Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Research and Service High School
High school 16K669
1700 Fulton St.
Brooklyn
NY 11213

Principal: Allison Farrington

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

Lead Reviewer: AJ Hepworth
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

Research and Service High School serves students in grade 9 through grade 12. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

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></td>
<td></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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</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>Area of Focus</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>
</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
<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>Well Developed</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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings

The schools approach to culture building, discipline, and social-emotional support is informed by a theory of action and strategically aligns professional development, family outreach, and student learning experiences and supports.

Impact

A safe and inclusive environment exists that supports all staff, families, and students in a dignified manner, while recognizing each student's diversity and culture, all of which result in the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- Students express sincere fondness and appreciation for the entire school community’s contributions to their personal sense of inclusivity and family values. The students agree the “Panther family,” (school mascot) defines what it means to be a student in Research and Service High School. Students appreciate the extra time and commitment staff provides to ensure each of their successes. Students state, “It could be Friday afternoon, and no teacher will leave until the last one of us is comfortable and ready to go home.” This sentiment is echoed by so many students who attend all day schooling on Saturdays. In addition to being served meals each day, a special warm cooked breakfast is served every Friday morning to the entire school community, including the other schools who share the campus. Students at breakfast appreciate the vibe, family environment, and opportunities to ensure no tensions exist between schools. Students overwhelmingly feel “this is the best way to engender collaboration and good spirit between staff and schools.” The opportunity for students to be served healthy and satisfying meals, aids in students’ ability to go to class and prepares them to learn, while also being taught life skills pertaining to proper greetings and the use of etiquette.

- A theory of action guides choices made by school leaders regarding communication. School leaders stated, our theory of action makes “this a special place…where students are not afraid to ask for help and talk about either academic or personal concerns to get health services or advocacy [from a counselor] to help them understand.” Students led efforts to create themed spirit weeks, career day structures, and focus group ideas which have furthered their learning experiences. Additionally, students were integral in the success of a recent full expenses paid six-day trip to Paris, France intended to provide highlights of the African-American diaspora and its involvement in post-World War II, along with visits and experiences at many popular tourist destinations.

- Professional development is designed to support teachers’ understanding of the nuances with language using the Danielson Framework for Teaching, especially to create an environment of respect and rapport Teachers decipher the rubric language and identify evidence regarding what good work habits and student engagement look like, thus resulting in effective academic and personal behaviors amongst peers.

- Families are invited to benefit from the in-house food pantry. A variety of food and merchandise are readily available and presented in a “dignified” dedicated store, to assist families support their resilience and persistence with attending school to achieve graduation success. Students shopping in the store stated they appreciate how the merchandise allows them to focus on their schooling more and not having to always worry about feeding themselves, or in some cases, their child.
## Findings

Across classrooms, student work products and thinking are inconsistently supported by efforts to engage students in discussions and differentiated tasks.

## Impact

Students have uneven levels of engagement with appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate inconsistencies of higher-order thinking skills as reflected by their thinking, participation, and student work products across classes.

## Supporting Evidence

- A core belief communicated by school leadership and confirmed by teachers is to engage all learners in demonstrating higher-order thinking skills through the use of scaffolds and graphic organizers, especially during small group instruction. For example, a U.S. History multiple paragraph outline aided students' completion of a Document Based Question (DBQ) by providing structures to support their explanations and conclusion based on a thesis statement they generated. Similarly, a worksheet for use in a Common Core Algebra class presented students a series of scaffolded questions tiered to develop increased comprehension and annotation strategies. However, some of the worksheets and graphic organizers used in other classes did not support the students thinking or provide structures that met the needs of the varied levels of learners. In an English Language Arts (ELA) Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, all students, including those who struggled, were encouraged to annotate a complex text with minimal supports. Most students were limited to oral directions and were not able to demonstrate critical analysis. Furthermore, several of the other classes provided limited differentiated tasks for groups of students, although lesson plans demonstrated more purposeful opportunities.

