Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts

High School 03M485
100 Amsterdam Ave.
Manhattan
NY 10023

Principal: Lisa Mars

Dates of Review:
January 11, 2017 - January 12, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Kevin Bradley
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>
</tr>
</thead>
<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 Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
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### School Quality Ratings continued

#### 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>Additional Finding</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Systems for Improvement

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

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

### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide training to the entire staff. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations to families connected to a path to college and career readiness.

### Impact

Communication and professional development around high expectations results in a culture of mutual accountability. Partnerships with families support students in their progress toward college and career readiness through the dual mission of the school as an academic and arts-focused school.

### Supporting Evidence

- Partnerships with families support students in their progress toward college and career readiness. A strong parent association leads fundraising efforts to support the school’s dual mission of strong academics and exemplary performing arts. Parents praised the school’s efforts to communicate college and career readiness. A La! WEEKLY publication from the principal includes different versions for staff, students and parents. An Advanced Placement Fair in January is an important opportunity to reach out and partner with parents as students develop their requests for the subsequent year’s class schedule. Teachers use the PupilPath online platform to empower parents to serve as active academic supports for their children. One parent reported, “I read the newsletter, sync my calendar with the school calendar, and get push notifications from PupilPath. It helps my student as an organizational tool; we’re teaching them how to organize their work schedules.” The school tracks college applications through Naviance, an online portal with information and resources to move students through the college application process. A parent shared, “The guidance counselor called me to come in and meet about one class that he was borderline in and she had already identified his need. Guidance has been super supportive this year.”

- Students participate in multiple grade level assemblies, during which academic expectations and requirements regarding high school diploma options and the college application timelines are reviewed. Students receive progress reports every three weeks and report cards every marking period. All students who failed one or more classes receive support that includes a failure letter with links for resources and important dates, a copy of the tutoring schedule and outreach to home to set up a meeting with a parent/guardian and a student meeting with the guidance counselor to develop a plan. Students receive a detailed Regents status letter that includes clear explanations of Advanced Regents Diploma requirements, Regents Diploma requirements, Science Endorsement requirements, Math Endorsement requirements, Arts Endorsement requirements, and Additional Honors Designation requirements. Students are provided with specific information about their status towards these requirements that includes their current diploma status, their current highest exam scores for each Regents exam, requirements met for the Advanced Regents Diploma, and requirements met for endorsements and designations.

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the standard for professionalism and high quality instruction. Additionally, school leadership maintains a professional development (PD) plan that is differentiated by departments and common courses and includes alignment to particular Common Core Learning Standards, MOSL (Measures of Student Learning), Danielson Framework for Teaching components, and Quality Review indicators. Teacher feedback includes narrative statements detailing the impact of PD measures on teacher practice. One example following a session on Danielson component 3d: Using Assessment in Instruction, was “Reviewing the rubric gave me a chance to go over evidence of effective versus highly effective and how to think of more ways to incorporate more assessments into my lessons.”
Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations. Across the school, grade teams meet on a consistent basis to analyze assessment data and student work products, and to share teaching strategies.

Impact

Teacher engagement in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations has strengthened their instructional capacity and promoted implementation of the instructional shifts. While systematic analysis of student data and work products has resulted in mastery of goals for groups of students, teacher teams are well positioned to increase their work’s impact.

Supporting Evidence

- An Algebra I inquiry team was observed looking at the results of two recent assessments: the Unit 5 test and exit slips. The teacher team identified strengths and weaknesses of students based on the assessment data and came up with next steps based on trends that they noticed, which included justifying and explaining, and error analysis for reading closely to make sure that they are answering the whole question. One of the teachers shared that she created a justify/explain lesson and students have been more successful at justifying and explaining since. Another teacher wanted to try this lesson to address her students’ learning needs. This team also spent time reviewing the common final for the subject area, with each question aligned to a particular Common Core Learning Standard that was to be administered in an upcoming class period.

