Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Frederick Douglass Academy II Secondary School

Middle-High School 03M860

215 West 114st St.
Manhattan
NY 10026

Principal: Osei Owusu Afriyie

Dates of Review:
December 22, 2016 - December 23, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Clarence Williams Jr.
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

Frederick Douglass Academy II Secondary School serves students in grade 6 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>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</table>
### 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>Area of Celebration</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>
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### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<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>
</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>
</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>
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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>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

The school leadership and faculty approach to culture building, discipline, and social-emotional support is informed by a theory of action. The school community strategically supports professional development, parent communication, and student learning experiences.

Impact

Staff and school leadership purposefully involves student voices in decision-making to initiate, guide, and lead school improvement efforts. There is a culture of trust which supports the academic and personal growth of teachers and students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school community has a theory of action that all teachers and staff buy into and are a part of. It includes a document entitled, "Core values at Frederick Douglass Academy 2." It states, “We believe scholars learn best when every educator explicitly teaches and models the academic and personal behaviors necessary for success in school life and establishes relationships with the family of the scholar through the regular communication of their child’s progress.” Impact of this was seen in a parent meeting where all parents interviewed shared that their favorite thing about the school is communication. One parent stated, “Pleasantly pleased with communication, I can walk in anytime and meet with the parent coordinator and teachers. I love the camaraderie.” An additional parent stated, “Teachers and administrators contact us immediately to support our children’s learning.” All teachers interviewed referred to and cited the core values of the school.

- All students interviewed stated that they feel safe in the school. When asked what makes them feel safe, one student stated, “Teachers make us feel comfortable and are always available when we need them to discuss concerns or issues.” In a 2016/2017 work plan, the principal identified “establishing structures for knowing students well” as an implementation priority. The principal also gave a professional development on teacher learning targets for all staff. A learning target included, “I can identify next steps to take in order to implement the school structures designed to build and maintain a supportive environment for students.” When interviewed, all teachers stated that maintaining a safe environment to support student learning is a core belief of the school. This was impactful as teachers stated that every teacher takes responsibility in the securing of a safe educational environment.

- Students are involved in decision-making that positively impacts the school community. Teachers, parents and students participate in conferences. These are parent-student conferences as opposed to parent-teacher conferences. The students lead the conference and show their work and reflect on his/her progress. These conferences are from grades six to nine. A letter that went out to families in November stated, “These conferences provide opportunities for scholars to accept responsibility for their learning, evaluate their performance, take pride in their achievements and develop leadership skills.” Parents stated that these conferences strengthen communication with their children regarding their educational progress. The principal stated that conferences have improved this year. Students had impact on making the decision to be a part of this initiative as well as organizing it.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Developing |

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula and uneven levels of participation are reflected in work products and discussions.

Impact

Students are not yet consistently engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and higher-order thinking.

There are uneven levels of student participation and thinking across classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade eleven English Advanced Placement class, students were working on interpreting a quote from James Baldwin. There was evidence of some student engagement. One student stated, “I connect with the quote using chess because the pawn is weak and not as important as the king or queen.” However, other groups were not engaged. One group observed did not read the quote and was not focused on the task. The group did not discuss anything and sat quietly during small group discussion. When asked what they were working on, one group responded, “A performance task on one of James Baldwin’s quotes.” When asked why it was important, they responded, “I’m not sure.”

- In classes visited there was evidence of student engagement and higher-order thinking skills however this was inconsistent across classrooms. During an observation of a grade six math class, students were working on solving problems involving exponents, order of operations and variables. When the teacher asked a student, “What is the coefficient?” A student responded, “Five and three because it’s the number in front of the variable.” The teacher asked the student, “What is the variable?” and the student responded, stating, “The numbers that are unknown.” Although the teacher asked clarifying questions, there was not a great deal of evidence to demonstrate higher-order thinking and discussions among students. There was no evidence of multiple entry points for students with disabilities or English Language Learners (ELLs).

- Teaching strategies reflect questioning that required student thinking although student participation was uneven. In a grade eleven astronomy class, students were identifying characteristics of planets. The lesson was teacher-centered and demonstrated low-level questioning. An example was exhibited when the teacher asked, “What did you notice about Neptune and Uranus?” and a student replied, “They are both sphere-shaped.” During the visit the teacher lectured most of the time, and when students were allowed to discuss the comparisons of Earth with Neptune and Uranus, one student in a group stated, “Maybe Neptune rotates differently from Earth.” Other students were playing with each other in their group, speaking about what happened at lunch time. This went unnoticed by the teacher.

