Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Long Island City High School
High school 30Q450
14-30 Broadway
Queens
NY 11106

Principal: Vivian Selenikas

Dates of Review:
May 18, 2017 - May 19, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Rosemary Stuart
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

**Instructional Core**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings
The school is structured and organized in small learning communities (SLCs) that reinforce the coherent core values that are the basis for the positive culture.

Impact
There is a safe and respectful environment with a strong culture of student advocacy. Within each SLC, students are well known and supported.

Supporting Evidence

- The school’s core values of diversity, responsibility, ownership, and achievement are reflected in the policies and decisions that are made to bring students into the “sphere of success.” These core values are translated into the languages of the community and disseminated in the Student Handbook. Students take ownership of the programs offered in their school and are active in making their opinions known. The formation of one of the SLCs, the Academy of Wellness and Education, was the result of suggestions made by students who expressed interest in the growing career opportunities for health professionals, fitness trainers, and teaching professions. Senior students determined that they wanted and deserved to have something uniquely for them, across all SLCs, and suggested an internship program be created. Now twelfth grade students who are on track to graduate are eligible to participate in internships and externships such as tutoring fellow students or participating in programs with partners such as the Hospital for Special Surgery.

- Along with changing the program to start later in the day, a decision widely supported by students and staff, school leaders also instituted a grab-and-go breakfast in the lobby of the school so that students could have breakfast and still make it to their first period class faster. Students attributed better on-time attendance to these initiatives, which address the school goals of improving attendance. As a result of these efforts, the attendance rate improved from 84 percent in January, 2016 to the point that by January, 2017 the rate of 86 percent was approaching the schoolwide goal. The culinary SLC has a year-to-date attendance rate of over 89 percent.

- Each SLC is organized to provide personalized support from guidance counselors, social workers, and parent coordinators and to offer specialized programming, such as Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID), to promote the acquisition of college and career success skills such as notetaking and research skills. The core course passing rate for students in the AVID program in the Humanities and Urban Culture SLC increased from the third marking period to the fourth and the passing rate for social studies increased from 77 percent to 84 percent.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Findings**

Teaching strategies across all SLCs do not consistently implement the curricula designed to provide entry points for all students to engage in tasks and discussions. Student engagement in rigorous tasks is inconsistent.

**Impact**

There is uneven demonstration of higher-order thinking and participation in challenging tasks.

**Supporting Evidence**

- There is a schoolwide practice of providing time for students to engage in independent reading in every English class. In one class, students silently read their chosen texts and then were prompted to update their reading logs. However, the teacher proceeded with the lesson on using appositives before allowing students to write in their reading logs, thus missing the opportunity for students to reflect on their reading and reinforce their writing and text citation skills.

- A history teacher created a game for students to explore the impact of the Columbian Exchange. A student commented that she was competitive and wanted to win the game, but the card she picked on her turn required her to “get smallpox, go back to start.” There was a high level of engagement as all students shared their thinking and understandings. In other classes, the level of engagement was not as high. For example, in a science class, the teacher held a teacher-centered whole class discussion during which the same two students were called on to answer direct questions.

- While some student work reflects creativity and imagination, as well as high levels of rigor, these characteristics are not consistent across all classrooms. Students in a culinary arts class worked purposefully to prepare scones following a recipe. Each student understood their role in the process, collaborating to produce a product that was consistent in appearance, quality, and taste. Although some classrooms have translation dictionaries, in one class, an English Language Learner (ELL) student was struggling to copy words from the text with no evident differentiated support.

- School leaders expect teachers to differentiate access to the curricula for all students through the use of scaffolds in the form of customized tasks or customized supports and they provide professional learning opportunities and guidance to support teachers. One plan for a unit on Shakespeare identified possible process and content scaffolds. Although there were examples of both types of scaffolds observed, they were inconsistently implemented in classroom instruction.
### Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Findings

The SLCs have specialized curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. Academic tasks consistently incorporate the instructional shifts and emphasize rigorous habits for all students.

#### Impact

Curricula, accessible for a variety of learners, promote college and career readiness.

#### Supporting Evidence

- The curriculum is unique to each of the SLCs. For example, one SLC with a focus on culinary arts has sequences of courses in hospitality and restaurant management. The Academy of Wellness and Education includes courses on fitness training. School leaders in each SLC review unit and lesson plans to ensure that the aim, learning objective, task, and assessment are all aligned with each other and with the Common Core standards. Feedback to teachers on lesson planning note such practices as emphasizing the development of academic vocabulary or integrating the schoolwide annotation strategy in the extended response task. Supervisors reinforce the importance of designing curricula in alignment with the expectations of the school leaders. One supervisor recommended that a teacher meet regularly with a peer teacher to improve the incorporation of more specific instructional foci in lesson plans.

- Across the school, teachers consistently incorporate the college readiness writing skills of expanding and adding detail to writing using the Writing is Thinking through Strategic Inquiry (WITsi) strategies. For example, an English Language Arts (ELA) lesson plan included an exit ticket with sentence stems framed by the use of the conjunctions, *because, but,* and *therefore.* Another lesson plan emphasizing the skill of parallel revision included a checklist for revising written work to expand sentences by adding details, combining simple sentences into complex sentences using conjunctions, and checking for grammar and spelling conventions.

