both students themselves and teachers while increasing self-care and worth, thus increased value and ownership of completed work.
- Partnerships with several community-based organizations have resulted in increased attendance, Regents exam pass rates, and overall student achievement. One partnership strategically targeted students' attendance. Since implementing the partnership mid-year, attendance for students has seen an increase of two percent from the same time in the prior year. Additionally, this partnership has supported a significant increase in students' pass rate from January 2017 to January 2018 Regents exams in all content areas.
- All staff shares the responsibility of instructing strategically assigned groups of students during an advisory course to improve college and career readiness and core content proficiency for Regents exams. The design of the advisory curriculum is to promote access to college and career with emphasis on understanding the application process, the development of strong study skills, financial aid support, and social-emotional guidance in preparation for graduation. Staff share the responsibility of advising students whom they do not teach in their core content courses. Teachers also support all students' success with after school, lunch period, and weekend tutoring for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and Regents exam prep work.
- Teachers have common planning time to promote collaboration while addressing student misconceptions and areas in need of improvement aligned with the instructional goals. For example, the implementation and use of manipulatives in math classes support increased student engagement, understanding, and achievement on common assessments. Similarly, Integrated Co-teaching (ICT) classes have related service providers push-in during classroom instruction so students are able to meet their learning needs without losing class time.

## Area of Focus

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

Teaching strategies, including the use of manipulatives, consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula, although high-quality supports and extensions beyond the expected learning outcome to engage all learners is lacking across the vast majority of classes.

### Impact

Students are engaged in challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in their work products and discussions, however only exhibit ownership in a few class activities.

### Supporting Evidence

- During an English Language Arts (ELA) ICT lesson on character traits, students used sticky notes to annotate their reading *Of Mice and Men*, and made inferences. Students were provided an annotation guidance document to support their proficiency with the task. Some students were observed using it, while most were encouraged to demonstrate their thinking from the teacher's feedback. One group annotated character traits on a series of sticky notes about "Curly not liking Lenny because he is bigger than him." One girl furthered her group's thinking by referencing a quote stating, "it says on page 26, Lenny likes to try to be tough." Although teachers and peers challenged one another to demonstrate their thinking, most students were limited to the grade level standard since high-quality supports were not offered to further extend thinking more deeply. Similarly, in a global studies ICT class, students were provided highlighters to identify key components within a series of differentiated data-based questions. However, most students did not appear to understand how to strategically annotate according to the questions, rather they noted all aspects of the information.
- Across most classes, teachers engaged students with provided scaffolds so they could further access the content information. For example, during an Advanced Placement Language and Composition lesson, students annotated a sample rhetorical analysis essay using anchor charts and guided documents. However, during the whole group share out, student presenters did not provide explicit reference to the document to ensure their peers had a clear conceptual understanding. Additionally, the document camera or display of the sample article were not used by students when explaining their thinking to peers although identified by the teacher. As such, the use of scaffolds and anchor charts, although used, were not strategically implemented across all classes.
- Across classes students engaged in discussions and group participation with peers. During an earth science lesson, students created their own model of one of the agents of erosion using several materials. Although the task was engaging and required students' to explain their reasoning, the geological processes as stated, limited the students' ability to create a meaningful model reflecting the agent. One group stated a misconception regarding porosity and infiltration when modeling their agent. However, in several art classes, students demonstrated ownership of their thinking through their use of manipulatives, student feedback, and self-reflection with renderings and photographic images of themselves. Students self-selected their materials and medium to create their art while also reflecting on one another's work and providing comments based on the criteria for success.

## Additional Finding

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

Academic tasks and curricula include rigorous tasks and higher-order skill development as evidenced in lesson plans and unit plans across grades and subjects. Additionally, tasks are planned and refined using student work, data, and customized math curricular documents from an adopted and purchased program.

### Impact

A diversity of learners have access to the curricula and are given opportunities to be cognitively engaged during instruction.

