The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Celebration** to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Focus** to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as **Additional Finding**. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School


School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td>Additional</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<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>Finding</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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 Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<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 Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
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Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

The school’s approach to culture building, discipline, and social-emotional support is based on the Lincoln Citizens program, which emphasizes the development of core values, and the small learning community structure of the five academies.

Impact

Staff of each academy know the students well and personalize attendance, social-emotional learning, and guidance supports, and meaningfully involve students in decisions that affect the adoption of academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- The school’s approach to building culture is rooted in the belief that each student can be guided to become a reflective thinker and independent learner in a safe and supportive environment. The Restorative Circles program has been part of the school for the past three years. The commitment to moving towards restorative practices and training teachers is reflected in the five cohorts, comprising 43 staff members, that have participated in the certification program. All ninth- and tenth-grade students participate in an advisory period once a week based on a social-emotional learning curriculum created in collaboration with a partner community based organization.

- The school leaders adopted the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program that recognizes students when they display exemplary academic and personal behaviors as Lincoln Citizens. The program emphasizes the school’s core values of grit, growth, commitment, and empathy. Students stated that they feel safe, enjoy coming to school, and “feel respected by the staff.” With respect comes an increased level of safety. Occurrence reports indicate that there has been a decrease in incidents over the past two years. In 2015-16 there were 134 occurrences, and in 2016-17 there were 78 occurrences in the same time period. Parents stated that the school is supportive and a safe place for their children. Students informed choices of rewards and celebrations such as a screening of the movie, *He Named Me Malala*, for those recognized for empathy, and a camping trip for students who exhibited the core value of grit, defined as perseverance, self-control, self-advocacy, hard work, and patience.

- Discipline is aligned with social-emotional services to support students and create a safe environment. A social worker works in the deans’ office to support students in crisis and help them develop positive decision-making habits. For students who are under-credited and have a history of repeated disciplinary infractions, a Pathways Program supports academic and behavioral success by integrating a paraprofessional and guidance counselor into the classroom.

- The leaders of the academies in five small learning communities develop partnerships with parents to support students’ success. Academies target student interventions through common planning time, report card conferences, core values celebrations, senior buddies, and attendance buddies. The attendance committee is improving attendance through parent outreach, celebrations, and by targeting students for outreach and counseling. The overall attendance rate rose from 83 percent to 86 percent in 2016 while the percentage of students with high attendance improved from 54 percent to 63 percent, which is higher than this school’s comparison group. In addition, the attendance team focuses on specific low-attendance days throughout the year. The automated phone messenger reaches 855 families a day.
Area of Focus

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

While teaching practices across classrooms are aligned to the curricula and the Danielson Framework for Teaching, the articulated belief that students learn best through student-led discussions is not yet coherent across all classrooms. The multiple entry points for learners in most classrooms do not always include high-quality extensions for all learners.

Impact

Tasks, discussions, and student work products are engaging to most learners and reflect critical thinking and participation; however, they do not always demonstrate student ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders articulated a belief that “Learning is done by the learner.” They implemented a program, Read20, which ensures that all students read academic texts in every subject area for 20 minutes each week. All content-area lessons address the instructional shifts through incorporating contemporary issues while integrating the Common Core Learning Standards. Instructional shifts were observed in classroom instruction, in particular students citing evidence from the text to support a claim. In one class, students used sentence starters such as, “I agree with the author’s claim” and then added their own evidence to support the claim. In another class, students annotated text to highlight the author’s perspective. Most lessons focus on real world connections and highlight student engagements and discussion through student voice, and collaborative small group work. One lesson focused on the essential questions around the ethical production and consumption of goods. During this lesson, students cited text evidence to support their claim that clothing manufacturers should be held responsible for worker safety.

- There was evidence of student thinking and class discussion at levels three and four on the Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) scale, but this was not coherent across all classrooms. In a social studies class, students read the article, “A Generation of Men Raised by Women.” The students annotated the article and then debated agreement with the idea that “fatherless boys inevitably suffer delinquent tendencies.” One student argued to the contrary, “Because there was no father in the home, the hard working mother could be a role model and the children would be educated and continue on to a good job to support their own family.”

- Student work products consistently demonstrated engagement, collaboration, and student voice. Most students were engaged in challenging tasks, although not all tasks included entry points for advanced learners and there were a few missed opportunities to address struggling students. In a math class, the students were working on a culminating group project. The students matched the equation on one index card with a visual illustration on a poster board and debated to clarify how to make the matches.
Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 1.1 Curriculum

**Rating:** Well Developed

Findings

School leaders ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Care Learning Standards and focus on incorporating non-fiction texts across all grades and subjects. Curricula and academic tasks are embedded in lessons that emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects for all students.

