NYC Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Institute for Health Professions at Cambria Heights

High school 29Q243

207- 01 116th Ave.
Queens
NY 11411

Principal: Gareth Robinson

Dates of Review:
January 12, 2017 - January 13, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Rod Bowen

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

Institute for Health Professions at Cambria Heights 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

Instructional Core		
To what extent does the school...	**Area**	**Rating**
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	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
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	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
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	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**

School Quality Ratings continued

School Culture

To what extent does the school...	Area	Rating
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults	**Area of Celebration**	**Proficient**
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**

Systems for Improvement

To what extent does the school...	Area	Rating
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	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
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	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
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	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	**Area of Focus**	**Proficient**
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	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	1.4 Positive Learning Environment	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

Members of the school community purposefully build school culture and provide social-emotional supports. They maintain the school's culture through the alignment of professional development and student learning experiences.

Impact

Safety, inclusivity and respect are integrated into the school's culture, which promote effective academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- Students agreed that one of the reasons why they feel safe and respected at the school is the Fairness Committee. Select students are trained to serve as facilitators of the committee. A student noted that when someone in the community is "harmed," they can bring the person that they are in conflict with before the Fairness Committee to resolve the issue. The committee determines an appropriate next step or consequence. A member of the staff noted that though it is rare, the school culture allows for students to bring a faculty member before the committee. Students' willingness to engage in this restorative justice process demonstrates a connection to the school and those who make up its community.

- Student voice is honored in a number of ways. Student government runs the school store and raises money for student activities. The students also feel heard through clubs based on their interests. A dance team, fitness club and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) club were all initiated by students.

- During a weekly schoolwide community meeting, school leaders had select seniors stand as their names were read along with the colleges they were recently accepted into. The entire school community applauded and cheered as their peers stood. It was stated that names would be shared in this fashion as the list is updated weekly. A tenth grade student was acknowledged because he was going to transfer from the school. The community applauded and wished the student well as he stood and waved. Character principle awards were given out by staff to students, by students to students, and by students to staff. Such acknowledgements support healthy relationships amongst staff and students.

- Teachers receive training on how to be effective advisors during semi-monthly advisory team meetings. This professional learning addresses skills such as helping students develop individualized learning plans, advocating and supporting academic performance, and communicating with parents. Teachers also engage in weekly cross-grade conversations focused on student social-emotional well-being and the support of behaviors that can enhance learning. A teacher shared that teachers leave these discussions with strategies and tools to support specific students whose success may be hindered by social-emotional factors.

- Aspects of the school's advisory curriculum are purposefully designed to provide students with learning experiences that promote the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors. *Transitions to High School* is a ninth grade advisory curriculum that focuses on the school's academic and character expectations in addition to community service opportunities.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

The majority of teachers engage in professional collaborations using an inquiry approach. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

The work of teacher teams does not yet result in schoolwide instructional coherence or increased student achievement for all learners. Though teachers have a voice, they do not play an integral role in key decisions.

Supporting Evidence

- An English team meeting began with the review of a consultancy protocol. This was followed by the presenting teacher outlining his instructional dilemma, which was how to effectively design an interim assessment that would prompt students to successfully interpret quotes and use outside sources to support their claims. The facilitator and other team members veered away from the agenda of assessment design and into instruction as they inquired about teaching strategies and the use of scaffolds. Eventually the conversation returned to the interim assessment and a recommendation was made to highlight the research component's role in informing students' arguments. Though the meeting was aligned to the school's goal of embedding college readiness and higher order thinking skills into instruction, and the presenting teacher left with a suggestion that strengthens his instructional capacity, the execution of the meeting hindered the degree to which the presenting teacher was supported in a coherent fashion.

- Minutes from a social studies team meeting focused on providing a teacher with feedback on the design of a Performance Based Assessment Task (PBAT), collegially sharing by acknowledging strong elements and providing suggestions to improve other areas. A positive point of feedback was that the debate topic was interesting and connected to students' lives as it related history to modern day contexts. A recommendation for improvement included the need to provide students with research resources to help facilitate work done during class time. Minutes from other teacher teams showed that they all use similar protocols and structures to engage in inquiry-based professional collaborations. However, the detail with which feedback and project suggestions were memorialized varied, limiting schoolwide coherence in this practice.

- One of the areas within which teachers have the most voice in decision making is professional development. Staff had input in the creation of the professional development calendar for the year and most training sessions are facilitated by teachers. Designated twelfth grade teachers are trained to also serve as college advisors.

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

Instructional staff ensures that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and that the academic tasks consistently stress the *Habits of Mind.*

Impact

Curricular decisions ensure that a variety of learners have access to rigorous tasks across grades and subject areas that promote college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- A math lesson plan contained the standards-based learning target: I can apply my knowledge of quadratic functions to make connections to figurative numbers. The group task in this lesson would call on students to identify the type of function needed to interpret a diagram. They would then have to provide a rationale for their choice. They would also work to find an equation to model triangular numbers.

- A science lesson plan used the English Language Arts Common Core standard regarding the writing of arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts to inform a Socratic seminar where students would argue for or against hair relaxers or skin whitening after reading pertinent articles.

- The Common Core literacy standard that requires students to write informative essays to examine and convey complex ideas and concepts clearly and accurately through the analysis of content was one of the foundational expectations of a research assignment. Students would organize their research and writing to build and support a hypothesis, follow a four paragraph journal article format, and use the proper referencing and in-text citation format. This level of rigor in the design of student research promotes college and career readiness.

