

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

# Final Report



<b>BEDS Code</b>	331500010448
<b>School Name</b>	Brooklyn Collaborative Studies
<b>School Address</b>	610 Henry Street, Brooklyn, NY 11231
<b>District Name</b>	NYCDOE CSD 15
<b>Principal</b>	Priscilla Chan
<b>Dates of Visit</b>	May 14-16, 2019



## Purpose Of The Visit

This school was identified as needing additional support by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Because of this identification, NYSED arranged for an Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) to visit the school. The visit is intended to help the school identify areas of need that are making long-term success a challenge and provide several visible Quick Wins that can be accomplished and demonstrate the school’s commitment to improvement.

The report provides a critical lens to help the school best focus its efforts.

## School Performance

New York State uses multiple indicators to determine the identification status of schools across the state. For each of these indicators, schools receive a number of 1 (lowest), 2, 3, or 4 (highest) that corresponds with how the school performed in relation to either other schools and/or performance targets. More information about how these levels are determined can be found at: <http://www.nysed.gov/accountability/essa-accountability-designation-materials>

The most recent results for the “All Students” group at the school are as follows:

### Elementary/Middle School Performance Indicators

Composite Performance Achievement Level	Student Growth Level	Combined Composite and Student Growth Level	English Language Proficiency Level	Average ELA and Math Academic Progress Level	Chronic Absenteeism Level
1	1	1	3	1	1

### High School Performance Indicators

4 Yr Grad. Rate <67%	Composite Performance Achievement Level	Average of 4-, 5-, and 6-year Graduation Rate Levels	Combined Composite Performance Achievement and Graduation Rate Level	English Language Proficiency Level	Average ELA and Math Academic Progress Level	Chronic Absenteeism Level	College, Career, Civic, Readiness (CCCR) Level
No	3	4	3	3	1	2	1

Brooklyn Collaborative Studies School serves 667 students in grades six to twelve.

## Information About The Visit

- The visit was led by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from NYSED. The team also included a district representative and a representative from the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN).

- The team visited a total of 46 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited seven classrooms with the principal during the visit.
- Team members conducted interviews with students, staff, and parents.
- Team members examined documents provided by the school, including lesson plans, schoolwide data, and student work.
- In advance of the visit, the school provided results of a staff survey that 49 staff members (89 percent) completed.
- In advance of the visit, 41 staff members (74 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

## Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. Recognizing the need to increase the course passage rate schoolwide, school leaders implemented Tuesday Mastery Support this school year to allow students to receive extra help to assist with homework, make up missing assignments, or refine their thinking and resubmit their work. As a result, students shared that they are better able to manage their own learning, feel less overwhelmed, and are more likely to do what is needed to increase their mastery level.
2. School leaders selected a target group of ten students who were borderline passing as of the midterm for the 2018-19 school year, and increased points of contact with them via daily face-to-face and weekly PupilPath check-ins. Leaders stated that as a result, six of the ten students earned a passing grade in one more core class compared to the previous semester, and three of ten students earned passing grades in three more classes compared to the previous semester. As a result of the success, leaders plan to scale up the work to include more students and share the successful strategies with crew advisory teams.
3. Recognizing inconsistent implementation of the mastery grading system last school year, the principal communicated the expectation that the mastery grading policy was to be implemented by all teachers across all grades and content areas starting this school year. As a result, staff stated they now enter mastery level data for each long-term learning target into PupilPath in a timely manner. By doing this, students and parents reported that they log into PupilPath more regularly and are more aware of students' academic progress and current mastery level, and students said they can forecast and prepare for upcoming learning targets. Staff also stated they use mastery level data to monitor course passage rates and graduation progress so they can share up to date information with parents and students. The principal shared that based on these practices, the percentage of students on track to graduate increased from 77 percent in May 2018, to 92 percent in May 2019.

## Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

### Systems for Improvement

- **School leaders should provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate on addressing the needs of students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs).** English as a new language (ENL) teachers shared that they recently started to meet as a group on their own but would like more collaborative opportunities to meet with other subject area teachers, especially those in the English language arts (ELA) department, in order to discuss how to best meet the needs of ELL students. In addition, special education teachers shared that they

value the collaboration time they have with general education teachers, but they would like to meet as a team to discuss and share strategies specific to meet the needs of special education students. School leaders should consider using the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) to plan for increased collaborative opportunities for teachers in 2019-20 so they can address the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities.

- **School leaders should use the SCEP to create specific schoolwide and subgroup attendance goals and then strategically map out incremental actions and benchmarks to achieve those goals.** The 2018-19 SCEP indicated that 34 percent of students missed 18 or more days of school during the 2017-18 school year; however, there was no clear goal outlined to address this issue. The SCEP also identified the tracking of schoolwide attendance, but the IIT did not find evidence of a clear mechanism in place to disaggregate attendance data easily and quickly by subgroup, such as for ELLs or students with disabilities.
- **School leaders should use the available restorative practice resources, including staff, collaborative meeting time, and outside partnerships outlined in the SCEP, to support teacher development in classroom management techniques.** The 2018-19 SCEP indicated that during the 2017-18 school year, teachers in grades six through eight logged 479 “follow-up requests” in the request log due to behavior incidents. While the number of log entries decreased from 479 to 448 at the time of the visit, the principal stated that staff still need more professional development (PD) on classroom management strategies. While the IIT observed minimal behavior incidents during classroom visits, the few incidents observed were not consistently handled.