- The Algebra II team identified the challenge in teaching how to convert the exponential growth formula from years to months. The team looked at one question from the June 2016 Regents, which was the multiple-choice question that their students performed the worst on during the most recent Regents exam. The team identified two different approaches, using the exponential growth formula, or the compound interest formula. The team agreed that t=m/12 could be substituted into these formulas to get time into months and they would adjust instruction accordingly. A Global History team meeting included a data review of the June 2016 Regents. The team’s responses, based on the data review, were modifications for instruction by incorporating more document-based and political cartoon questions to help students review skill and content, incorporating an OPVL (Origin, Purpose, Value and Limitations) strategy across the department as a way for students to analyze documents, and differentiated activities using political cartoons while pairing students based on their mastery of cartoon analysis.

- The number of students with Individualized Education Program (IEPs) has increased and the school has made a focused effort to address their learning needs. Staff has increased their documentation of students with IEPs in anecdotes, using the online grading system Skedula to facilitate improved communication between students, staff and families. Based on feedback from both students and parents, an area of focus for all teacher teams is to increase their use of Skedula. Students and parents both consistently praised the importance of the information provided by staff to help them take ownership of academic progress and classes not on Skedula limit opportunities for ownership. Special education and guidance team meetings have resulted in outreach protocols to improve the support of students with IEPs. Based on data review, classes in marking period one start off with foundation and review topics and cover new material during marking period two. Data comparing the failure rate of students with IEPs between marking periods one and two in fall 2015 and the same marking periods in fall 2016 was 4.5 percent lower during fall 2016. Students with IEPs, which constitute approximately 7.5 percent of the school’s population, were also represented as four of the six (67 percent) leads in the prestigious fall school musical, Les Misérables, which is the school’s biggest production of the year involving students from multiple studios across the school.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings
Curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in academic tasks that emphasize the school’s dual mission supporting academics and performing arts across grades and subjects.

Impact
Curricular alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts results in coherence across grades and subject areas, promoting college and career readiness for all learners. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills require that all students demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Lesson plans consistently challenge students to utilize rigorous habits in the course of instruction. Learning objective statements in lesson plans include, “Understanding historical issues can help lead us to solutions to modern-day injustices”, and “Analyze creators’ context and how they manipulate elements of music provides insight into their intent and informs performance.” Additionally, students are to consistently write and connect their writing to evidence from the text. Lesson plans consistently detailed high-level questions. Examples of higher-order questions found in curricular documents include, “What is ethos, pathos, and logos, and how can these rhetorical devices be used to influence change?”, “How can we answer the exact same question conceptually, without any formulas?”, and “How do poets express a point of view and multiple meanings through the use of techniques and devices?”

- Courses, lesson plans, unit plans and curriculum maps reflect full integration of the instructional shifts embedded in Common Core Learning Standards across content areas. For example, lesson plans in English emphasize the value of text-based evidence in argument through the development of complex thesis statements and close textual analysis. An example of the inclusion of the English instructional shift to grounding reading and writing in textual evidence is an activity in which students are to identify the use of rhetorical devices in three forms: ethos, pathos, and logos, while citing specific textual evidence. One example of the inclusion of the mathematics instructional shift to increase rigor is a lesson that requires students to use exponent standards at the Algebra II level during an Algebra I lesson on exponential functions and sequences.

- A review of curricular documents demonstrates academic tasks that promote college and career readiness for all students. A Drama Studio D lesson includes presentations of 10-minute scenes connecting character research, investigation and script analysis to inform performance in the black box theater. An Art Studio Practice 3 lesson asks students to create their own branding identities and logo design that visually communicates the artist’s ideas through discussion, visual analysis, peer review and drawing. An AP Environmental Science lesson asks students to analyze data and connect their analysis to the real world problem of solving access issues to freshwater resources for countries with water deficits. A math lesson asks students to make conjectures about the relationships of sides and angles within isosceles triangles. The lesson includes modifications for students with IEPs, including color coded notes, graphic organizers, and supports designed for specific students noted by name in the lesson plan to allow all students to demonstrate their thinking. Lesson plans involving English Language Learners (ELL) include translation of materials into native language supports and ELL students are able to demonstrate their thinking according to the same high-level standards expected of all students.
Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula, reflecting a coherent set of beliefs that students learn best when they are able to work collaboratively and tap into both their creative and academic skill set. Across these same classrooms, teaching strategies strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports as discussed at the team and school levels.

