Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Food and Finance High School
High School 02M288
525 West 50th Street,
Manhattan
NY 10019

Principal: Roger Turgeon

Date of review: March 4, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Richard Cintron
The School Context

Food and Finance High School is a high school with 443 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 41% Black, 49% Hispanic, 4% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 44% of the students enrolled and girls account for 56%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 88.0%.

School Quality Criteria

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<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>Well Developed</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>Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</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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<thead>
<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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<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>Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<th>Systems for Improvement</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
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<td><strong>To what extent does the school…</strong></td>
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<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>Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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Findings
Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching strategies strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports for all learners. Student discussion and work products reflect high levels of student thinking, participation and ownership.

Impact
In the vast majority of classrooms, all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, are motivated and actively engaged in classroom activities and discussions, resulting in them producing meaningful work products that prepare them for college and career.

Supporting Evidence
- Teachers used a variety of strategies to ensure all students could access the material. In a tenth grade social studies class, students used graphic organizers to record their findings and organize their thoughts. In a tenth grade English language arts class, students used leveled text on the same topic to engage in discussions within their groups.

- Purposeful grouping of students was seen in the vast majority of classrooms. In a ninth grade English language arts class, students were grouped based on a learning style survey. In a tenth grade English language arts class, students were grouped heterogeneously based on reading level. In a ninth grade mathematics class, students were grouped based on results from previous assessments within the unit. When asked, students spoke to how they frequently work in different groups depending on the class and the topic that is being covered.

- In classrooms visited, questioning strategies to promote higher levels of students thinking and discussion were consistently seen. In a tenth grade English language arts class, as students worked in groups discussing a piece of text and potential evidence to defend their claim, when students asked the teacher questions, instead of answering them, the teacher redirected the questions back to the group or to the entire class. In a ninth grade mathematics class, when students asked questions regarding the solutions that other students had written on the board, instead of answering them, the teacher asked students to reflect on the previous problem they had discussed earlier in the lesson and then waited for a different student to answer the question.

- When asked, the vast majority of students could articulate what they were learning and why it was important. In a ninth grade mathematics class where students were learning about how to write an equation of a line when only given two points on the line, students explained how today's lesson built upon yesterday's and how they would use this information in future lessons on creating equations. In a ninth grade English language arts class, students explained how learning a strategy called P.E.E. (state the point, use evidence, and explain) helps them in all of their classes with identifying points of view from a text, supporting them with evidence, and explaining them verbally or in writing.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based collaborations. Distributed leadership structures allow teachers to have a voice in key decisions across the school.

Impact
The work of teacher teams has strengthened teacher collaboration resulting in improvements to pedagogical practices and a stronger voice in key decisions affecting supports for student achievement.

Supporting Evidence
- Teachers articulated how they share best instructional practices connected to the school’s instructional focus and to targeted groups of high need students. For example, the special education teachers created a document outlining best practices for how to support all struggling students, outlining individual strategies that work or don’t work, as well as the environment in which they learn best. English language arts teachers have developed a number of strategies to support the school’s instructional focus of increasing literacy across all subject areas through reading and argumentative writing with the focus on claims and counter claims.

- Teachers formally meet once a week in their teacher teams to work on their practice, analyze student work and discuss specific instructional strategies related to increasing student achievement for struggling students. In addition to these formal meetings, all teachers have common planning time during the week and frequently meet to continue conversations or to plan intervisitations connected to areas of individual need. Teachers spoke to how both of these collaborations have been instrumental in helping to improve their practice. For example, several teachers spoke to how they have seen growth in their ability to develop higher order questions and to plan differentiated support for struggling students. The principal spoke to how during observations, teacher’s questioning skills have shown an increase as has their ability to differentiate support to struggling students.

- Teacher leaders spoke to how they regularly meet with the principal as part of the school’s Staff Development Committee to discuss professional development to support the school’s instructional focus, the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and student achievement trends as well as to collaboratively plan support for staff on a school, group, and individual level. Teacher leaders are working with a consultant from Teaching Matters, to further develop their facilitation skills and strengthen their ability to lead the work of their teacher teams. Teacher voice is heard during school-wide meetings, through teacher reflection sheets after professional development, and during post-observation conferences.
Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum  Rating: Well Developed

Findings
School leaders and faculty ensure curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Higher order skills are emphasized in curricula and tasks in a coherent way.

Impact
All students, including English language learners (ELLs), students with disabilities and highest achieving learners, are consistently exposed to higher level tasks across grades and content areas, are required to demonstrate their thinking, and are provided with the necessary supports to access those tasks leading to college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence
- All departments have clearly defined criteria for what students need to know and what skills they need to master to move to the next grade ensuring coherency. A review of the English department’s expectations showed that in ninth and tenth grade students are expected to cite strong textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly. In eleventh and twelfth grade students are expected to determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis. In math, as students move from algebra to geometry they are expected to master modeling, functions, and deciphering word problems. As they move from geometry to algebra two they are expected to solve multi-step problems and provide explanations.

