Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Academy for Health Careers
High School K751
150 Albany Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11213

Principal: Deonne Martin

Date of review: March 25, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Marcella Barros
### The School Context

Academy for Health Careers is a high school with 363 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 86% Black, 9% Hispanic, 1% White, 2% Asian and 2% other students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 30% of the students enrolled and girls account for 70%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 83.0%.

### School Quality Criteria

#### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<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>Developing</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>Developing</td>
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#### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<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>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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#### Systems for Improvement

<table>
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<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<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>Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based collaborations aligned to the achievement of school goals. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have a voice in key decisions.

Impact
School-wide teacher team professional collaborations have resulted in improved leadership and instructional capacity of teachers, which affects student learning.

Supporting Evidence
- Teacher teams meet weekly and have developed structures such as protocols for looking at student work and school-wide use of Google docs to share agendas and minutes. The focus of these meetings is to promote the school’s instructional focus on literacy. The inquiry team has developed a website titled, “AHC Literacy Strategies” which contains teacher strategies to increase student literacy such as the “Literacy Design Collaborative Template Task” for creating essay prompts and SQ3R (Skim, Question, Read, Recite, Review), which provides support for students to actively read texts and make inferences.

- During an inquiry team meeting, ninth and tenth grade teachers discussed student work, assessment data and next steps for teaching practices. Specifically, an English language learner’s (ELL) document based essay was examined where teachers noticed language gaps in capitalization, the use of grammar and answering text-dependent questions. It was determined that the student would benefit from targeted instruction from the English as a second language (ESL) teacher to address her grammatical deficiencies. This also promotes the school’s goals to incorporate literacy strategies into teacher practice in order to meet the needs of struggling students and increase instructional rigor.

- A review of school documents demonstrated that several teachers serve on a Career and Technical Education (CTE) committee along with school leaders to collaboratively develop the CTE scope and sequence for grades 9-12. They discuss the progress toward their CTE application, the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards into these courses, and progress towards college-ready coursework in this area. This committee’s work has increased students’ interests in industry and careers as well as increased engagement through hands-on learning with equipment and technology as evident in student conversations.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Developing |

Findings
Across classrooms teacher practices included questioning and scaffolds, but entry points and high levels of student discussion and work products was uneven.

Impact
Tasks, student work, and classroom discussions, are in the process of engaging students in demonstrating higher-order thinking

Supporting Evidence
- Some teachers provide scaffolds and supports such as visuals, tiered tasks, leveled texts and graphic organizers. However, these practices are inconsistent across classrooms. In some classrooms, teachers use one version of the text, and assign all the students the same task. For example, in a tenth grade geometry class, low performing students were provided with a reference sheet of theorems and postulates as well as given tiered worksheets. On the other hand, in a science class, the teacher conducted a read aloud on a text about extra-embryonic membranes and asked students to formulate Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Level 3 and 4 questions. The questions resulted in Level 1 and 2 questions such as, “What membrane transports blood from the mother to the embryo?”

- Some teachers provided opportunities for students to demonstrate higher-order skills. For example, in an English class, students were asked to read a text and formulate opinions and questions to discuss with a partner. However, in other classes, students read from a text, and were asked to define terms, answer questions with single correct responses such as “Do we agree that CO2 and energy are used in cell respiration?” and were not asked to support their answers with evidence from the text.

- Student written work products reflect uneven levels of rigor and high-level thinking. For example, in one social studies class, students created 10 multiple-choice questions based off a review sheet. However, in another social studies class students wrote a speech where they argued for or against settlement housing in the Progressive Era.

- Practices across classrooms demonstrated the uneven use of entry points to support student learning. For example, in a nursing class, students read different emergency medical scenarios collaboratively and were prompted to discuss what treatment options they would choose and why. However, in a social studies class, students were reading the same text about the social gospel movement independently and answering the same four comprehension questions, which included, “How did the Settlement Houses reflect the ideas of the Social Gospel Movement?” with limited tools for supporting their ideas.
Additional Findings

Quality Indicator: 2.2 Assessment  
Rating: Developing

Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use assessments and rubrics that are loosely aligned with the school’s curricula. Teachers’ assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact
Teachers’ assessment practices result in limited feedback to students and teachers about academic achievement. Teachers are in the process of making effective adjustments to meet student learning needs.