- Many lesson plans include tasks that are challenging and engaging for students of all ability levels. One math lesson for an Integrated Co-Teaching class included a carousel activity for groups of students to rotate among stations to solve linear, quadratic, and exponential functions. Another co-teaching lesson focused on students presenting their culminating projects about the Holocaust and genocides in the present time. One of the learning objectives for this lesson required students to “evaluate their classmate’s presentations” with respect to content and to make recommendations for improvement. An activity in a chemistry class required students to construct possible isomers for hydrocarbons using a molecular kit.

- Many lesson plans include modifications for ELLs such as glossaries of content specific words, dual language dictionaries, or designated grouping. One lesson plan identified the students that would be paired as “language buddies” to explore the pre-Columbian civilizations of the Americas.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

Across SLCs, teachers use common assessments and rubrics to track student performance. Teachers and students use checks for understanding and self-assessment to monitor the quality of their work.

Impact

Teachers revise curricula and adjust student grouping in response to their analysis of student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers track the continuous reading practices of students during the independent reading time at the beginning of many ELA classes. In one class, students read books of their own choice and were given extra credit if they obtained the book from the library. Students frequently self-assess and provide feedback to peers. Students used the schoolwide writing rubric to give feedback to peers on a paragraph revision for a lesson in Roman history. The directions reminded the students to consider if they would make the same word choices as their writing partner. Another student recommended that their writing partner use their introduction to preview what would be presented in the rest of the essay.

- Teachers and students track the change in score from pre-assessments to post-instructional assessments. A task from April, designed to be similar to a text-analysis response on an English Regents exam, had students note the score they had received on an interim assessment in January and reminded them that they should be aiming for higher scores because they “are now a stronger writer than you were in January.” An assessment analysis focusing on the performance of ELL students indicated that the credit accumulation rate for grades nine and ten students in the dual-language program exceeded the schoolwide rate for the same grades.

- Teachers compiled baseline and end-of-unit performance data on a common task for students across SLCs and analyzed the data to determine how individual students were improving in specific sentence expansion skills. This information was used to identify skill gaps and to determine groupings for future instruction.
Findings

Teachers and school leaders communicate high expectations regarding the focus on preparing for college and career to students and parents beginning in the summer before freshman year.

Impact

Parents are aware of the progress their children are making toward graduation, and students are supported by the guidance programs in their SLCs.

Supporting Evidence

- Programs offered by the SLCs reflect the high expectations the staff has for students to prepare for success in college and career. For example, students have opportunities to develop career skills, such as health and fitness training, lifeguarding, first aid, and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, as well as to earn Career and Technical Education certificates in areas such as culinary arts, hotel and restaurant management, and information technology. Students indicated that they chose to attend the school in order to participate in the specialized programs offered in the SLCs. One student stated, “Not a lot of schools offer culinary… it may help me to get into college.” Other students indicated that they receive guidance support for completing college and financial aid applications.

- Students and parents regularly receive progress cards from their guidance counselors that identify the courses and Regents exams that each student still needs to pass in order to be on track to graduate. The report also highlights the college preparatory courses that students have taken and includes a checklist of college readiness benchmarks, such as earning at least an 80 on a math Regents exam and obtaining at least a 480 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

- Parent newsletters highlight students who are successful in their academic performance as well as their extra-curricular activities. One newsletter celebrated the scholarship a student received and the colleges she had been accepted to attend. Parents are reminded of opportunities to increase their involvement in their children’s education and to be familiar with the graduation requirements.

- Students look forward to participating in the Let’s Get Ready program with Zone 126, a community-based organization, which includes mentoring from volunteer college students and tutoring to prepare for the SAT. Parents indicated that their children are well supported as they prepare for the next level. One parent stated, “They give everything that is needed, plus some, for students to be ready for college.”

- The communication of expectations to students and families begins with the summer bridge program for incoming students and the unit of study on personal identity for students in all SLCs. The identity unit includes activities for students to research colleges they might want to attend and to write about the programs of study at those colleges. One student determined that a college offered geology as a major and noted, “I love exploring and talking about our states and lands.” The student also noted the admission requirements for this college.
### Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Findings**
Teachers collaborate in teams within each SLC and across the school by content areas. These teams regularly analyze data from common assessments and use protocols to examine the qualities of student work.

**Impact**
Collaborations, including intervisitations, focus on improving teaching practices with the goal of improving student performance.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams meet by SLC, department, or grade to examine student work and analyze data to determine changes to instruction and to track student performance. Teachers noted that meeting in department teams helps them cover the same topics and coordinate the pacing of lessons across SLCs. One teacher stated, “We share materials and handouts. It opens you to things that may work better.”

- One team used a discussion protocol to examine data from an assessment of tenth grade skills related to parallel revision, during which students revise their writing to make it stronger in addition to editing it for errors. Teachers summarized their findings and agreed that the use of WITsi strategies was not transferring to social studies and science content writing. In addition, teachers noticed that grammar and spelling skills were not improving and determined that they would spend more time on basic writing skills in addition to emphasizing content vocabulary.

- Teachers regularly conduct intervisitations within departments and SLCs to support and learn from each other. Teachers in the math department collaborated to turnkey a strategy for increasing student to student discussion that was the subject of an off-site professional development session. Six teachers implemented the task in a lesson and others observed the lesson during intervisitations. Teachers who participated in the intervisitation reflected on the experience and noted that students were engaged in productive struggle to solve the problem. They determined the next step would be to find problems from past Regents exams that are similar in order to give the students “more insight into solving them.” Teachers stated that these types of collaborations help improve their pedagogical skills as well as student performance. A physical education teacher reflected that the strategy of using a guide and a scribe for parallel revisions could be adapted for sports training.