



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**East Brooklyn Congregations High School for
Public Service**

**High School 545
1155 DeKalb Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11221**

Principal: Victor Capellan

**Dates of review: June 3 - 4, 2008
Lead Reviewer: Elena Papaliberios**

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The East Brooklyn Churches High School for Public Service is a high school with 642 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises of 11% Black, 83% Hispanic, 0.8% White, and 0.6% Asian students. The student body includes 10.7% English language learners and 10.4% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 82.7%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 82% eligibility.

The school was opened in collaboration with a number of congregations, which are the East Brooklyn Churches, and their theme is community and public service. All the students are required to be involved in a community service program during their time at this school. This is one of the oldest small schools in existence, founded eighteen years ago.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is highly respected by the entire school community and has created a culture of high expectations.
- Staff members, parents and administrators describe the school as a family place where people support and respect each other.
- The school provides good youth development support through its advisory program.
- Parents and caregivers are welcome and receive useful information and support throughout the year.
- The school provides a safe and comfortable environment for learning, where students receive constant support.
- The administrative team and the principal gather and analyze school wide data and disaggregate by gender, ethnicity and grade level.
- The school works with similar community schools and shares school wide data around attendance and credit accumulation.
- The inquiry team identifies and provides strategies to support the progress of the targeted students in greatest need of improvement.
- This school has developed effective partnerships with organizations that support student growth and development.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend differentiation in all classrooms to ensure all students are engaged in their learning.
- Provide a structure for classroom teachers to undertake inter-visitations and to share best practices among experienced and inexperienced teachers.
- Extend opportunities for teachers to analyze student work together and plan for create measurable goals for student improvement.
- Make professional development decisions based on data in order to improve student and teacher outcomes.
- Use and deconstruct periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to develop whole class and individual student plans for improvement.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made some progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The entire school community respects the principal. He is accessible and available to students who feel that they are able to talk to him, not only about schoolwork, but about life as well. They are all very saddened by his decision to leave the school at the end of this year. The principal, assistant principals and the inquiry team collect data and use it to analyze student progress by ethnicity, gender and grade. Teachers make use of assessments, but do not deconstruct the data to influence differentiated instruction. There are limited chances for teachers to share good practice to ensure that the match of work to student needs is consistent throughout the school. Community and public service effectively enhance the school's curriculum. This is an integral part of students' experience, as they are all required to participate throughout the year. The school's collaboration with East Brooklyn Churches supports this theme, and helps further the personal growth of students. Other organizations that work with the school in providing academic and personal support are El Puente, The Mcif Center, Brooklyn College, City Tech.

The school uses the Gates McGinitie exam as a baseline for students in grades 9 through 11. The inquiry team identifies students in need through the advisory program which is gender based. The cabinet and the school leadership team work collaboratively to develop annual school goals and share these goals with the school community. However, there are few opportunities for teachers to analyze student work together and set measurable improvement goals with precise interim targets. Moreover, data generated via periodic assessments does not always support planning for next steps in student learning, or guide decisions regarding professional development for teachers.

Since the previous Quality Review, the school has worked effectively to improve student attendance, which has risen by 5%. A change in personnel has helped move the school in this area. The inquiry team selected to work with 36 students who have been in the school for three years, but only have enough credits to be in the 9th grade. Their focus is on vocabulary development and academic language. The team has developed strategies to help students improve, but has not shared them with the staff as a whole. Therefore, these strategies have not made an impact school wide. Once they see positive results, the team expects to share these with the staff next year.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

This school updates their understanding of the performance of students using report cards, progress reports, baseline assessments, and marking period grades. The school assesses the performance of English language learners and places the students in levels according to LAB-R or NYSESLAT scores. Through a variety of assessments, the school has an understanding of student performance and progress for individual students, classes and grades. The school disaggregates their data by ethnicity, grade, and gender in order for the advisors to review it and address areas of need. There is a very strong advisory program for separate male and female groups. Students stay with the same advisory group for the entire four years they are in school. Structures are in place for teachers to meet by department, grade level and as a whole school. At the meetings, they share data to gain a better understanding of student progress and to plan instruction. Through this efforts they have began to develop lessons to meet the needs of their students.