## Leadership and Organization at the School

- **The school leaders should work to create an easily accessible data warehouse system that allows staff to quickly review disaggregated quantitative data so they can easily monitor for equity and access, as well as student proficiency levels.** When asked by the team, the principal explained that the school reports a student’s progress using mastery level categories such as beginning, competent, accomplished, and exemplary. However, there was a lack of clarity around the schoolwide course passage rate data for student subgroups, as staff have only recently assigned numeric ranges to mastery levels. The principal went on to explain that staff are just beginning to disaggregate and translate qualitative mastery level data into quantitative data, with the work primarily taking place at the department level. For example, the principal shared that science teachers recognized that students across grades six through twelve were having difficulty with data analysis, so the department developed a schoolwide intervention plan to improve students' ability to do scientific data analysis. Further, she stated that the school is looking to analyze more of the available data to address disproportionality in course passage rates, which she stated might be the result of the subjective nature of the school’s mastery grading system. In addition, the principal stated she is working with staff on implicit bias training to examine why subgroups of students are not progressing beyond the competent level.
- **The school leaders should examine ways to assess and monitor the implementation of new initiatives.** The principal shared that the school’s office referral program is supposed to consist of a specific conversation between teachers and referred students. However, school leaders stated that they are often called to handle disciplinary issues, as the initiative is not consistently followed, and that no modifications or revised action steps have been put in place to make sure that the plan is being better utilized. The school hired an instructional guide to support EL Education practices, who provides school leaders with data to monitor the implementation of initiatives.
- **School leaders should establish formal systems to collect and analyze parent engagement data on current and past practices to determine which engagement strategies are most effective and why.** When asked by

the team, staff indicated that the school does not have a formal system in place to gather or track parent participation at school or Parent Teacher Association (PTA) events. In discussions with staff, the IIT learned that while the school has anecdotal evidence that parents enjoy participating in the school's book club, drop-off breakfasts, the student/staff basketball game, and other events, they are not clear on why some events or meetings are more popular with parents than others, or what other activities and events parents are interested in participating in.

- **The school leaders should collaborate with the attendance committee to monitor attendance interventions to make sure interventions are effective.** The principal shared that the attendance committee meets to coordinate schoolwide efforts to identify and support chronically absent students. Through their work, committee members discovered that most chronically absent students were absent due to family and/or sibling responsibilities; however, there was a lack of clarity around what is being done specifically to support these students. According to the SCEP, crew leaders are supposed to look at their advisee's attendance and lateness data and follow up with students, but the IIT learned that there is no system in place to monitor any efforts made after staff follow up with these students.

## Learning at the School

- **Teachers should provide students with opportunities to engage with content through multiple modalities, such as role play or listening centers, to accommodate individual learning styles and needs.** In most observed classrooms, student learning materials were comprised of worksheet journal packets, where students were asked to provide short-answer responses to questions of varying complexity levels. Some students shared that most of their assignments are done on worksheets and they have to turn these worksheet journals in to receive a 95 percent "habit of scholarship" grade. In many classes, team members found that the teacher provided instructions and content information orally, and as a result, the ratio of teacher talk to student talk was high. The IIT seldom observed students engaging with technology or using other media forms such as audio recordings or movies to explore content.
- **Teachers should formatively assess student learning then use that information to modify instruction in order to support all students in mastering skills and concepts.** Teachers were observed using various forms of formative assessments including exit/entrance tickets and questions; however, it was unclear how these assessments were being used to subsequently modify instruction during the delivery of the lesson. Most checks for understanding were procedural, such as raising hands or thumbs up, but there was little evidence of student responses being recorded or of teachers providing students who did not indicate understanding with feedback and instruction to correct their misconceptions and ensure all students mastered the skill or concept being taught.
- **In keeping with the habits of scholarship, the principal should work with teachers to remove scaffolds so that students take more responsibility over their own learning and build their confidence.** The principal shared her expectation that teachers should gradually remove scaffolds and encourage productive persistence through the habits of scholarship. She further shared that although the removal of scaffolds was taking place in small pockets, it is an area for growth across classrooms.

## Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Parents shared that while they are happy with the school’s diversity, social justice philosophy, project-based learning, outward bound school design, and authentic learning experiences, they are unclear on the mastery grading aspect.** Parents said they are happy with the rigor of the school model and the authentic learning opportunities students are given. However, some parents shared that the mastery grading system is confusing.
- **Students shared that teachers should quietly take misbehaving students aside for one-on-one discussions when they misbehave in class in order to allow the other students in class to continue working.** Students stated that when teachers make examples of misbehaving students in class, it disrupts the learning process and takes time away from instruction. For example, they stated sometimes when a student misbehaves, teachers may address the issue with the whole class instead of directly and quietly handling it with the one student.
- **Students reported that they would like additional information on how to apply for scholarships and grants to attend college outside of the State University of New York (SUNY) or City University of New York (CUNY) systems.** Students said that sometimes staff use affordability as the reason why students should almost exclusively limit their college choices to SUNY or CUNY schools and do not encourage them to apply for scholarships or grants or explore other ways to pay for college.