- The school has created templates for curriculum maps, unit plans and lesson plans that have been adopted by the vast majority of teachers and has developed a process for teachers and administrators to peer review all teacher work products. The principal was able to show evidence of feedback across all content areas and grades that had been used to revise curricula to ensure alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards as well as the school’s instructional focus.

- A review of curricula documents revealed purposeful planning aligned to the school instructional focus of increasing literacy across all subject areas through reading and argumentative writing with the focus on claims and counter claims. For example, tasks from social studies unit plans asked students to defend a position using evidence from a variety of primary and secondary sources. Tasks in mathematics asked students to solve problems and defend their answers in writing using evidence.

- Lesson plans across all content areas revealed that tasks consistently emphasize higher order thinking skills such as citing evidence, developing logical arguments, analyzing information from multiple sources, and applying concepts in real world situations. In an eleventh grade English language arts lesson plan, students are required to draw connections from texts and materials read about existentialism and connect their learnings to the text No Exit. In a psychology lesson plan, students are asked develop claims and counter claims using the most relevant information from several different texts.
Quality Indicator: 2.2 Assessment  Rating: Proficient

Findings
Data from common assessments is used to adjust curricula and instruction. Teachers regularly check for understanding and use the information to make instructional adjustments.

Impact
The school’s use of common assessments, data analysis and regular use of checks for understanding allows teachers to determine student progress towards goals and adjust instruction accordingly to meet the needs of all students.

Supporting Evidence
- Common end of unit performance assessments are administered in all core subject areas and the data is used by teachers to adjust curricula and instructional strategies. During a mathematics teacher team meeting, teachers discussed how they could increase student use of evidence during discussions by incorporate higher level questions into all DoNow questions and asking students to work in pairs or small groups to solve them. To ensure that all students could access the material, teachers agreed to start with problems from previous days lessons and have students identify why the problem was correct or incorrect based on evidence from material they had already learned. Teachers then agreed to visit each other’s classrooms to observe how each teacher would implement the strategy and assess its effectiveness.

- In classrooms observed, teachers consistently used a variety of methods to check for understanding, such as, exit slips, one-on-one conferencing with individual students as well as groups of students, and purposeful questioning. For example, in ninth grade mathematics class, students were asked to write individual reflections about how today’s lesson built upon what they had previously known on the topic of the equation of a line. In a tenth grade English language arts team teaching class, both teachers conferenced with specific students as well as groups of students to ensure they understood the task and were using each other and the texts as resources for completing the assignment.

- Across classrooms, teachers consistently asked students to peer and self-assess their own work and the work of their partners. For example, in an eleventh grade English language arts class, students worked in pair using a rubric to ensure they understood the task and to peer assess each other work. In a eleventh grade mathematics class, students worked in pair to grade each other’s work and offer feedback towards next steps for solving similar problems. In both classrooms, when students were stuck, they used their classmates as a support to help them continue to move forward with the task.
Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff. Staff has established a culture that provides all students with clear, focused, and effective feedback, guidance, and ongoing support with college and career.

Impact
A culture of mutual accountability exists between all staff members. Students are motivated to own their own educational experience and support their peers so that they are prepared for college and career decisions.

Supporting Evidence
- The school has a very detailed professional development calendar that was collaboratively created with the school based Staff Development Committee and is aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, the school's instructional focus, as well as the work of creating and modifying curriculum. The school's Staff Development Committee frequently facilitates or co-facilitates with the administration and several teachers referenced how this change in practice has allowed teachers to take a much greater ownership role in professional learning and increased the school’s ability to highlight best practices across all departments. The principal spoke to how this collaborative process has helped strengthen teacher’s ability to implement the school's instructional focus, which is evident in feedback given on teacher observations, and has allowed staff to better support each other both during professional learning and during individual free time.

- A review of the school's faculty handbook clearly outlines all staff professional responsibilities and expectations and is regularly reviewed each school year to ensure familiarity and relevance. Topics include the school’s expectations connected to the school’s instructional focus, city-wide instructional expectations, interactions and communications with parents and students to ensure social and emotional support for students, as well as all other professional expectations and responsibilities.

- The school offers a wide array of supports for students starting in the ninth grade to help them take ownership of their own educational experience. Guidance counselors and teachers help students to set very high expectations and work with them on a regular basis to expose them to a variety of college and career options and consistently partner with them so that students can eventually take full ownership of their own learning. During the student meeting, students spoke at length about all of the opportunities available to them outside of the school through the school's strong internship program. Students also spoke about how these opportunities, along with the opportunities they have to regularly mentor younger ninth and tenth grade students at the school, have prepared them for the responsibilities associated with college or a career in the food industry and have given them a sense that they control their own success.