- Although evident across classrooms visited, in some classrooms, teachers did not ask higher-order thinking questions. In a grade nine living environment class, students were engaged in a discussion on recessive and dominant genes. During whole group instruction, the teacher asked the class, “Most people in this classroom have dark hair. Is this a recessive or dominant gene?” Most students replied, “Dominant.” The do now required students to look at their peers in the classroom and see what traits they saw in their classmates. Students were required to write two to three sentences describing what they saw. Students stated the following, “Different color hair, different skin color and different eye color.” Some students did not contribute to the conversation. Others were actively engaged in the discussion and presenting their findings, although they were short answers that did not require follow up or meaningful discussion.
Additional Finding

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

Curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Teachers and school leaders make curricular decisions that build consistency and promote college and career readiness for all students so that a diversity of learners have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use a department tracker for analyzing student work to refine instruction across subjects and grades. The math department presented a tracker which shows the teacher, the student, what is noticed, what the data suggests and what the implications are. An example shows that the student was not using the BUCKS strategy (box the question, underline the facts, circle the vocabulary and key words, state the strategy, operation and solve). Next steps included writing the lesson plan to state that the topic should be presented in a word problem so that the student can create an algebraic expression using BUCKS.

- In most lesson plans viewed, teachers provide differentiation for students with disabilities. A grade twelve social studies lesson plan demonstrates modifications for students with disabilities. The aim of the lesson was to reflect on the unit one performance task through a different lens. A separate section for students with disabilities included modeling and guided practice through gradual release, directions verbalized and written on the board, one-to-one small group check-ins and the use of a timer to support pacing of students who require more time on task. Scaffolds were in place for some students such as sentence starters and graphic organizers. When asked about the student work impacting revisions, the principal stated that they use exit slips and teacher assessments to make modifications. Curriculum revisions are made in May and June.

- In order to tie in college readiness, students will be required to solve problems with real-world scenarios and elaborate on their thinking through their writing. A unit on scientific notation demonstrates that students must determine whether or not Pluto should be considered a planet based on its size in scientific notation. Students are required to take notes, explain their understanding of the scientific notation, and create an argument for their position.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school's curricula. Teachers' assessment practices reflect actionable feedback.

Impact

Staff members provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement so that teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers provide actionable feedback to students using glows and grows. An end of unit reflection from a grade ten humanities class demonstrated glows and grows. Under glows, the teacher wrote, “You stated two essential understandings for unit three, good job of using RATE to organize your writing.” The grow stated, “Always be sure to elaborate whenever you state a claim or provide an answer.” Another piece of feedback read, “Glow: Your writing is well-organized and you included a sufficient number of examples. Grow: Very basic, looking for more elaboration in the future.”

- English teachers use an op-ed twenty-point article rubric for a forty-point performance task. The categories are content ideas, word choice, voice, conventions and research. Each category is rated from one to four. One student received fours in the areas of content, word choice, voice and research. The student received a three in conventions for an overall score of nineteen. The rubric also lists actionable feedback stating, “You did an awesome job on your performance task. You were able to give strong opinions that are supported by facts, and a sophisticated level of word choice. Review your work to check for grammar, commas and apostrophes.” During a student interview, a student stated, “The feedback I receive from my teachers helps me to be a better writer, which I will need for college.”

- In most classes students use a peer-review template. An example was presented is a writing class. The student that reviewed their peer’s work was required to answer the following questions, “Does the author have a clear position? Is there a combination of types of sentences (complex and simple)? Does the author use three or more texts to cite? Which text does the author use as evidence and does the essay provide clear justifications for their evidence?” The student responded yes to all categories. There is an additional column for positive comments and suggestions for improvement. The student stated, “You chose a clear position and explained it. You reconnected back to your topic.” During a student interview, students stated they learn better from their peers and look forward to the feedback. An additional example was seen in a peer review sheet. On a writing sample a peer wrote the following, “You have a clear introduction, you used transition words to combine the sentences.” Teachers stated that they use the peer-review template to make instructional adjustments. For example, one teacher stated that the peer-review template showed that students need to spend more time on annotating, thus the teacher modified the lesson.
Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused.

