Quality Review Report

2016-2017

The Cinema School
High school 12X478
1551 East 172nd St.
Bronx
NY 10472

Principal: Keisha Warner-LoSasso

Dates of Review:
May 16, 2017 - May 17, 2017

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


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>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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>Additional Finding</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 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>
</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>
</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>
### Area of Celebration

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

#### Findings

A culture for learning is established that communicates high expectations shared by staff, families, and students. There is effective communication of expectations connected to a path toward college and career readiness.

#### Impact

As a result of the school successfully partnering with families to support expectations connected to a path for college and career readiness, families play an active role in supporting students throughout the school. The school offers ongoing and detailed feedback and guidance supports that prepare students for the next level of learning.

#### Supporting Evidence

- As stated in interviews with teachers, parents, and students, the school community has clear expectations for pedagogical and professional practice, further evidenced by written communication to all constituents. These expectations include that every student will graduate with the skills and knowledge reflective of a strong and engaging learning environment. The Danielson *Framework for Teaching* is used to communicate high expectation related to preparation and planning, learning environment, and classroom instruction. Parents stated that the principal is available night and day, knows every student, and is a presence in their lives, and that filmmaking as a major course of study has changed their child’s educational life into an avid interest in learning. Students are recognized for their academic achievement as well as for their citizenship. There are whole school assemblies to celebrate Honor Roll and attendance excellence. This is the first year of the National Honor Society to celebrate a culture of academic success and highlight the importance of community involvement. *SchoolMessenger* and *PupilPath* are documented for use by parents and families.

- All school staff consistently supports students’ social-emotional development through respectful conversation, allowing students to have a voice in decisions such as creating student clubs and selecting trips. The school’s high expectation on all levels includes raising attendance and decreasing lateness and incidence reports. There is a full time college advisor through the New York University Advising Corps who brings in admissions officers to meet students, organizes college trips, and facilitates presentations and college night along with student and parent workshops. Teachers share their own experience in college, and there is a college panel hosted by the guidance department to introduce students to a wide range of fields. Parents host a “College Week Breakfast” where counselors and guest speakers from colleges provide presentations on topics such as how to read a transcript and financial aid. Seniors mentor freshmen and teachers meet with students individually throughout each semester to set goals. These efforts lead to a student body that is invested in the school community, a learning environment that is treated with respect and a mutually-respectful tone that is evident in classrooms and hallways.

- School leaders indicated that they use data and input from teacher leaders, teams, and staff members to plan professional learning opportunities that are tailored to teachers’ individual needs. Guidance counselors are in contact with families to further support expectations connected to college and career readiness. The school partners with College Now through Lehman College and students earn college credit while in high school. Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) support the schoolwide strategy for helping all students achieve important social and learning goals. Columbia University participates in the school with a “Respect For All” program that teaches job interview skills, how to deal with micro-aggressions and stages combative vignettes to discuss constructive responses to such events. As a result, the OORS report numbers have gone down, attendance is up and 100 percent of all seniors have applied to college.
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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</table>

Findings
Teaching strategies are aligned to the curricula and reflect the use of Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts. There is consistent use of multiple entry points and appropriately challenging tasks for students in all grades.

Impact
Students are engaged in activities that require high-order thinking skills and discussions, and reflect participation of all learners including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. While teaching practices are aligned across most classrooms, there are some missed opportunities to engage all students in challenging tasks.

Supporting Evidence
- Clear expectations for classroom practice, as outlined in Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*, reinforce schoolwide beliefs about engaging all students. The school has provided professional development to all teachers on synthesizing the Common Core Learning Standards in math and English, and the instructional shifts into all lessons. In addition, teachers participate in various instructional activities in order to gain a range of pedagogical approaches such as analyzing text and citing evidence, assisting students on foundational skills. Lesson plans reflect activities designed with strategic groupings, questions to activate thinking, and graphic organizers to gather information.

- There is use of scaffolding to meet the learning deficits of students with disabilities and ELLs. There was consistent use of multiple entry points in classes observed so that academic tasks challenged all learners. There were extensions to push thinking and broaden the learning experience of some students, though this was not apparent in all classes visited. Questioning and routines were in place in all classes visited; however some students did not always participate in discussions and did not produce higher-order thinking skills in student work products. In a grade nine Global History class, the teacher was circulating while the students were filling out worksheets. Most students were working independently and there was little discussion about the assignment. After a few minutes the teacher asked questions from the worksheet and the students rushed to fill in answers provided from other students. In an Advanced Placement English class on authors’ intentions from varying texts such as *The Handmaid’s Tale* and *The Road*, the class was developing, defending and rebutting evidence-supported claims from their books.