Impact

Teaching practices across the vast majority of classes reflect school beliefs that students learn best when teachers require them to work with their peers toward a common goal, accessing creative and academic skills and talents along the way. Strategies additionally ensure that all learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- In an English 1 class, students used evidence from Martin Luther King Jr.’s Letter From Birmingham Jail to identify his use of rhetorical devices in three forms: ethos, pathos, and logos. The teacher reviewed the meaning of rhetoric as the art of persuasion and reviewed ethos, pathos, and logos and provided examples of each with a real world connection for clear understanding. Questioning and discussion during the lesson specifically asked students to find textual evidence to support their answers. Students called on other students randomly or on those who wanted to volunteer to continue the student-centered discussion. One student read an example directly from the text and explained Dr. King’s use of rhetoric promoting the idea that individual people can be agents of change, “You’ll make the right decision because you have something that not many people do. You have heart.”

- During a Senior Orchestra lesson, students are performing a piece from Berlioz’s Symphonie Fantastique, as students use depth of knowledge to assess overall successes of the performance and determine areas of growth, as well as areas in need of further development aligned to New York State Standards for the Arts and the LaGuardia Arts Music Department Performance Rubric. Students were divided into four groups: woodwinds, brass, percussion, and strings; as multiple entry points are demonstrated through performance as the teacher asked the orchestra to play the finale to illustrate successful excerpts and areas in need of further growth. During the class, a student conducted the orchestra through the finale section as the teacher facilitated from the back of the class. While the teacher was observing, all student eyes were on the conductor, as students read sheet music and performed their parts of the musical piece. As students passionately displayed their work, this was an example of the students demonstrating full group knowledge of the musical score and their individual roles in it.

- In an AP Environmental Science class, the lesson asked students to collect data on internal renewable water resources amounts and population totals using World Bank Information. The students worked in collaborative groups, used laptops to access the data and graphing calculators to calculate the internal renewable water per capita and evaluate the value against the Falkenmark indicator to determine the category each country is assigned by color-coding the water index level on a world map. The goal was for students to organize data, investigate, and propose a solution by selecting a country based on their data analysis, determining the sector that is the largest water sector for the country, synthesize information from two essays and draft a proposed solution to that country’s water issues. During the lesson, multiple students participated in discussion as they were answering higher order thinking questions posed by the teacher. Differentiation supporting all learners was demonstrated through strategic peer support during group work and targeted support from the teacher during individualized work time. Specific learners who were identified by name in the lesson plan received differentiated supports to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.
Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. In addition, teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

High quality assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers’ assessment practices result in effective instructional adjustments to meet all students’ needs and articulate to them what their next learning steps should be.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments that result in effective instructional adjustments to meet all students’ needs. For example, during an Algebra I Common Core class lesson on exponential functions and sequences, the teacher paired students together with whiteboards, as they collaboratively worked through assigned problems that were identified by the teacher based on exit ticket assessment data from a previous class session. One partner explained how to answer the question and the other partner recorded the work being explained to them. If partners disagreed on the work, they discussed and agreed on an answer before the allotted time expired. The teacher checked for understanding by asking students to hold up their whiteboards with their answers. After completing an assigned problem, the teacher noticed a consistent mistake in students’ work by checking their whiteboard answers and strategically adjusted the lesson to include re-teaching of the specific content area.