To understand its relative performance, the school compares itself with its peer group schools and the eight schools in Bushwick. Attendance data as well as graduation data is always looked at in comparison to the neighborhood schools. The eight schools also share professional development sessions, this practice has helped to provide training in the content areas to departments of two or three teachers allowing them to get exposure to a larger number of teachers in their content area.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school works in a collaborative way to set school wide goals, shares these goals with the entire school community. At the end of each year, a retreat is set up for the school leadership team and the cabinet, which includes teachers, coaches, parents and students, to evaluate the work of the year. Goals focus clearly on supporting students whose performance is not meeting standards. This support incorporates the strong advisory program, used as the primary way to identify students who are not progressing and are in greatest need of improvement. One of the structures in place is the yellow, green, red system. The school labels students who are on track as green, those almost on track are yellow and students not meeting all the requirements are red. This system has helped counselors to target students who are off track quickly. Teachers and counselors meet with students to review transcripts and invite parents to talk about their children's progress at academic conferences. The attendance team addresses students most at risk who are long term absentees. The team reaches out to parents through the "phonemaster" system and through home visits.

All members of the school community have high expectations for their students. Students are expected to take the most rigorous courses offered, such as advanced placement physics, US history, global honors and College Now. This pushes students to achieve at their highest levels. In order to keep parents informed, the school has grade meetings, parent/teacher conferences, and mails out a monthly parent letter. Although the school sends progress reports out, they are sent too close to the end of the marking period. This does not give the students an opportunity to seek help and make improvements before the marking period is over.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

Teachers have freedom to develop their own curriculum and create courses that are interesting and engaging. One of the courses that teachers were proud to talk about is that for Latin American and Caribbean Literature. The school has developed a suitable English language arts curriculum using the “understanding by design” model. The program includes strategies from Ramp-Up for reading recovery intervention and extends to literature courses for more advanced students. The school’s goal is to include writing, accountable talk, and student projects in every class. The program has positively influenced some classes, but is not yet consistently used across the school. At present, teachers do not match all work appropriately to the needs of the full range of student needs.

The principal holds teachers accountable for their students’ progress through informal and formal observations and cabinet walkthroughs. As yet, understanding of how information from such observations is used to improve programming and outcomes is not entire clear. This is particularly apparent in math and science. The school has used financial resources appropriately to appoint an additional assistant principal with specific responsibility for these subjects.

Teachers and students have good relationships and students feel very comfortable to be in this school. Students confirm that teachers are caring and that they can go to any teacher any time to ask for help and they go out of they way to support student. Staff members have created a family environment, so parents are very happy sending their children to this school.

Since the last review, attendance has been a focus for this school. The school hired a new attendance teacher and now provides incentives for students with excellent and improved attendance. This has been effective in raising student attendance rates significantly. The “phonemaster” system generates automated calls to parents.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The principal and assistant principals conduct formal and informal observations regularly with timely feedback. The cabinet also conducts walkthroughs with the math and literacy coach. However, there is no professional development plan for the current year and teachers made independent decisions about the training they want to be involved in. This lack of strategy has steered the school away from providing professional development based on clearly identified, data informed needs. Currently, there is no formal structure set up for inter-visitations. Often, the only opportunity to see other teachers teach is when the mentor works with a new teacher. However, this is rare, as most staff members are experienced and long standing.

This school aligns its youth development program and supports services with the academic development of their students. The advisory program is a very strong component of this school and has helped students to connect to adults in the school, to peers, and has helped to support their academic development through weekly meetings where advisors discuss individual students. The advisory groups go through a two-week summer bridge program where students take math, English language arts, music and team building. The teambuilding component is done through one of their partnerships, El Puente. The school has many other partnerships that provide academic as well as social support such as the East Brooklyn Churches, City Tech, Brooklyn College, City University of New York, and many more organizations where students perform community service.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The principal provides good leadership and conveys a clear vision for the future development of the school. His cabinet, parents and students support his vision to build a quality comprehensive high school that meets the academic, emotional and social development of all his students, supporting future college success.

Leaders recognize necessary developments in the use of periodic assessments to develop individualized student goals and action plans for improvements. The assistant principals do not fully understand the process clearly themselves. Therefore, they are not able to train staff members or have appropriate expectations of how teachers will use periodic assessments effectively.

The cabinet conducts walkthroughs to get a sense of where they are in regards to the school goals. They review data and analyze the material being covered, number of students earning credit, and number of students attending. As a result of such review, the math program was changed in the middle of the year. Leaders are open to such flexibility, in the light of useful review and evaluation information to ensure that expectations are high enough, teaching strategies appropriate to learning styles and curriculum effectively planned to match all student needs.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: East Brooklyn Churches High School for Public Service	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
Quality Score			X		

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide ...	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?			X		
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?			X		
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?			X		
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?				X	
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?			X		
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X		

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty ...	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area?				X	
2.3 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school ...	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?			X		
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?			X		
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X		

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

To what extent does the school ...	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?			X		
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?		X			
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?		X			
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?			X		
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?			X		
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4					
			X		

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

To what extent do ...	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?		X			
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?		X			
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?			X		
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?			X		
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?			X		
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5					
			X		

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped