Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Francis Lewis High School
High school 26Q430
58-20 Utopia Parkway
Queens
NY 11365

Principal: Dr. David Marmor

Dates of Review:
October 24, 2016 - October 25, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince
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

Francis Lewis 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

### Instructional Core

<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>1.1 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>
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<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>Proficient</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>
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### School Culture

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

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

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<th>Area</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>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>
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<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>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>
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</tbody>
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Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

The school promotes a culture of high expectations for staff, students, and families through use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the core belief that students utilize a wide variety of strategies and technology to become citizens of the twenty-first century.

Impact

As a result, there is a culture of mutual accountability for those expectations. All constituents contribute to a culture of learning and families actively collaborate to ensure all students are on a clear path to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The entire school community has a mutual understanding of what is necessary for students to meet the high expectations which includes academies that determine students three year elective course sequence. Participation of parents and families in the school provides actions designed to advance educational goals. As a parent stated, “The school is as big as Madison Square Garden, yet it is designed to move students toward their next level of learning.” Students were aware of the school expectations and stated that they self-assess to measure their progress and restate next level goals as it relates to what is required to receive acceptance and scholarships into colleges.

- School leaders use the Danielson Framework for Teaching to provide meaningful feedback to teachers based upon formal and informal observation. There is an inclusive environment in both instructional and organizational decision-making fostering partnerships with families, businesses and community-based organizations. The school has a relationship with the Korean Parents Association, human rights associations including the President of the International Criminal Court, resulting in a creation of an elective class on International Relations and Crimes Against Humanity. The Junior Reserve Officer Training (JROTC) program represented New York State in France in 2016 and the students completing JROTC for four years has a 100% graduation rate. Through a weekly newsletter from the principal, clear expectations at each level are defined and has resulted in a school community with a mission of providing students with twenty-first century skills within a personal, safe, and supported environment.

- The school leaders and staff clearly stated that they expect every student to go to college or plan for a career. As evidenced through expectations of perseverance, engagement, collaboration, commitment, self-regulations, work habits and organizational skills. Teachers are held accountable through the observation process. Every student and their families have access to PupilPath and students revealed that they use this system. The student handbook reveals that students are expected to take Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses and enroll in the school’s program of College Now or take City University of New York (CUNY) early college courses. A message of expectation and success in academics are woven throughout the community and has made an impact on honor status, rising attendance rates, graduation numbers, and acceptance into college programs. High college readiness and preparedness index scores are strong indicators that there has been a positive impact on student learning and the development of career and life skills.
Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Across classrooms teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best. Teaching strategies, extensions and multiple entry points vary across the grades in engaging English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Impact

Although in some classrooms, challenging tasks and supports are provided for all learners, including students with disabilities and ELLs, enabling students to demonstrate higher order thinking, this is not demonstrated in all classes.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms teachers provided small group instruction with students interacting with each other. In some classes students participated in discussions by responding to teacher-generated questions, in-depth analysis and peer to peer assessing was evident. Student pairs were asked to share the process they created in a mixed grade, Integrated Co-Teaching algebra class. Math talk occurring in pairs related to methods and strategies used to arrive at their answers. Peer helpers were available to assist in explaining reasons. Technology was used to interpret data from graphs with students creating their own questions in relation to real world problems.

- Teaching practices reflect a consistent belief that students learn best when engaged at high levels. Evidence of higher-level thinking in purposeful class groupings and pairs to assist in scaffolding for struggling learners, ELLs, or students with disabilities was visible in most, but not all classes observed. Teachers provided opportunities for students to engage in evidence based conversations about text in small groups, however, extended learning for the higher level student was not often present. In a twelfth-grade English Language Arts class, students were working on vocabulary, recording words per row assignments. The teacher explained words unknown to students in the class, such as porridge with examples such as, oatmeal. Many students were ahead of their group and proceeded on their own to discuss the first chapter in the text.

- Students at the small group meeting expressed that they are comfortable discussing their thoughts on any given subject and feel challenged by their teachers to think more critically. It was evident in many classrooms that teachers plan with various activities to meet the need of all students, resulting in differentiated instruction, with supports for all learners including explanations using reason and evidence. In some classes students were serving as leaders and answering student questions instead of the teacher. In the science research class students were presenting different projects of student choice, such as ratio and derivations, Earth elements and calculations on aging. Students were incorporating statistical analyses into their papers and peer feedback was observed. However, in other classrooms, teachers did not employ academic tasks varying in opportunities for student choice and extension for higher performing students, limiting accelerated learning for all students.
### 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**

All curricula aligned to Common Core and Content Standards promote college and career readiness skills across subjects. Curricula emphasizes higher order thinking through student generated questions and research topics for all students, including students with disabilities and ELLs.

