Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Boys and Girls High School

High school 16K455

1700 Fulton St.
Brooklyn
NY 11213

Principal: Grecian Harrison

Dates of Review:
May 1, 2017 - May 2, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio
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>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
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</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Developing</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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### School Culture

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<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>Area of Celebration</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

*To what extent does the school...*

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<tr>
<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>
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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>
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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>
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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 Finding</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>
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Area of Celebration

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
School leaders communicate high expectations on writing strategies and planning to staff. Structures are in place to inform parents of their children’s progress on credit accumulation and school expectations.

Impact
Staff members are provided training and held accountable for meeting high expectations. Parents understand and are made aware of the academic progress of their children.

Supporting Evidence

- Structures are in place to communicate to staff expectations related to the instructional foci of the school. Teachers reported that professional training has been provided on using the Writing is Thinking through Strategic Inquiry (WITsi) strategy. Teachers reported that use of the strategy has led to an increase in the amount of writing with students writing five paragraph essays. In addition, during staff meetings, school leaders convey their expectations on using data to inform instruction and recently conducted a professional learning session to support teachers in this focus. Furthermore, weekly newsletters serve as reminders of upcoming professional learning sessions for teachers and indicate the instructional focus.

- Post-observation feedback provides another method for communicating high expectations across the school. A review of reports indicates feedback on using Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) for planning higher-order thinking questions, using formative data to plan instruction, and the promotion of student engagement through pair and group work. One teacher reported that feedback has helped them in developing a continuum of tiered questions to maintain a balance of DOK level one to three questions. Another teacher stated that her supervisor suggested that she incorporate more group work so that students can engage in student-to-student discussion.

- Guidance counselors and teachers send flyers on college fairs and arrange trips to universities like Morgan State. In addition, parents acknowledge the efforts of staff members to help build a culture where sports and academics are equally important by holding students accountable for their studies and communicating with parents on their progress. Parents reported that teachers use online grading systems, emails, and other forms of communication to provide feedback on their children’s academic progress in school. Furthermore, several parents have reported that teachers have supported them and their children with extra tutoring and other programs, thus leading students towards a pathway to graduation.
Area of Focus

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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Findings

Although teachers use rubrics aligned to the curricula to determine students’ needs, checks for understanding and self-assessment are inconsistent across classes.

Impact

Assessment practices have yet to lead to actionable feedback for students and clear on-the-spot adjustments to meet students learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Across subject areas, the school uses rubrics and other assessments to gauge student understanding on tasks. In addition, students report that they receive their grades using an online grading system. A review of some student work and assessments reflects grades with check marks or levels. Feedback reflecting strengths, areas of growth, and actionable next steps is reflected in only some work products. On a social studies task rubric, comments include, “Provide a chart to show the social status of the third estate and why they were unhappy,” and on another similar task, “Provide examples and details to enhance knowledge of the topics.” Yet, other work products and assessments only indicated the grade with no feedback or comments with unclear next steps.

- During an interview, students shared examples of the types of feedback they receive from teachers and peers. One student indicated that his teacher helped him understanding how to use the process of elimination in choosing the most appropriate answers on a multiple choice test. Another student stated that he needs to focus on answering all parts of the question because he can get partial credit on his exams if he attempts a response. Other students were unable to share strategies they were provided by teachers to improve the quality of their responses.

- Across classrooms, teachers varied in their use of questioning and prompting of students to gear them towards having a clear understanding of the task. In an Integrated Co-Teaching English as a New Language class, one teacher prompted students and used tools to help students understand what the question was asking and clarified any misconceptions. In some other classes, although teachers actively asked or prompted students, students still experienced misunderstandings. In addition, although students stated that there were some opportunities to reflect on their work, several response on how they would revise their own work seemed unclear. Although some students stated they would go back and revise their writing or answer the questions fully, strategies for improvement were not stated or unknown.
**Quality Indicator:** 1.1 Curriculum

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<th>Rating:</th>
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**Findings**

The school staff is in the process of developing rigorous curricula and using data consistently to refine tasks and planning documents.

**Impact**

The curricula are beginning to reflect tasks to immerse students in higher-order thinking and offer access to all students in order for them to be cognitively engaged.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In a Living Environment lesson plan, six stations are designed to incorporate between two to four tasks, each aligned to DOK levels ranging from one to three. In a station, one task incorporates a short reading on predators and asks students to determine how the mesopredator population most likely controlled before the apex predator wolves were removed from the food web. Another station, the task at first focuses on skills, such as prediction, but then asks students to draw a conclusion on which species has more speed based on three skeletal structures and to explain their thinking. However, this level of planning to support higher-order thinking was not present across all curricular documents.

- Some of the guided questions and tasks across lesson plans primarily focused on DOK levels one and two. In an algebra lesson plan, guiding questions focused mainly on recall, comparisons, and cause and effect skills. In a grade nine English Language Arts (ELA) lesson plan, questions included, “What was stolen at this party?” and “If you would change one thing about the world, what would it be?” In a self-contained special education ELA lesson plan, students were asked to use three types of graphic organizers to define words. In only one graphic organizer, students were asked to develop a question about the word anthology.

- In a geometry lesson plan, the teacher indicated that the lesson would be differentiated based on what the various groups of students will be asked to do with no guidance as to the use of data or how the lesson would be altered. In an ELA lesson plan, although the task included a graphic organizer and a use of a dictionary, there was no indication as to the type of data used to plan this activity, and all students were asked to complete the same task. In a social studies lesson plan, although individual modifications were listed for students with disabilities, several of them were not utilized in the lesson, nor did the plan indicate how data or student work was used to modify the lesson.
### Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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**Findings**

Teaching strategies have yet to consistently provide multiple entry points in challenging tasks as demonstrated in discussions and work products for all students.