- Teachers are using Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge (DOK)* questioning levels to guide their questioning and providing opportunities for higher-level discussions across classrooms. Most classrooms visited provided small group instruction and connections to the real world by explicitly connecting to concepts of everyday experiences. While many teachers encouraged students to frame their own questions and respond to other students, there were instances of teachers answering student questions instead of reframing and redirecting the questions to other students for discussion. As seen in several classrooms, discussions are student-led and peer collaboration is providing students with opportunities for assessment criteria using peer- and self-assessments.
Findings
School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students.

Impact
All grade levels and subject areas have worked on the integration of the Common Core into everyday practice using the standards and the instructional shifts. Career and college readiness in evident and is tracked by student assessments and accreditations.

Supporting Evidence

- Students are aware of current unit plans as seen in “student-view” charts in every classroom with performance tasks, study skills and due dates. Teachers plan units of study based on The Understanding by Design (UbD) guide including skills focus and performance tasks. This has created a unified language allowing for meaningful discussion where teachers engage in Assessment Driven Instruction (ADI) informed by inquiry cycles based on DataWise by Kathryn Parker. There is writing across the content areas, which was encouraged at professional development (PD) meetings for all teachers and emphasized in particular for math, science and social studies teachers.

- The school is emphasizing the use of more nonfiction texts and to deepen the study and application of math with the instructional shifts. After close analysis of student writing on both summative and formative tests, teachers focus on essential questioning techniques and key standards in reading and writing across the grades. Teachers stated at a team meeting that they are seeking to increase rigor of what students do and know by adapting planned units of study aligned with the Common Core and the Danielson Framework for Teaching to have more level three and four questioning techniques, and that curriculum revisions have been made. For example, the teachers adjusts their unit plans and pacing calendars to instructionally address the skills that may be lacking by adding meaningful resource tools such as graphic organizers or vocabulary charts. Guidance presentations to each grade exists asking, “What do you want, what do you understand and how is it achieved?” Advisory classes are started in grade 11 and include the writing of personal narratives and peer assessments.

- The Institute for Student Achievement (ISA) has provided a math coach to offer tiered approaches to learning through differentiation. The school has no text collections; teachers have created a list of required texts for each grade and aligned rubrics. All planning and co-planning documents are shared on GoogleDocs and all teachers, including teachers of students with disabilities and ELLs, to ensure higher levels of performance tasks and building cognitive engagement through scaffolding. The school’s primary partnership is with Ghetto Film School, a non-profit organization that seeks to support the next generation of filmmakers. As such, film is the foundation of learning at the Cinema Schools and the arts support the academics. There is a Mid-Winter Institute when students focus on their films for one week and work in specialized roles such as director, producer and editor, learning the skills of a professional. Students’ work involves securing locations as well as scheduling and signing out equipment. Students are encouraged to problem solve the challenges and determine their own strengths and weaknesses.
Additional Finding

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

Assessment, including common assessments and ongoing checks for understanding, are aligned to the school’s curricula and used strategically in most classrooms to make adjustments and push students to think critically.

Impact

Most teachers assess student learning effectively, leading to targeted interventions, varied scaffolds and shared instructional planning to meet all student learning needs. Teachers continue to refine curricula and instruction to meet all students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricula units provide evidence that the school is embedding the use of assessment and ongoing checks for understanding into their lesson planning. The principal stated that before every unit teachers give a baseline assessment to modify the units based on data collected and continue to make modifications throughout the year based on data collected from benchmark assessments administered throughout the year. Teachers use notes to gather information about students’ progress during lessons such as conferencing, checklists and quick-writes. Every teacher in the school keeps a disaggregated class summary analytical tool listing students achieving mastery or accomplished level of work, emerging or proficient work, or not achieving minimum level of work. Three specific criteria standards are aligned across grades and subject areas for this assessment.

- Vocabulary development is a major focus, as emphasized in teacher planning, with a language and content area aim. Students across the school are given vocabulary prompts for writing assignments and, as a result, emphasis on higher-order thinking skills positively improve questioning by students, and push student growth in writing as assessed by progress through benchmarks as well as formative and summative assessments. Teachers are adjusting pacing calendars to address lagging foundational skills through targeted instruction. The impact of this structure is that students are making gains as evidenced by midterm improvements on assessment exams for all students, including students with disabilities and ELLs.