- Across the school, students use rubrics as tools of self-assessment. For example, during an Art Studio Practice class lesson on branding identity and logo design group reflection, the lesson involved students making a brief presentation of their project, an inquiry based discussion, a visual art representation, explanation of the process, note taking, and self-reflection. The lesson and assessment is based on NYS Standards for the Arts, the NYC Blueprint for the Arts Standards, and Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for writing and literacy. Students and the teacher used a rubric that assessed the following performance indicators: directions and process, idea clarity, visual communication of image, contribution to group discussion, creativity or originality. After a student presented their art project, students circled around a peer’s art project and asked questions to the student presenter and provided detailed feedback. For example, “I like your idea of a mascot, but feel you need to connect it to your logos.” After feedback from their peers, the teacher then asked the presenting student, “What are your next steps for your design?” as she was to articulate through reflection her own learning following the group assessment.

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher-written actionable and meaningful feedback directing students to the steps they should take to strengthen their work. Some examples of that feedback were: “Very good integration of textual evidence and vocabulary. You could have expanded more upon the idea of Clarence’s ‘chameleon character.’ Yet, your analysis is clear and easily to follow, impressive analysis and remarkable understanding of the text,” and “There are some insightful moments here and you maintain a clear structure. Sometimes your prose is wordy, undercutting your point and you often stop just short of explaining how the example proves the point,” and feedback on an AP French essay, “I could have gone to the 4 [instead of a score of 5]. However, I liked the structure of your essay. But you MUST start using the expression ‘il y a’ - this error would take you down by the College Board readers,” and “This gets a little dismissive. Think of addressing some of the valid concerns regarding having immediate access and issues with social media instead.”
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

Findings

School leaders and teacher peers support the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with effective feedback and next steps from the strategic use of frequent cycles of classroom observation and analysis of student work and data. Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact

Feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice and supports teacher development to elevate schoolwide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- Strategic, frequent cycles of classroom observations provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Each rated item on observation reports includes specific language from the rubric, evidence from the classroom observation that supports the rating, as well as actionable next steps. For example, next steps included, “Increasing the time between asking a question and having students respond to that question from the typical one second to five seconds will provide all students with time to think. This is known as wait time. Wait time will: increase the student responses, increase the number of students who respond, students will ask more questions, additional students have the capacity to further the discussion.” Another example of effective feedback includes, “Students were able to articulate the objective and process of the lab. However, when asked why they were doing the lab, students responded, ‘Because it’s on the Regents.’ Though this may be true, students should have a higher understanding of the content and lab objective. How the coefficient of friction applies to life outside of high school curriculum could be included in the lab opening as an explanation.” Another example includes, “When you asked students to state the base angle theorem in their own words, students could have thought about it individually and then shared their answer with their partner. Then you could have opened the discussion up to the whole class. Providing students with the opportunity to discuss ideas at smaller intervals throughout the lesson will allow all students to directly engage with the material more frequently.”

- Feedback and support to teachers also includes a transcript of observation feedback breaking down teacher and student low-inference notes with time stamps. Also included are actionable changes or next steps, as well as documentation on Implementation of Instructional Focus-Designing Coherent Instruction: “1. Lesson has a clear, logical, timely structure. 2. Instruction is designed to engage students. 3. Evidence of thoughtfully planned learning groups. 4. Activities are planned to promote high-level thinking. 5. Lesson differentiates for student needs.” A graphic organizer breakdown of Danielson Framework for Teaching ratings for all eight rated categories based on this observation is included in feedback to teachers. School leaders also use a Classroom Walkthrough Checklist to assess all classes while focusing on data gathering in three main areas: Learners and Relevance, Instruction and Rigor, and Environment and Culture. This checklist is shared with teachers and drives data for the administration to focus supports.

- New teachers are supported by experienced peer leaders in their content areas with frequent feedback and mentoring. Feedback is connected to individualized goals and teacher support. For example, observation feedback includes, “In order to build on student autonomy, be sure to include an opportunity for reflection at the end of the lesson. This reflection can serve to identify what has been accomplished, identify next steps and consolidate the learning.”