Impact

Across grades and subject areas, curricula and academic tasks coherently promote college and career readiness. A diversity of learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, must demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- The school’s approach to integrating the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts include implementing the Read20 program weekly for all grades and subject areas. The plan for one lesson focused on building habits of sustained reading of non-fiction texts, such as an excerpt from an article titled “Origins of the Unconscious.” The instructional focus on higher-order thinking questions in all subject areas builds the skills needed for success on the ELA Regents exam in junior year as well as for college. Essential questions are similar across grades and subjects and referenced in lesson plans. For example, the essential question in one lesson plan asks students if they are responsible as individuals to take care of their own health. Another lesson plan includes questions about how globalization affects the economy of the United States and the city of Detroit in particular.

- A review of curricular documents revealed academic tasks that emphasize rigorous tasks and higher-order skills which are consistently embedded throughout the units across grades and subjects for all students. Units of study and lesson plans are planned with rigorous tasks so all students have opportunities to demonstrate their thinking. A math lesson plan requires students to critique each other’s explanations of standard versus vertex form of a function. A social studies lesson requires students to work in groups to explore the independence movements in India and Africa, and to respond to prompts such as, “Hypothesize why the British government would create a policy of disarmament.” A science lesson plan on genes, chromosomes, and other genetic material outlines how students will analyze information from videos about base pairing and replication of genes.

- The special education teachers team with other teachers to plan for scaffolds so that all students, including students with disabilities and ELLs, are engaged in rigorous tasks, with the support they need to successfully demonstrate their thinking. Many tasks include supports such as glossaries in order to promote academic language acquisition. For example, an ELA lesson plan includes two versions of the same text, one with vocabulary supports and a self-assessment checklist and the other with no modifications. The teacher noted that the version without the modifications is designed for students who are reading on grade-level. Another plan outlines how a special education teacher will work with students who under-performed on the pre-assessment to provide one-on-one conferencing to address any misconceptions immediately.
Findings
The school uses data from common assessments to track student progress toward goals. Across classrooms, teachers consistently use exit tickets and self-assessment checklists to check for student understanding.

Impact
The analysis of assessment data from practice Regents exams and ongoing checks for understanding at weekly collaborative meetings leads to the adjustment of curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence
- The administration and staff have created a calendar for administering common assessments such as practice Regents exams, throughout the year. Shared content assessments are graded through Datacation, which quickly tabulates the results for teachers to analyze at weekly content collaboration meetings. At these Friday meetings, teachers share results and discuss adjustments to curricula and weekly lesson plans. Several lesson plans reference the results of an exit ticket from a prior lesson, or a pre-assessment administered at the beginning of the unit. One lesson plan specifies that the next day’s lesson will build on the performance of the students “with a follow-up activity based on today’s reading.”

- Teachers track student performance using a tool that delineates challenges students face, strategies attempted, and the ideas that arise from brainstorming to refine and adjust lessons. Teachers in the upper academy analyzed the results of a common writing task modeled on the essays included in social studies Regents exams. One teacher used the tracking tool to identify students in his class who needed help with analyzing key ideas. The teacher then determined that he would re-teach a two-step process of summarizing key ideas before drafting essays. Another teacher revised instruction to include more structure scaffolding for ELLs with an emphasis on providing definitions for frequently used terms on Regents exams. Teachers look at student work and data during common planning time and team meetings and delve deeply into the data to determine adjustments that are needed to curricula and pedagogy.

- Across classrooms, teachers use trackers, questions, and exit tickets to check for student understanding of the lesson. For example, the exit ticket for one class asks students to demonstrate their understanding of insolation by writing about its correlation with the variation in temperature from season to season. Teachers use group work time to circulate and assess the skill level of students. For example, in a ninth-grade ELA class, the teacher checked how well students annotated the text, summarized the text, and responded to specific questions, all skills emphasized schoolwide. Formative assessment tools, such as quick polls and an internet-based student response program, help teachers determine groupings or scaffolds for subsequent activities. In one class, the teacher planned a quick-write activity to assess how well students were able to include one piece of evidence from an article to support their claims. There are self-assessment practices embedded in lessons through the use of checklists and rubrics. The exit ticket from a science lesson asks students to assess their own understanding of genetic replication with an explanation to illustrate their understanding.
## Additional Finding

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide staff training connected to the elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. School leaders and staff consistently communicate high expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness to students.