- Teachers reported that targeted instruction across all subject areas is grounded in the application of rubrics for student work, and the use of on-going checks for understanding to support the development of skills and next steps to reach greater achievement. Students at the student meeting were quite aware of their progress toward graduation, had goals for careers or college, and one student stated that, “teachers want us to make progress and share all data with us.” Another student stated that teachers model how to use the rubrics to support stronger writing on informational or argumentative paragraphs and is working on a photography project to accompany the text of Fences. Students stated that they journal in math, engage in peer assessments and teachers consistently checking their work, these practices help them to learn from their mistakes.
### Additional Finding

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

The school has established systems for monitoring teaching practice with a clear focus on improving instructional practices with next steps to improve student outcomes.

#### Impact

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

#### Supporting Evidence

- The Staff Development Committee (SDC) analyzes observations and feedback from teachers to determine priorities for planning the instructional PD goals for the entire year. In addition to *Advance* observations, administrators conduct walk-throughs for formative feedback purposes. The walk-through is a follow-up to previous observations’ actionable feedback. School leaders make expectations clear and include teachers in determining PD sessions. Teachers receive support from peers by modeling best practices during intervisitation and mentoring. Department leaders meet regularly with the administrative team to set goals and make school-wide instructional decisions.

- Teachers engage in feedback sessions with administrators and receive a rationale relating to their practice directly aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Next steps include an example of teacher practice, an instructional strategy to apply and a timeframe for when an administrator will return to observe teacher progress. As a result of this cohesive system, teachers are applying instructional skills that support the implementation of the Common Core and there is evidence of changes in instructional practices such as increased opportunities for group and peer discussions.

- Teachers also receive training in the PBIS program to learn how to implement collaborative discipline, such as peer mediation, that reinforces the values of the school community. Common planning, along with teacher planning teams, have assisted in a more uniform implementation of curricula and addressing the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities. This supports all teachers to be on the same page with colleagues on their grade level. GoogleDrive assists this effort as all teachers have access to lesson plans, templates for creating student work and a uniform testing system for all subjects. Grade leaders support new teachers and the school has differentiated professional development based on teacher needs.
### Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Team and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

Teachers consistently examine data and student work with inquiry-based teams. Leadership structures provide a means for teachers to have input on key decisions about curricula and teaching practices.

**Impact**

The work of teacher teams has resulted in improved pedagogy and student progress. Shared leadership structures build capacity to improve student learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- All teachers are members of a grade team and a department team with foci on academics and social-emotional supports for students. Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work including classroom practice, assessment data and student work, supporting each other by providing feedback on next steps to inform instruction. This was evident at the cross departments’ team meeting where a discussion was based on scenes from a film and the related learning goals, such as inference skills and learning to cite evidence. Each teacher had a specific role and all voices were heard. It was discovered while looking at a student writing piece that level 4 vocabulary was missing and annotation skills in citing evidence was not up to a level 4. A discussion ensued on the implications for teaching to get students to achieve the top level. It was determined that an academic vocabulary list was needed as well as sentence starters as scaffolding. It was also decided that a model outline of top-level writing was needed. Visual elements related to narrative writing were determined to be re-taught so students were more able to analyze the work.

- Teachers stated that the administration has given them freedom to explore their students’ needs and to find ways to best address them. Scheduling accommodations by administration are made so that teachers are provided opportunities to observe one another, visit other sites and then turnkey for the entire staff when appropriate. Teachers are adjusting practices based on information shared at the team meetings and are leading PD meetings. Teachers stated that they are responsible for setting agendas and feel empowered to have input on decisions toward the revising of curricula, development of instructional resources, and lesson planning. This has resulted in teachers making key decisions in subject areas that affect student learning and goals such as embedding new strategies to address the needs of students with disabilities and English Language Learners into all lesson plans.

- Teachers record meeting notes in shared GoogleDocs and are provided with weekly opportunities for cross-grade and cross-subject collaborations as well as grade team meetings. Subject teams collaboratively develop uniform pre-and post-unit assessments, midterm exams, projects, test prep task and long-term assignments. They review subsequent student performance and work products to inform planning for future instruction and task development. Teachers formed an accreditation committee and meet to discuss interventions and to analyze academic progress for students who may be in danger of not graduating on time. There is also a School Implementation Team (SIT) that meets to ensure that students with disabilities are moved in a timely manner to the least restrictive environments.