



Welcome to

# Brooklyn Laboratory High School

Brooklyn, NY

Educating all learners.

## How They Came to Be

### Brooklyn Laboratory High School's XQ Super School Journey

Brooklyn LAB leaders and educators mean it when they say they're committed to serving all learners. Around one-third of students are "complex learners" who qualify for special education services. At its core, Brooklyn LAB's school model features a rigorous, AP-for-all, academic curriculum for all students, including those with special needs. With this great ambition, Brooklyn LAB leaders learned early on that they'd have to develop their own teacher and leader training programs to ensure a diverse faculty prepared to meet these rigorous demands. Brooklyn LAB leads the way in recruiting a corps of teachers as intentionally diverse as their student population. 80% of their staff members identify as people of color and the majority hail from immigrant communities.

Primarily serving low-income students in the heart of Brooklyn's Tech Triangle, Brooklyn Laboratory High School (Brooklyn LAB) exists to connect students to promising opportunities previously unavailable to them.

## Discover Brooklyn LAB

Brooklyn LAB is a public charter school, opened in 2017, that serves 500 students in grades 9-12.

### Brooklyn Laboratory High School Design Features

## 1. A commitment to equity and access to college

Brooklyn LAB intentionally creates a “college-ready” culture that blends academic rigor with social-emotional learning, explicitly preparing all students for the demands and opportunities of college. From naming rooms after colleges and engaging students in collaborative research projects as 9th graders to building “AP-for-all” into the course sequence, the consistent message to students from day one is all of them are going to college. Scholars are encouraged to look ahead to their short-term and long-term futures through a daily advisory meeting and a foundations of leadership course. On a regular basis, teachers and counselors explain need-based financial aid, address student misconceptions that college acceptance means a college scholarship, and describe the importance of college accreditation.

This component of the school’s guiding vision permeates deeply into their team’s thinking. When COVID-19 hit and school leaders foresaw the disproportionate burden that school closures would pose to already-disadvantaged students, they launched a series of design charrettes (a short collaborative project between education and design experts) to support a new [Equity by Design](#) initiative to understand how to best serve their students during the pandemic, and have gone on to share the resources with countless schools across the nation.



## Nyliah Morrison

12 Grader

“I’m a 12th grader so this is the year of preparation for college and life. Brooklyn LAB makes sure to have a lot of resources for that, like college success counselor meetings which I enjoy to help prepare for applications and personal statements. They even have virtual college visits where we can learn about colleges that interest us. You get to decide your pathway and they help you make that happen along the way, like making sure your college options fit your personal statement.”

## 2. Teachers and technology to tailor student support

At Brooklyn LAB, scholars are required to “show what they know” before moving on. Teachers work to form personal relationships with students to provide stability, gain a better understanding of how to serve their students’ needs, and ensure students feel well-known. Cortex, a digital learning platform created by school co-founder Erin Mote, provides teachers and students with a day-to-day data dashboard and a cumulative “Mastery Progress Report” that shows what competencies, skills, and academic content each student has mastered. This enables teachers (two of whom are in most classrooms, moving fluidly from large-group to small-group to one-on-one instruction) to customize student learning to meet students’ unique needs while empowering students to better understand themselves as learners. Further, every student at Brooklyn LAB has a personal and individualized success coach, who fosters and maintains high expectations and employs strength-based and culturally relevant approaches in their support.



**Erin Mote**

Co-Founder and Senior Advisor

“Technology is never going to replace great teachers. However, there are ways to give teachers and schools better tools that allow them to be smarter about student information.”



**Eric Tucker**

Co-Founder and Executive Director

“There are so many charging stations for learning in a city, in Brooklyn, in a city like New York. It’s critical that we create paths to these types of learning opportunities.”

## 3. Encouraging and empowering young people

Brooklyn LAB students are leaders and decision-makers. During daily advisory periods, students work with advisors on things like leadership skills and understanding themselves as learners. Students design their own clubs—from debate to robotics—and serve as coaches and leaders in paid after-school positions. The school’s Foundations of Leadership program ensures that incoming 9th graders are challenged to think both short-term and long-term about their future, including college acceptance, scholarships, and financial aid. Brooklyn LAB also connects students with learning opportunities such as internships, mentoring, and work-based projects outside traditional school walls through partnerships with groups and initiatives such as the Amazon Future Engineers Program, a comprehensive childhood-to-career program aimed at increasing access to computer science education for children and young adults from underserved and underrepresented communities. The goal is to close opportunity gaps for young people in their changing neighborhood by connecting low-income students with thriving local businesses.



## Theory in Action

### Student work: Authentic and relevant art

In the 2019-20 school year, scholars were hard at work on a Year-End Arts Symposium. The symposium was intended to be an end-of-year event which would display the artwork students created throughout the school year in visual and performing arts classes. Unfortunately, when COVID-19 forced schools to close their doors, Brooklyn LAB was no longer able to host an in-person symposium, and students' eagerness to share their experiences under these new and challenging circumstances was on the rise. So the school's art teachers and students worked together to create a virtual walk-through art gallery that showcased artwork that students created while in quarantine throughout the spring. The June event included drawings,

paintings, and recorded dance performances, many of which were in response to COVID-19 community resilience or commitments to social justice (the timing of the symposium also coincided with the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement and calls for social justice being raised both nationwide and directly in scholars' neighborhoods throughout New York City). Despite the challenges, the year-end arts symposium, "A New Dawn: Reflecting on a Brighter Side," was a success, enabling more scholars, staff, and families to attend than may have if the event were held in person as a one-time event, due to space and family schedule limitations. The art symposium highlighted artwork from 137 scholars.

#### State Standards Met:

- ✓ VA:Cr1.2.HSI: Consider a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design.
- ✓ VA:Cr2.1.HSI: Generate and develop artistic work in a self-directed manner.

#### Competencies Met:

- ✓ XQ Learner Goals



## Hi, I'm Yasmin Chowdhury

“Since we’re not a large high school, the small community we have makes it really easy for us to connect with our teachers and our peers on a personal level. As a 12th grader, I know kids all through the years (grades). Ms. King, our Partnerships Manager, helps students find internships and opportunities. She and Ms. Duran, who supports community outreach, will help you find internships and really cool opportunities.”

## Student Storytellers

Brooklyn Laboratory Charter School hosted its first-ever virtual TEDxYouth@BrooklynLAB event in 2020 showcasing talks and performances from Brooklyn LAB and other high school students. TEDxYouth@BrooklynLAB specifically highlights Gen Z’s vision for the future and their take on critical issues, like racial justice, teenage mental health, gender identity, climate resiliency, and others! Check it out [here](#).

## Student data

Brooklyn Lab serves 486 students in grades 9-12 this school year.

**65% Black**  
**25% Latinx**  
**1% White**  
**5% Other/Bi-racial**  
**3% Asian**  
**1% Native American**

**100% Free Lunch**  
**29% Special Education**

## Blogs and Media

- [This High School Is Sharing How to Make Remote Learning Work for Every Student](#)
- [This School Is Giving Families Meaningful Options as They Reopen. You Should Too.](#)
- [Building Caring, Trusting Relationships in a Remote Learning World \(Pt. 1\)](#)
- [Advice for school leaders on how to serve English learners and special ed students](#)
- [‘The Gift of Complex Learners’](#)
- [When a School Opens Its Arms to Immigrants](#)
- [How parents can help shy and introverted kids through a particularly tough back-to-school season](#)
- [Safeguarding Back to School: Preparation for a Healthy Return to School in Downtown Brooklyn](#)

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