### Impact

Communication through staff training has led to a culture of mutual accountability for high expectations of student achievement. Guidance and advisement support reinforces the expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers hold themselves accountable for implementing the school’s belief that “learning is done by the learner.” Together, they designed a schoolwide professional development plan to reinforce the expectations around this focus. School leaders expect that teachers, who are trained in facilitative leadership, will use protocols during teacher team meetings to discuss lesson plans, academic tasks, and student work as well as provide peer feedback. School leaders and staff stated that it is an expectation that all teacher teams utilize systems such as GoogleDocs to keep track of minutes and to document the rotation of teacher leadership roles. Teachers agreed that they share their action plans and findings about progress toward goals with colleagues and school leaders. For example, English teachers examined students’ writing samples to evaluate students’ understanding of analyzing evidence within a text and shared their findings and their strategies to address them with school leaders.

- The college office communicates high expectations through a four-year series of presentations to students designed to support the college process from grade nine to grade twelve. Students agreed that the college office offers information about the college application process, such as reminding them about fee waivers at City universities, as well as reinforcing skills needed for interviewing, writing essays, personal statements, and resumes. Selected students and their families participate in the Abraham Lincoln Educational Advancement Program (ALEAP), which reinforces the expectations of pursuing a college career through workshops, celebrations of academic performance, and college tours. Seventy-nine percent of students earned enough credit to be on track to graduate in four years which is the same as the rate at similar schools. As of mid-March, more than 80 percent of graduating students applied to college or trade school.

- School leaders and guidance counselors regularly monitor cohort performance and provide interventions for students who are deemed to be off-track for graduation. Interventions also address on-track students to ensure they make expected progress. Students track their own progress toward completion of courses and graduation requirements. Students in an English class write weekly reflections about the skills and content they have learned, noting in particular how this learning is preparing them for college. One student reflected on the changes she had made in her study habits that resulted in a trend of higher scores on assessments, essays, and classwork from February to March. In particular, students reported that the feedback provided by teachers on assignments and on Pupilpath, helps them understand the progress they are making. The Horizons Academy, which serves high-need, at-risk students, provides academic tutoring, college counseling, and job placement. One student stated, “Through the Horizons Program I was given college counseling, SAT prep, math tutoring, and English prep. I also have an understanding of job readiness.”
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

Findings
The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that promote the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. Teacher teams in each small learning community analyze instructional practices and assessment data for their students, and identify target students systematically throughout the year.

Impact
The instructional capacity of teachers and schoolwide instructional coherence has increased along with academic achievement for all learners. Teacher team analyses result in shared improvements in teacher practice and mastery for goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence
- Teachers are engaged in several collaborative inquiry teams organized by grade, content, English as a New Language (ENL), and small learning community. These teams engage in cycles of inquiry that focus on looking at student work and designing strategies to reinforce the alignment of pedagogy and learning. Teachers on one team used a protocol to look at student work and stated that the team is responsible for analyzing student work, designing scaffolds, and creating common assessments to inform adjustments to curricula. The consistent emphasis on improving writing through citing text evidence is reflected in the trend in improved outcomes for students taking the Common Core English Regents exam. Overall, students passing the exam with a score of 85 or higher improved from 10 percent in 2015 to 37 percent in 2016 while the percentage of ELLs passing the exam grew from 41 percent to 55 percent. The Common Core Algebra I passing rate for students with disabilities grew from seven percent to 26 percent.

- Documents from teacher team meetings indicate the coherent use of protocols and structures to look at student work and track progress across grades and subjects. One protocol includes having teachers identify the skills that higher-level students can perform but that other students struggle to master. Teachers then identify the scaffolds they could provide to help struggling students. Records from various team meetings reflect the schoolwide focus on having students cite evidence to support a claim. In an English class, a student discussed that an idea in a text deserves to be annotated because “it just stands out. It feels important.” The rubric for a document-based essay requires students to reference relevant material from at least four documents. Minutes from a ninth-grade academy meeting show the same focus on developing tasks that require students to support the central idea “with specific and relevant textual evidence from the passage.” New teachers spoke about how the work being done at teacher team meetings has improved their instructional practice. “The ENL teachers share strategies for the ELL students that positively impacts our teaching.” Another teacher stated, “Sharing best practices results in improvement of student achievement.”

- One common planning team from the Upper Academy, identified off-track students in two graduation cohorts who met the minimum criteria for credits and Regents exams passed and assigned them to teachers from the team for additional skill-based interventions. Teachers met weekly to discuss the progress these target students were making. The inquiry team discovered that when students with specific skill deficiencies were paired with teachers in that content area, then performance on subsequent Regents exams improved. For example, six out of seven students who were paired with an English teacher passed the ELA Regents exam. The team determined this initiative will be expanded to include all teachers in the academy thus providing more targeted content support.