**Impact**

Curricula decisions and alignment to the instructional shifts ensure coherence and rigorous habits for all learners, across grades and content areas. Academic tasks consistently emphasize higher-order thinking skills.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school has engaged in a cycle of ongoing curriculum development, alignment revision and monitoring, modeled from the Learning Centered Initiatives program. In the leadership meeting, it was stated that “During the summer a deep dive into the upcoming year’s curricula, emphasizing depth of knowledge and critical thinking skills as part of teacher planning, has prepared the staff for promoting critical thinking and problem solving skills.” Purposeful lesson planning, incorporating the instructional shifts and key standards to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students are embedded into all subject areas. The math department is focusing lessons on understanding concepts rather than how to get an answer. All department leaders, as well as subject area teachers consistently review student writing samples to assess for career and career readiness.

- There are college focused English and math classes for seniors, specifically designed to address students’ academic deficiencies and reinforce the skills needed to pass college placement exams. In the fourth year science research program, experimentation culminates in independent research projects in collaboration with medical institutions and colleges, such as Columbia University, Queens College, and Mount Sinai. Students in the science research class were synthesizing information from their experiments and simulations into a coherent understanding of the process or concept.

- While visiting the virtual enterprise class, students were building business skills in collaborative teams using business models based on authentic research that involved Chief Financial Officers (CFOs), Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), advertising, and market research. There is a Forensic Science Institute where students develop skills over a three-year period involving investigation and analysis of evidence found in an elaborate mock crime scene. The JROTC class visited showed students during an inspection, using leadership skills and learning good citizenship to build character strengths. Ongoing schoolwide curricula events involve the entire community, such as the “Mock the vote” election where student’s role played the candidates and gave speeches, participated in debates. The event encouraged all students and families to vote. All lesson plans embedded higher order thinking prompts and as a teacher stated they design lessons to support college and career readiness so students learn how to use their time efficiently. In many classes, students utilized academic vocabulary to explain thinking during group or partner discussions. The principal stated that this has impacted the quality of student writing across all grades as assessed by beginning, mid-year, and end-year benchmarks and Regents exam scores. Modifications are created to address high-need subgroups. Extensive use of Castle Learning has provided data to inform instruction at the department and the classroom level.
Findings

A schoolwide grading policy, along with rubrics and assessments provide actionable feedback to all students and teachers. Across classrooms, teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding.

Impact

Assessment practices provide actionable feedback that informs students of their next learning steps, and allow teachers to track student progress. Teacher practice reflects checks for understanding and ongoing student self-assessment leading to effective lesson adjustment to meet the learning needs of all students.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers have planning conferences with administration to set teacher, student and school goals based on Common Core Learning Standards and the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teachers are formally and informally observed by administration and receive verbal and written feedback through Advance, based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching rubric. This immediate feedback is discussed in order to provide next steps to enhance teacher pedagogy through additional support of internal and external professional development opportunities. This scaffolding support continues to allow teachers to design standard based lessons, rubrics, activities, and performance tasks designed to enhance student achievement and instructional practices for maximizing student growth. Additionally, the premise of this plan is to prepare students for college and career readiness. Students, as observed, used to peer assessing as a means to better their work and provide next steps to each other. Exit slips and quick writes are used as checks for understanding along with classroom technology that allows for graphing of student answers on a screen.

- Teachers collaboratively developed and implemented grade level curriculum maps, content area pacing calendars, units of study and standard based rubrics. Teachers use assessment results formal and informal to adjust lessons. Teachers adjust curricula through analyzing pre-test and state tests using benchmarks and common performance tasks with itemized analysis that highlight the lowest standard in each grade. Lessons infuse higher-order thinking skills, multi-leveled graphic organizers, literacy, and mathematic standard based open-ended questions and challenging performance based tasks. Learning is monitored and assessed through questioning, conferencing, student work folders, student portfolios, reflection logs, journals, performance task projects and discussions. Teachers were seen checking in at tables to assess student understanding, listening in, and asking prompt questions to push student thinking. In a grade 9 Living Environment class, groups were studying life cells. The teacher was circulating and making sure that each table looked for at least five examples have the text that will assist in determining types of cells and how they are different and why. The teacher prompted students to identify next steps, annotate language to highlight important words within the leveled text articles.