**Impact**

Missed opportunities for engaging students in rigorous tasks lead to uneven levels of thinking and participation.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In an Integrated Co-Teaching Living Environment class, students were grouped into stations where each member was provided a multi-level task to help determine how the environment interacts with living and non-living components. Some students worked on Regents-style questions to produce an extended response in writing while other groups collected data on either owl pellets or bones to determine relationships and draw conclusions from their observations. In addition, some tasks included WITsi strategies such as “because,” “but,” “so,” and appositives. In each group, students worked together to meet the learning objectives for each task. This level of engagement was present in only some classes.

- In another Living Environment class for students with disabilities, students were all given the same task to dissect pellets. Students were provided with a graphic organizer to input their noticings and determine the type of mystery animal based on the objects found in the pellet. Although some students attempted the task, others chose not to engage with the pellet. In addition, some students stated that they felt this was an easy task.

- Some lessons were teacher-directed which only allowed for some student engagement. In a geometry class, students were asked to determine the relationship of angles in a circle. Many of the questions were directed by the teacher to the students. In addition, although students were seated in pairings, engagement between students regarding the task was not observed consistently throughout the class. Similarly, in an ELA class, most of the questioning about the text was driven by the teacher which only engaged a few students in the class.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: Proficient |

Findings

School leaders support teachers through frequent cycles of observations, effective feedback, and analysis of student work and data. There is an effective system of professional development created using teacher observation data to inform decisions.

Impact

Analysis of teacher data and training opportunities increase schoolwide practices, and teachers implement strategies that promote growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct observations frequently based on pre-determined cycles decided by the cabinet. Thus far, there have been five cycles of observations. Feedback is provided using student work and data from classroom observations to support teachers’ next steps in instruction. Reports indicate the level of student engagement in class, as to whether they were on task, to help formulate the type of feedback. One report shares actual student responses to indicate the level of teacher and student interaction. A review of teachers’ feedback reflects that school leaders provide resources for support, such as articles and one- to two-week timelines for implementation of new suggestions, and follow up for accountability.

- Teachers are assigned to work with peer collaborative and model teachers based on school leaders’ recommendations. Model and peer collaborative teachers are chosen based on Advance data around areas of strength and on their teaching abilities to provide support to their colleagues. Other out-of-school coaches are provided to support staff to hone in on instructional areas of improvement, especially in math due to decreases in recent Regents performance. One teacher reported that she observed a model teacher to obtain strategies for class management which led to an improvement during her following observation. Similarly, other teachers reported that support from both peer collaborative and model teachers and coaches has helped them plan more effectively and integrate instructional strategies such as WITsi.

- A school-wide professional development plan was developed based on a review of Advance data to support teachers on key areas of growth. This year, a goal for the school was to work on the consistent implementation of the WITsi program to enhance the quality of student extended response writing. Teacher leaders have facilitated WITsi workshops during whole-school professional development to support teachers. Other workshops have been provided on vocabulary development and the implementation of the new school curricula. Teachers report that professional development in these areas has helped improvement their instruction, which is also evident in the increase of effective teachers, based on Advance data.
### Additional Finding

<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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</table>

**Findings**

The majority of teachers engage in structured, inquiry-based grade-level and content teams. Distributive leadership and cabinet-level structures are in place.

**Impact**

Professional collaborations align with school goals to strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers. Teachers have a voice in key instructional decisions that are connected to enhancing teacher practice and student learning needs.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Grade teams meet weekly to discuss data from mock Regents and student work. Teachers use protocols to determine students' strengths and areas for growth and next steps. This term, teams have developed specific action plans to implement based on their review of student work across grades and focus their attention on the use of WIToi strategies to gauge how students are improving across content areas. The eleventh-grade team reviewed mock Regents data and determined that students were not using academic vocabulary in context as well as they had difficulty with the language listed on questions. Teachers implemented several strategies from WIToi and the Frayer Model to assist students with understanding academic vocabulary. In the ninth-grade WIToi team, teachers noticed that students were not writing with volume. Teachers implemented other WIToi strategies including the use of appositives. In addition, teachers report that the focus on WIToi strategies has helped them become more facile with scaffolding and knowing which WIToi strategies to use based on students' needs.

- During a grade-ten team meeting, teachers reviewed a chart for trends in the data based on student work product responses on an appositive task. Based on the trends, teachers discussed how well students were able to retain the WIToi strategy and implement it into their writing. Based on student trends, teachers noticed that several students were able to use the strategy correctly with the exception of two students. Teachers discussed continuing to work with these two students to reinforce the appositive strategy and move into a new strategy with the other students. Teachers shared how the use of this strategy had helped them understand how to look at writing more efficiently. One teacher stated that by implementing these strategies, she now looks at student writing more specifically as a means to provide feedback to students, compared to before where she only looked at capitalization and punctuation.

- The cabinet inquiry team is comprised of school and teacher leaders who look at student work and teacher pedagogy to determine the focus of schoolwide inquiry and professional development. A review of cabinet meeting minutes reflects how the team has noticed that student responses lacked deeper analysis and that classroom teaching needed more rigorous questioning. The team decided to focus on questioning for professional development in addition to reviewing data to determine how students are improving in writing. In addition, teachers report that they wanted more professional development in this area to develop a common language using DOK levels.