- An observation of a small group discussion in a science class about which is more stable, a food chain or food web, was an impromptu conversation led by the teacher based on student understanding of the do now question. The teacher guided the discussion and several students responded accordingly. Although the conversation demonstrated student understanding, it was limited in its ability for students to highlight critical thinking, as the questions used to build the conversation often required only one word answers. Additionally, students in other classes were mostly engaged in independent work that did not create many opportunities for group discussion. Students were engaged with their individual tasks, therefore limiting a core value communicated by school leadership. During a Capstone class, students were expected to pick a quote from a list and justify their reasoning by making a personal connection with it and discussing it with a partner; however, the teacher selected a few students who briefly spoke directly to the teacher instead of as was intended.

- During a geometry lesson, a teacher asked questions repeatedly in an attempt to have students understand the difference between dividing by zero and dividing into zero. However, all students struggled with understanding and correctly identifying the difference. Although students eventually came to the conclusion through trial and error, they did not demonstrate an understanding. During the prompted questions, the teacher minimally used scaffolds, visual support, or alternative questions. However, she did eventually provide an analogy that dividing pizza by no people is not possible. Opportunities to support the lesson with additional scaffolds were missed.
## Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### Findings

Teaching resources are purposefully designed by teachers to align with the Common Core Learning Standards and are planned and revised with feedback across grades and subjects to prepare students for the Regents exams.

### Impact

College and career readiness skills are promoted across courses and core content areas by planning documents for a diversity of learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- Unit maps and daily lesson plans are instructional supporting documents developed to ensure the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts are embedded into curricula accordingly, while being cognizant of the sporadic attendance for many students in this transfer school serving over-aged and under-credited students. The unit plans build coherence across content areas by identifying the specific content and skill taught for both whole group and small group instruction, and absent students. A U.S. History marking period instructional plan identifies all key concepts to be taught in conjunction with the citywide instructional expectations. The specific learning objectives are also identified for what students will be able to do and how they will be assessed, including reference to each thematic essay.

- All daily lesson plans identify the lesson objective in terms of what students will be able to demonstrate as a result of the intended lesson. An ELA lesson plan document addressing student reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition, includes several narrative texts with document analysis questions to challenge student’s ability to read, annotate, and determine central idea. Another ELA lesson plan document is written so students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of literary skill and techniques by completing the comprehension text-dependent questions based on a novel. Common Core Learning Standards connected to analyzing a particular point of view and determining the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text are essential to the lesson.

- Lesson plans are adjusted through reflection and analysis of student work samples and those revisions are memorialized on unit action plans. Teachers collaboratively review each unit plan and all interim assessment data to guide the adjustments and subsequently determine on-going opportunities for students relative to if they need more time spent on practicing how to write a particular essay, or structures outside of the classroom that meet their needs, such as PM or Saturday school. Additionally, when designing a reteach lesson, based on assessment data gaps, instruction for groups of students is discussed, for all students including those at the highest level of achievement.

- Several graphic organizers used to support the instructional goal of writing across the curriculum were generated by teachers after reflecting on students submitted work samples. Purposeful organization of paragraphs, additional pivotal questions, and suggestions for completion of the task have been planned and revised on pre-existing documents using the multiple paragraph outlines to ensure cognitive engagement by all students.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers focus on the instructional goal of assessment and develop feedback structures that are aligned with the school’s curricula to determine student progress towards credit accumulation and graduation.

Impact

Assessment results allow for actionable feedback to students and teachers and are used to adjust curricula and instruction. Additionally, the mock assessment results are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- In discussing the feedback they receive on their work, most students were able to articulate clear next steps for improvement, particularly as it related to comments on their writing samples. Students generally felt the feedback, especially from their one-on-one conferences, allowed them to be more thoughtful, clear, and organized so they could build the skills necessary for success on their required Regents exams. Several students expressed how the feedback and opportunities to improve their work is “more than enough…we have access to everything we need to make sure we get better,” and “They actually stay and give us time and work more than they are supposed to until whenever, [so we get it right], for the last student.”

- Teachers provide Regent exam rubrics with assignments to consistently reinforce the skills necessary for success on the summative assessment, and students receive actionable feedback regarding their achievement using the rubric as a tool. Furthermore, checklists accompany many free-response essays to guide development. Graded papers include written feedback from the teacher with reasons and explanations for the grade assigned. For example, for a thematic essay in U.S. History, a teacher suggested a student discuss how the Dred Scott case limited the rights of African Americans and how the Roe v. Wade case limited the rights of woman.

