Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Origins High School

22K611

3000 Avenue X
Brooklyn
NY 11235

Principal: John Banks

Date of review: February 4, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio
The School Context

Origins is a high school with 211 students from grade 9 through grade 10. The school population comprises 41% Black, 22% Hispanic, 21% White, and 12% Asian students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 89.0%.

School Quality Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school…</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<th>School Culture</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<td><strong>To what extent does the school…</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<th>Systems for Improvement</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<td><strong>To what extent does the school…</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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Area of Celebration

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</table>

Findings
Structures and systems are in place to consistently communicate high expectations to staff and to provide feedback to families around supporting students towards expectations connected to college and career readiness.

Impact
School-wide systems of accountability and feedback to families are resulting in meeting expectations in teaching and learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Team meetings, emails, and school website provide clear expectations of instructional expectations. Observations of team meetings by the school administration assist with the development of the instructional focus and progress of school initiatives. During an interview, while discussing their attempts towards meeting the school’s expectations, teachers reported “although the meetings are run by us, the assistant principal has been supportive especially when arriving at obstacles” during these team meetings.

- Feedback from observations conveys strengths and areas of focus for teachers to use towards next steps. For example, in review of the school’s online tracking system, feedback is provided to support teacher’s progression towards professional goals and demonstrates relevance towards the instructional focus on fostering engagement and independent thinking. In review of several teachers’ feedback, the administration suggested to set clear criteria to further engage students in understanding and meeting the standards.

- The school website, roundtable discussions, and meetings, provide parents with information on upcoming events, including insight into Common Core Learning Standards. During an interview, one parent reported that the roundtables, which included the participation of his child, provided him insight on his progress and stated, “This method of communication is very sophisticated”. The parent reported that his child “has made progress from the last quarter”. In addition, the school website provides information for parents on the school’s mission and four focal points which provide details on student advisories, and types of curriculum and instruction implemented in the school.

- Progress reports and a school online grading system provide parents with ongoing information on their child’s progress. One parent reported that the school online grading system assisted him with determining his child’s progress and determining whether his child was missing assignments.
Findings
While teacher practice included questioning and scaffolds, entry points and student discussion were uneven across classrooms.

Impact
Teacher practice and classroom discussions are beginning to engage all students in demonstrating higher-order thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers across classrooms were observed using a variety of questioning strategies and providing graphic organizers such as the Frayer Model to support student thinking. In one class, students use the Frayer Model to define terms such as isolationism. However, the evidence of higher order thinking was only demonstrated by one student who was able to connect that “Japan chose to maintain no contact with other countries.”

- High levels of participation and student-to-student discussion were inconsistent. For example, in two classrooms, groups of students were observed unengaged. In another class, although students were fully participating in the lesson, the level of discussion focused on recalling facts while observing an object.

- Across classrooms, graphic organizers did not appear to be modified for subgroups or targeted to the specific needs of groups of students. In the majority of the classes observed, the same graphic organizers were provided as scaffolds to all students, even high achievers. In addition, teaching strategies were not modified for groups of students. In two science classes, the same project outline was provided as a teaching strategy for all students. Scaffolds for groups of students were not provided.
Additional Findings

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
School-wide assessments, including rubrics, conferences as ongoing checks for understanding, and student self-assessment, are all related to the curricula, and provide actionable feedback to support students' understanding of content-related materials.

Impact
The use of assessments leads to actionable next steps so that students know what they need to do to improve. Ongoing adjustments to instruction in classrooms target and support student learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- School-wide assessments include performance tasks and Common Core aligned rubrics aligned to teacher created unit plans and curricula. For example, the 9th grade rubric assesses students' ability to “introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim from alternate or opposing claims and write and revise a persuasive speech or argumentative essay related to a unit on creating speeches”. The student rubric is written in the form of “I can” and student friendly language statements to assist them in understanding their areas of strength and determine a focus for next steps. During the student interview, students were able to explain these areas in terms of “I can”, statements in the rubric.

- According to teachers and students, feedback is provided verbally and in writing. During an interview, students reviewed their work and were able to state areas of strength and improvement based on teacher feedback. For example, one student reported she needed to work on her stating her claims and counterclaims using an Ethos and Pathos strategy. Another student stated that her teacher’s feedback helped her revise the claim in an essay analysis on Suzuki. The student stated she revised her claim “to say the same idea but not as choppy as the first.”

- Across classrooms, teachers used questioning strategies to determine student understanding of the task and use coaching methods to support misconceptions of the task. For example, in a science class, the teacher conferred with one student on narrowing his research topic by using the questions in a graphic organizer as a support tool. In addition, through the use of roundtables, students use a rubric to self-assess and reflect on their own understanding. For example, in a review of student folders, one student determined they needed to improve on “using more evidence”. Other means of self-assessment include project-based rubrics where one student checked, “I need help” and wrote in reference to the research question, “I might need to revise it.”
Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum  
Rating: Proficient

**Findings**  
The school utilizes a curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and emphasizes rigorous habits for all students.

**Impact**  
Across classrooms, students are consistently exposed to coherent and rigorous curricula.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school has made efforts to develop curricula in across subject areas and grades aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. A review of online curricula maps reflects alignment to specific standards such as developing central themes in history and English. Curriculum maps in math and science demonstrate alignment to literacy standards on determining importance and stating claims.

- Instructional shifts are clearly reflected across curricula maps. For example, in algebra, unit three reflects an integration of citing evidence to support claims which is aligned to instructional shifts in literacy and math. Additionally, in the global II curriculum map, a focus on tier two and three words such as “revolution” and “conflict” is provided which aligns to the instructional shift on academic vocabulary.

- Curricula and academic tasks emphasize Conley’s Key Cognitive Strategies (KCS) to inform curriculum development. For example, strategies in unit plans include “the consideration multiple approaches to complex real-world problems” in order to “generates a feasible plan of action to implement it (an appropriate approach), applying prior knowledge and discipline-specific considerations”. The essential question aligned to this task asked students to consider, “How could speakers persuade their audience using the power of words?”

- Rigorous language objectives are planned to align with content objectives and are included in curricula and task designs to support student subgroups such as English language learners and students with disabilities. For example, one language objective aligned to a content objective on the development of claims is, “I can identify pathos (through emotional language, shared emotional experience, and call to action) within my persuasive writing project.”
Findings
Teacher teams are in the process of engaging in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations using student data and work products.

Impact
Inquiry based professional collaborations are in the beginning stages of improving instructional capacity and student outcomes aligned to specific data and work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet regularly to discuss implementing methodologies such as reciprocal teaching and student behavior using Kid talk protocols. A review of recent meeting notes reflects teachers using the Kid talk protocol to discuss observation and attendance data relevant to anecdotes of student conversations during advisories. However, adjustments of specific instructional strategies for students discussed weren’t noted. For example, for several students, next steps included the use of conversations to discuss behavior as a means of addressing issues.

- During a meeting, teachers were observed discussing a student’s behavior based on class observations, emails and previous conversations. In general, teachers discussed student work and suggested next steps included more advisory conversations, parental support as well as the use of highlighters. The interview did not include targeted academic strategies or goal setting for this student.

- A review of minutes across the year demonstrates the identification of English language learners as a subgroup in need of extra support and instructional strategies. According to school administration, teachers used the Gates-Macginitie assessment to make this determination. However, meeting notes and the teacher observation reflected some use of the inquiry within the first cycle yet reflections on student progress towards goals set for this subgroup were not noted.