### Supporting Evidence

- Curricular planning documents used across classes emphasize rigorous habits with an emphasis on incorporating bilingual academic vocabulary when completing tasks. Most lesson plans include tasks that build on prior concepts and require an understanding of those connections. For example, an algebra lesson plan highlights how students will be engaged in their learning to construct a viable argument and critique the reasoning of others throughout the lesson, while incorporating prior knowledge to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them. Additionally, the teacher plans to comment on any trends and noticings while giving feedback on student work from the prior day to ensure a consistent emphasis on rigorous habits and higher-order skills exists with the strategic use of tools. Similarly, an ELA lesson plan explicitly requires students to provide at least one detail from the prior reading using evidence while not repeating another group's findings. Such expectations consistently support rigorous and critical thinking for a variety of learners across classes.
- Consistent higher-order performance tasks are designed to foster students' ability to demonstrate their thinking. Students are able to highlight the life of a literary or historical figure by designing a biographical book cover. They are expected to purposefully feature image, typography, color, and wording to affect the audience. Several graphic organizers and research prompts are included in plans to ensure students have the access to engage accordingly with the task and collect the necessary information to be successful. Similarly, an art performance task challenges students to model how they perceive themselves versus how their peers perceive them. The use of digital photography and image manipulation supports students' ability to remain engaged in a rigorous task while actively listening and making meaning of oral feedback.
- Results from formative assessments and students' submitted work samples guide curricular adjustments and support identification of anticipated academic struggles or student misconceptions. A global studies unit planning guide identifies a tenth grade continued struggle with correctly determining and explaining cause and effect of historical events in essay responses based on mock Regents exams. As such, unit plans and lesson plans are purposefully written to challenge students to read complex documents and identify causal relationships between historical events affecting global politics.

## Additional Finding

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

Teachers use and create assessment measures, including rubrics and checklists that are aligned with the school's curricula. Additionally, future aspiration trackers are used to determine student progress toward grade-level proficiency on a variety of tasks.

### Impact

Actionable feedback is provided to students on the vast majority of their work; however, not all students have a meaningful understanding of the feedback they receive. Common assessments are used to adjust curricula and instruction for all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- A variety of assessment tools and structures provide feedback to students regarding their completed assignments. Checklists and rubrics also offer students opportunities to reflect on their progress toward learning goals. Written assignments typically include a performance standard checklist fully aligned to the task with written feedback and next steps associated with each standard. For example, on a global history argumentative essay pertaining to the Chinese and Roman empires, several students received written feedback to provide better and more evidence to support their claim. Furthermore, students' ability to make specific changes without some additional meaningful clarity limited their ability to improve the quality of their work. Similarly, some students received feedback regarding good structured body paragraphs, but lacked depth in the evidence to present a clear argument in a logical order. The feedback is often actionable, but occasionally is written in a manner that limits students' ability to make concrete and specific changes without further one-on-one conferencing.
- Teachers across grades track student performance on formative assessments using item analysis reports to focus on instructional modifications for lower performing students to further success. Regents prep programs are used to provide students with targeted interventions based on the pre-assessment results. English as New Language teachers analyze strength and weaknesses on student essay assessments. Teachers concluded that more reading comprehension strategies were necessary and a variety of texts to support multiple choice question responses were necessary. Furthermore, teachers recognized, although students are progressing with understanding informational text, they still need targeted interventions with the use of figurative language, tone, and mood. Social studies assessment data revealed many students need support understanding political cartoon analysis, leading teachers to create lessons on comparative cause and effect.
- Students are monitored for their progress on interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational tasks with progress trackers. Students receive an initial grade and then a final grade to determine their level of proficiency. They have the opportunity to improve their understanding with revisions between the initial and final grade. Students agreed the feedback allows them to "know where you are at and what you can do to do better."

## Additional Finding

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

School leaders, staff, and community-based organizations consistently communicate high expectations connected to instructional non-negotiables and a systemic culture of college and career readiness.

### Impact

Teachers hold themselves accountable for strategies that embed professionalism and effective instruction across grades and subject areas. Students are prepared for the next level as a result of clear guidance and support.