- *Habits of Mind* were clearly referenced in most curricular documents across subject areas. The habit of interpretation was embedded in a social studies, a math, and two science lesson plans, while the habit of problem formation was in a science and social studies plans. Such purposeful decisions build coherence while promoting rigorous habits.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, the school's belief that students learn best when engaged in project-based collaborative work and discussions is evident.

Impact

High levels of student thinking and ownership during instruction are not present across the vast majority of classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- Peer assessment was the learning task in a social studies class. The *Habits of Mind* interpretation and communication were highlighted in a process that included a protocol that required the use of a rubric. In one group, a student pointed out that some background details included in the introductory paragraph actually belonged later in the body paragraph and that her focus should be to catch the attention of the reader in the opening paragraph. Other students spoke of needing to analyze evidence to support their arguments.

- In a science lesson focused on advanced research and writing, students were collaborating on topics that they selected based on shared interest. They explained that they were engaging in background research that would inform their hypothesis. They understood that they would then test their hypothesis in an experiment that they would have to design. One group was exploring the question, "Does pressure have a negative or positive affect on athletes?" This level of student clarity and ownership of the learning task was not reflected in most classrooms.

- Students in an English class were creating artifacts and engaging in writing in preparation for a class museum that related to the Holocaust. Teachers circulated and guided online research efforts, coached artifact development, pushed students to make connections to a recent trip to the Holocaust museum and encouraged students to use a check-list that outlined their steps toward completion. Though all students understood that their artifact was related to the Holocaust, few could articulate why their choice was symbolically significant enough to warrant being included in the museum. Similarly, in a science class, students seated in groups completed their data tables and discussion sheets related to their physics PBAT involving the study of velocity, mass, angle, force and energy through the construction of catapults. Students were able to discuss their construction processes as well as questions embedded in the lesson such as, "How did the variable you studied relate to the motion of the object?" and "If you were not successful, what does your data show that you could change to make your catapult successful?" Student ability to interpret and predict showed high levels of thinking, however a number of students were unable to connect their learning to contexts outside of the catapult experiment. In both cases, ownership of knowledge so that it could be applied and articulated at deeper levels was limited.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

Teachers across classrooms are committed to grading policies, rubrics and assessment design that are aligned with or support PBATs. In addition, teachers consistently engage in checks for understanding and provide students with opportunities to self-assess.

Impact

Actionable feedback is available to both students and teachers, allowing teachers to make adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The grading policy requires that student academic progress be shared in four mastery reports each year. The policy states that students should be provided with multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery toward rigorous standards. In addition, students and parents should know the content and skills that inform the standards that students are expected to meet. A student's mastery report shows that the student has a rating of "Good" in the social studies standard related to understanding the roles of citizens within American constitutional democracy as well as the scope of a citizen's rights and responsibilities. However, he earned a "Needs Revision" in the skill of supporting arguments with specific, relevant, accurate and verifiable evidence drawn from both primary and secondary sources. Such policies ensure that both teachers and students are provided with actionable feedback regarding students' achievement.

- Students were able to refer to specific actions they would take to improve tasks based on feedback they had received. While discussing a physics PBAT, one student claimed that he was good at the math aspects of the task, but he was challenged by how to elaborate on the physics parts. He plans to do more research on how changing angles in his catapult impact motion. Another student understood that he earned a higher grade on an English assignment because he added more relevant evidence and made more connections between the text and the outside world.

- Across classrooms, teachers either circulated or had more structured systems in place to conference with students and support them with aspects of their project based work. A social studies teacher pushed student thinking and understanding of the task by asking questions such as, "So what examples would you use to support that?" and "What information would you use?" When a science teacher noticed misunderstanding within a small collaborative group, he purposefully asked them to tell him about the setup of their experiment and what they were measuring, guiding them toward the desired understanding.

- Students used check-lists or rubrics to self-assess their progress in a number of classes, including a social studies class where students used a rubric to provide each other with feedback and an English class when students referred to a checklist as they constructed museum artifacts.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate the use of the *Habits of Mind* as a foundational resource for teaching and learning. School staff establishes a culture of high expectations.

Impact

Teachers are provided with ongoing support and training to ensure that the *Habits of Mind* are integrated into their work. Students receive guidance and feedback that prepares them for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- A resource entitled "Habits of Mind in Action across the Grade Levels-Content Areas" outlines expectations for how the habits of problem formulation, research, interpretation, communication and precision/accuracy should be considered when designing tasks. It clearly shows how skills evolve from ninth through twelfth grade. In ninth grade, students should be able to use the internet to find sources beyond Wikipedia. By the time they are seniors, they should be able to select resources and research using credible internet resources, and evaluate those sources when writing a paper.

- The professional development calendar outlines numerous teacher led sessions on the planning of PBATs and looking at student work for evidence of *Habits of Mind*. The tuning protocol that teacher teams use to develop projects includes the guiding question, "What are students expected to know, understand, and do through all of the projects (PBAT skill/standards/*Habit(s) of Mind*)?"

- Students have access to an online platform that houses detailed information pertinent to their preparedness for promotion and graduation. The home page states that students can monitor their grades, review their mastery of academic standards, and communicate with teachers using the platform.

- Advisors provide ongoing guidance and support that prepares students for the next level of their education. Twelfth grade advisors host college admissions representatives during advisories, support students in the completion of their applications, and hold students accountable for submitting intake forms for college planning.