Supporting Evidence
- Some teachers use rubrics to provide students with criteria for assessment. For example, in one class, students were asked, “Can humans be considered an endangered species?” They were provided with a rubric that guided them to make a claim and cite evidence from the article to support the claim. As the teacher examined student work, she provided feedback with prompts such as, “Prove your point with evidence from the article. How does the article support that claim? Does something in the article support your decision?” However, this is not a consistent practice across the school. In another class, students responded in writing to the following prompt, “Do you think the US can change the way it produces energy in the next 10 years? Why or why not?” As students completed the assignment, the teacher placed a stamp on their work, but did not read it or provide specific feedback.

- In one math Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) classroom, teachers checked for understanding by asking a student to solve a problem on the board and then asked the class, “Do you agree with how the problem is set up? Is there another way to represent the problem? Do these steps align with these steps here?” Student responses led the co-teacher to target students for individualized support during independent work. However, in a social studies class, the teacher asked students to work collaboratively to make connections between a text and whether social reformers were generous or condescending. During the group activity, students repeatedly called the teacher over to explain the task again while others waited for clarification.

- Some teachers provided students with opportunities for self-assessment through lesson reflection sheets. For example, in a science class, students were asked to respond to the following prompts: “List two key facts that you learned during this exercise? Are you ready to move to tomorrow’s lesson? Why or why not?” However, this reflection was neither shared out nor collected by the teacher resulting in a missed opportunity to make effective adjustments for the next day’s lesson.
**Findings**
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training on elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. School leaders and staff offer ongoing feedback to help families regarding the support of students towards expectations connected to college and career readiness.

**Impact**
The communication of high expectations results in a system of accountability for the entire staff. Ongoing feedback to families provides an understanding of the path to college and career readiness for students.

**Supporting Evidence**
- The administration provides several resources to convey their expectations to staff including a staff handbook and training on the Citywide Instructional Expectations. In addition, teacher team leaders are responsible for posting all teacher team agendas and minutes to Google docs where they can be reviewed by leadership and other teacher teams in order to inform school wide improvement.

- The school communicates expectations for professional learning through on and offsite training on struggling learners, differentiation strategies, building literacy, data analysis and assessment. Conversations with teacher teams demonstrated that professional development has led to the school wide use of the DOK wheel to increase the rigor of classroom discussions, tasks and student work products.

- Student and parent conversations indicated that teachers provide them with ongoing feedback and support to help students achieve their goals. For example, parents reported that teachers use Pupil Path and anecdotal logs to communicate student progress to parents. Parents are informed by school staff of opportunities for their children to engage in career opportunities such as nursing, biotechnology, dentistry, medicine, finance and forensics.

- School leaders communicate high expectations for instruction in the Danielson Framework for Teaching elements through their observation reports by providing teachers with next steps toward the school goals to improve their practice. For example, next steps are directed to teachers to set clear learning targets, communicate assessment criteria to students, create thought-provoking and rigorous essential questions, and to design tasks that challenged student thinking.
Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum  Rating: Developing

Findings
Curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills inconsistently across grades, subjects, and for ELLs and students with disabilities. Curricula and academic tasks reflect planning to provide students access to the curricula and tasks.

Impact
School-wide curricula and tasks are in the process of emphasizing higher order thinking and habits for all students. Lessons plans inconsistently reflect the use of student work and data as a means to alter tasks toward cognitive engagement for all learners.

Supporting Evidence
- In a global studies curriculum map, instructional strategies such as the use of a word wall, modeling, use of dictionaries, and vocabulary building activities were evident to provide access for English language learners. However, other curricular documents referred only to heterogeneous grouping as a strategy to provide access to ELLs.

- A document review reflected the use of planning tools to incorporate rigor and higher order thinking skills into lessons. For example, curricula reflect the use of the DOK wheel as a tool to formulate questions for discussion and the ACE (answer, cite, expand) strategy to increase students’ use of text evidence to support claims. Although, some curricula reflect planning for standards addressed, content knowledge and assessments, only some tasks demonstrate evidence of instructional strategies that emphasize higher order thinking skills.

- Some lesson plans reflect the use of student work and data to refine tasks toward cognitive engagement. For example, a global studies lesson plan demonstrates that the teacher will collect annotated student work to assess students' skills in forming and supporting claims with evidence from primary sources. However, other lesson plans demonstrate some planning for the use student work or data as a means of refining tasks.