- Teachers create their own rubrics for units using a common framework and bring suggestions to their teacher team meeting. Teachers have also created schoolwide and departmental rubrics in interdisciplinary teams during professional development session and then share, develop, and review during common planning time and team meetings. Performance based assessment tasks, turning point assessments and pre-and-post unit assessments determine student understanding on content and skill objectives to measure growth and changes in understanding to effectively adjust lesson planning.
## Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### Findings

The principal and eleven assistant principals, teacher leaders and an instructional coach support the development of all teachers with effective feedback and next steps. This feedback accurately captures strengths and challenges using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to articulate clear expectations for teacher practice.

### Impact

Accountable talk at teacher team meetings, with self and peer reflections, including a focus on instructional learning walks to support teacher development and practice.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher observation systems foster ongoing pedagogical conversations between administrators and teachers, teachers to teachers and administrator to administrator. The schoolwide goal, as stated in the Comprehensive Educational Plan, is to focus on individual student needs supported by targeted collaborative professional development for faculty. All staff observations are followed by a face-to-face verbal feedback post-conference providing feedback in a risk free environment. School leaders share low inference notes with teachers fostering teacher reflection on practice and plans for next steps. The principal stated that the impact of teacher effort is evident in classroom observations where more collaborative learning, differentiation, and higher-level discussions take place. In the tenth-grade Global History class students were engaged in expressing why the Industrial Revolution started in Great Britain. In groups, students were identifying factors such as social, political and economic causes to determine why certain events caused later ones.

- Analysis of teacher observation data from *Advance* is used as a basis for goal setting and focus of professional development topics. Each instructional assistant principal collects work samples that reflect implementation of an instructional initiative or best practice. This work becomes the subject of an instructional “show and tell” meeting held once a month with the principal. It was stated at a teacher team meeting that “during the teacher led instructional learning walks, goals are to improve pedagogy within a culture of respect and continuous improvement using warm and cool feedback.” Recommendations are aligned to instructional goals and Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

- Coaching supports provide common lesson strategies and follow through expectations for teachers. Teachers who are experts provide workshop models in different subject areas. Teachers stated that they are encouraged to visit classes where good differentiation and questioning techniques take place to help them make greater use of the techniques with their own students, but often time is limited to do so.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based structured professional collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity. Leadership structures provide a means for teachers to have input on key decisions about curricula and practice.

Impact

Informed by the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts, the work of teacher teams has resulted in schoolwide instructional coherence, improved pedagogy, and student learning outcomes. Shared leadership structures are in place.

Supporting Evidence

- The collaborative teacher team structure uses the expertise of colleagues to provide opportunities for teachers to work together to elicit the context of student learning experiences and to share/develop best practices to meet the learning needs of the diverse population. There are 50 teacher teams in the school. They meet regularly to look at student work, using data based on assessment to make curricular decisions and inform instructional strategies. They review student performance and work products to inform planning for future instruction and task development. At the English department team meeting attended, teachers were assessing final drafts on tenth-grade poetry, addressing the effectiveness of feedback to students, and determining if improvement in feedback needed. Shared leadership that focuses on improved student outcomes are seen in agendas and goals resulting in schoolwide instructional coherence.

- Professional development is teacher driven by request and through surveys to staff. Teachers often design and present workshops, the instructional coach presents workshops based upon teacher requests, as indicated in the Professional Learning Plan. Workshops are conducted by the principal and assistant principals, open to all teachers with a schedule posted in the teacher’s cafeteria and communicated through the principal’s weekly email message containing a link to a professional development interest survey. The professional development committee created a form for teachers to propose future workshops. Teams are systematically analyzing key elements of lesson planning, assessment data and student work. At the question and answer session with teachers, teachers discussed a regular schedule of intervisitations to observe each other and have conversations around formats and sharing of best practices.

- Administrators conduct joint observations that serve as a method of norming and foster a cohesive vision of quality instructional practice. Teachers use data and student work products to drive the direction and content of team meetings with meaningful systems and structures as seen at the English meeting. Opportunities and assigned roles allow teachers to engage in and make schoolwide instructional decisions. Teachers go to outside venues for workshops and subsequently turnkey training to the school staff. Leadership is promoted giving teachers decision-making capacity to plan academic tasks that improve classroom instruction.