Impact
Teacher teams promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards to strengthen the instructional practices of teachers, typically resulting in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- A math department meeting observed began with a glow and grow from the week. A teacher stated the following glow, “Students are engaged in practicing math via ixl.com.” A grow included, “I need to increase the daily student quota of questioning from forty to eighty questions online.” The team then debriefed on their intervisitations. The focus of the debrief was on the implementation of BUCKS in the classroom. Teachers discussed what worked well and what needs to be improved. One math teacher stated, “Being able to see both teachers and how they implemented BUCKS and asked questions around the BUCKS method worked well. Scheduling needs to improve.” During the data section of the meeting, teachers discussed the long-term goal of having students improve by 5 percent on student-constructed response scores. They looked at focus students which included ELLs and students with disabilities. The first step discussed was to update the schedule for implementation of BUCKS. The second step was to follow a protocol that allows for teachers to examine individual student work in four-minute cycles. Since implementing this protocol, the principal stated that the graduation rate for students with disabilities has improved from 52 percent to 82 percent.

- Teacher teams use a collaborative inquiry cycle to evaluate teacher and student performance. Many teams, such as the Math Response to Intervention team and the professional development team meet weekly. The guidelines for meetings is outlined in school documents and asks teachers to identify gaps in learning and corresponding instructional gaps and collaborate on solutions to develop a goal-driven action plan. Since the inception of the inquiry process, students earning ten or more credits since freshmen year is 82 percent. The inquiry cycle also focuses on the Common Core by putting aside time for teachers to look at the standards in the unit plans to assess mastery in the specific areas. This is evident in the majority of teacher teams based on the presentation of minutes.

- A humanities department agenda and minutes listed the following session goals, “Demonstrate and justify alignment between sample student work and lesson plan elements, and reflect on the implications and applications of today’s collaborative activity to the instructional planning.” Teachers discussed using the three A’s, aim, activity, and assessment, for alignment to improve teacher instruction. The process included reading student sample work products, design a think-pair-share based on the student work sample, look at what writing was produced prior to the lesson and collaborate on creating an aim, an activity and an assessment based on the student work. One teacher stated the following, “As a result we are able to collaborate with each other and provide feedback to our peers. We are confident that we will see growth in our scores this year in Regents and schoolwide assessments.”
Findings

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

Impact

There is a culture of mutual accountability for high expectations and families play an important role in supporting student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal communicates high expectations to staff. The staff receive a handbook that details high expectations. All staff members receive and sign for the handbook. An example of clear expectations is seen on page 12. It states that, “An educator will use the workshop model to identify, review, and regularly reference the lesson topic and aim.” This was evident in all classrooms visited and unit and lesson plans submitted. The workshop model was seen in all classrooms in different stages. It was also evident in the lesson plans that teachers used modeling to support guided and independent practice. The book also states, “Please take the time to display evidence of student learning and work in your classroom.” This was evident as all bulletin boards observed were aligned to the unit of study and up to date. For example, in several classrooms visited there was no work posted earlier than the beginning of December. In one class a student pointed out a writing assignment that was displayed that he completed last week.

- The school community communicates high expectations to parents and families. The school community hosted a workshop to inform parents about financial aid applications for students. The college advisor sent a letter home to parents. An excerpt from the letter includes, “Our school works with a well-known agency called New York Cares, who has trained professionals come in to help assist families with filling out the federal school loan applications for free.” This was impactful as some of the parents interviewed were present for the meeting. One parent said, “This is a big help to me because I don’t understand the college application process.” All parents were able to speak to the knowledge and awareness of the information including non-senior parents. All students interviewed spoke about having the funds to go to college based on the support of the school. One student stated, “I thought I couldn’t afford to go to college but my counselor showed me how I could.”

- The principal relates high expectations to the Danielson Framework for Teaching to all staff members. The principal uses the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) to communicate expectations to teachers and align instructional practices to the framework. An example was seen in an informal observation of a teacher. In regards to knowledge of content and pedagogy, the principal states, “Your lesson plan and practice display some awareness of prerequisite learning but it is incomplete. For example, the lesson plan does not include a strategy for modeling that includes student participation.” An additional example in another informal observation refers to creating an environment of respect and rapport in the classroom. The principal stated, “Implement a strategy for students to respectfully intervene with classmates at appropriate times in your lesson.” Teachers share accountability by supporting each other in the classroom by intervisitations and sharing the data from the informal observations.