### Supporting Evidence

- Staff hold themselves fully accountable for sharing best practices and reflecting on their own practices and that of others to identify areas for improvement. This occurs through a variety of learning opportunities the school leaders have ensured. First, all staff is observed a minimum of six times throughout the school year, including ICT classes, which are observed by two administrators with both teachers involved in the post-observation reflection process. Secondly, during common planning time, all teachers of a common grade or content, design and refine curriculum resulting in a culture that supports all learners, especially students with disabilities, which is an instructional focus. This approach to designing curriculum results in cross-curricular experiences, such as a graphic novel in tenth grade ELA linked to social studies topics from grade nine and ten, further supporting students' long-term understanding of a two-year scope and sequence in preparation for the Global History Regents exam. Additionally, staff stated they do "massive planning and quickly make changes and refocus on noticing," so they can "meet the needs of our kids."
- Staff receive and review the professional and instructional expectations communicated in the weekly principal information sheet. They hold one another mutually accountable for meeting these expectations by reviewing the required items, suggested items, action items, and by being made aware of the overall well-being of the schools' learning environment. A required item may include sharing out their upcoming unit with details about content and assessments at a department meeting or discussing struggles regarding a current department-wide instructional strategy. Furthermore, staff read professional research-based articles provided by school leadership and themselves connected to meeting these and other professional expectations.
- Several community-based organizations work with school staff to support students' access to college and career readiness and awareness. Students meet regularly with the college advisor, guidance counselor, and partners to build an understanding of the process, including financial aid, college majors, and regional school options. Career options are reviewed for those students interested in alternative pathways after high school. The attendance team also ensures students have significant resources to support their engagement in school leading to students' ownership and accountability for their progress towards graduation. Additionally, students receive SAT prep through after school programs and teachers integrate SAT strategies into their curriculum and instruction. Several English Language Learners expressed how much their teachers are helping them acquire the necessary vocabulary to be successful in college.

## Additional Finding

<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 weekly, inquiry-based professional collaborations that include their consistent analysis of assessment data from mock regents, in-class formative assessments, and student work.

### Impact

Teachers strengthen their instructional delivery while promoting best practices resulting in improved assessment practices and scaffolds for students.

### Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers collaborate during weekly inquiry meetings to review students' work and identify goals for instruction that are "attainable and sustainable." During a recent teacher team meeting, staff reviewed post-assessment mock Regents exam data for Living Environment. Teachers noticed consistent errors regarding cell structure and function from the pre-assessment, so planned an intensive review of those concepts that had not been explicitly revisited since the beginning of the year. Following the intensive instructional review, a focus group of six high achieving and six low achieving student work samples were further reviewed, which indicated an increase in achievement for most of the twelve students. Teachers reflected on how similar intensive reviews could be implemented for other units and content areas, in a timely manner prior to Regent exams.
- Social studies teachers noted their inquiry work has resulted in writing focused on skill development, and less on content, leading to transferrable skills across subjects. The teachers further noted they are intentional about providing students with more critical feedback that guides next steps and what could be done better, rather than simply a rubric based numerical score. Students stated during a meeting that they also valued having more explicit content feedback with rubrics instead of simply a numerical grade. Teachers suggested a review of more student work, rubrics and feedback samples to determine actionable next steps that can be incorporated into meeting this goal. Implications for future instruction were identified including the provision of more glows and grows and more frequent formative assessments.
- Teachers engage in inquiry work to promote achievement of school goals and reflect on instructional practices to build capacity. They specifically use their inquiry and common planning time as a forum to share curriculum updates and report progress analysis. Curricular updates help inform coherent implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and assessment practices. Suggestions by the history department include addressing misconceptions based on progress monitoring, integrating more multiple choice quick assessments, providing sentence starters, emphasize pacing with timers, and explicitly teaching vocabulary strategies. Similarly, the English department suggested a vertical alignment of skills and expectations to the Common Core Learning Standards using Regents results, providing students with running records based on clear assessments, and time simulated essay writing, reading, and multiple-choice experiences.