- Mock assessment review forms and error analysis reports are consistently used to determine student progress and determine if curricular adjustments are necessary. Review of an assessment review form used after administration of a Living Environment interim assessment, identified the science standards each question addressed and if it was developed as rigorously as the Regents exam. Additionally, an analysis of the format of each question was identified as recall or application. One of the unit two cellular questions was identified as in need of being changed to emphasize more compare and contrast using different types of thinking maps, thus leading to students being able to better demonstrate identifying the processes. Furthermore, additional emphasis was also determined as being needed in annotation and sentence structure.

- A currently piloted program using data analysis in ELA and social studies is intended to be rolled out next year across classes, with an emphasis in ICT classes, for its ability to provide greater explicit identification of the rubric-based criteria’s strengths and weaknesses, thus facilitating adjustments with curricula planning.
**Additional Finding**

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders empower teacher leaders and consistently communicate high expectations regarding professionalism, building culture, and pedagogy to the entire staff. Staff also establishes a culture of learning that regularly communicates high expectations relative to college and career readiness through partnerships with students.

**Impact**

School leaders established systems of training support accountability regarding high expectations by teachers. Additionally, teachers’ ongoing and detailed feedback to students prepares them for college or career after high school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Staff receive frequent professional development from both school leaders and their peers to further establish a culture of professionalism connected to all elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. A recent professional development session, led by an English department teacher, focused on inquiry work and student rhetorical analysis. Attendees reviewed student work samples to identify patterns and trends relative to what is necessary to meet students learning needs and push them forward. It is an expectation that the inquiry protocols are to be used to further individual learning, pedagogy and teacher teams’ professional responsibilities.

- The professional development plan is designed around four professional learning goals which are communicated to staff. Activities are designed and use appropriate resources to meet the goals. For example, one goal is to support teachers in creating and implementing high-quality feedback to students, thus improving learning outcomes. Teachers also participated in a series of workshops to increase awareness and understanding of assessment results and trends. Furthermore, they were trained in using formative assessments to track students’ progress.

- A variety of communications are used to inform families of their children’s path towards college and career. Parents value the timely and personal nature of the phone calls, texts, emails, and conferences which help them understand credit accumulation, grades, and number of absences. Additionally, many social events are held and connect to celebrating student successes, for example, a Father’s Day barbeque, paint night, and crochet classes.

- Students receive graduation trackers from a variety of school constituents who individually review them with the student to ensure they understand their progress towards graduation. Students can speak to their progress including credit accumulation, required credits, attendance, and Regent exam status. Additionally, students visit colleges and universities to experience “what they will be going through.”
**Additional Finding**

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<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 are engaged in weekly inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals. Additionally, teachers have leadership opportunities.

**Impact**

Teacher’s instructional capacity is strengthened through collaborations and the analysis of their work during inquiry discussions and common planning time. Teachers’ leadership capacity provides a voice to make decisions that affect student learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Weekly professional collaborations occur within departments to review student work evidences students being engaged in deep thinking and Regent’s exam preparation. Teachers use a protocol which identifies a specific meeting objective and helps them create next steps for instruction based on the student work. One teacher reminds the inquiry team their goal is to analyze student work to identify misconceptions or areas for improvement. All participants are given the task and samples of student work to interpret what the student was thinking and if they understand the assigned task. Participants need to be able to cite evidence for their assumptions. Teachers spend the majority of their inquiry time discussing the implications of their work for teaching and assessments for those students whose work was reviewed.

- A social studies department held an inquiry meeting to identify steps to improve the writing of students relative to the depth of detail used throughout an essay. The teacher of one student whose work was used for analysis, recommended they share their findings with the other instructional core teachers. Introduction of the topic with video or use of political cartoons to support challenging concepts was a suggestion by one teacher to help targeted students over the next six days, after which another meeting would follow up with progress report. Additionally, teachers appreciate the opportunity to work cohesively so students become more independent workers through well designed tasks, while also reflecting on what the data tells them, so they can improve on their lessons and units.

- The Instructional Core Team is comprised of the principal, assistant principal, and ELA, science, math, history and special education teachers. During these meetings, instructional and operational decisions are made. In addition, professional development is planned and ideas are generated which ultimately allow for shared feedback with the entire staff. Teachers also attend a variety of workshops they identify as valuable and useful to further the school mission. Most recently, one teacher attended a Harvard workshop and shared her learnings with her colleagues.