Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Hostos-Lincoln Academy of Science
Secondary School 07X500
600 Saint Ann's Ave.
Bronx
NY 10455

Principal: Nicholas Paarlberg

Dates of Review:
February 7, 2017 - February 8, 2017

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

Hostos-Lincoln Academy of Science 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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 Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>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...**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>
</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>
Findings

School leaders and staff successfully partner with parents to share in high expectations for college and career readiness for all students. Teacher teams perpetuate a learning environment that systematically communicates high expectations and support for all students.

Impact

High expectations include students having ownership of their present educational experience and beyond supported by all stakeholders while parents are able to support their progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- All students are involved in the high school-to-college articulation process. All grade nine students have goal-setting meetings that include focusing on high school requirements and an introduction to the Early College program with Hostos Community College. Grade ten students enroll in their first college courses. All grade eleven students begin Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) prep courses and start college essay writing in Advanced Placement (AP) English courses. By the time students are in their senior year, they are introduced to three college systems, State University of New York (SUNY), City University of New York (CUNY) and private universities. Students visit various campuses. Almost half of all twelfth grade students are on track to graduate with an Associate’s degree this spring.

- During an interview, all students reaffirmed that the school was helpful in communicating high expectations for college and careers on every grade level. All students complete a form called, “My future career assignment” which requires them to answer various questions. An example was presented. A student stated on his form that he would choose the career of a psychologist. The student stated that the job includes studying cognitive and emotional behavior. The work environment includes private sessions or working in a hospital or clinics. Another student stated he wanted to be a market research analyst; stated that the projected growth of the job will go up to nineteen percent by 2024. The student also stated that he needed a Bachelor’s degree in market research, but preferably a Master’s degree. The student stated that he sees himself pursuing this career.

- The principal and assistant principals communicate high expectations to parents and families. The principal sends out a newsletter to parents on a monthly basis. The newsletter includes a list of parent workshops to help them prepare their students for college exams and the application process. The newsletter also gives a save the date for a Hunter College trip on November 21st for grade eight students and November 22nd for grade seven students. All parents interviewed stated that the favorite thing about the school is the college preparation and the communication with the administration through newsletters, emails phone calls and Jupiter. The principal presented a sample log of Jupiter communication from parents to teachers. Subjects included, help with clarity on homework, grades and student progress.
Area of Focus

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

Findings

Teaching practices, such as lower-level questioning, across some classrooms reflect inconsistent levels of student engagement. Student discussions take place in some classrooms.

Impact

There is inconsistent evidence of active participation that is driven by challenging tasks and higher-order questioning in most classrooms visited. Some students demonstrated higher-order thinking skills; however, this was not evident in most classrooms visited.

Supporting Evidence

- A grade eight U.S. History class was observed. Students were reading excerpts from the book *How the Other Half Lives* while annotating parts of the text to address the topic of identifying living conditions faced by the urban poor in tenement housing. During a turn and talk, students were discussing what stood out in the book. Some students were actively engaged. A pair of students who were engaged in the turn and talk were observed. One student stated, “Immigrants from other countries made us a melting pot.” Other students were observed not participating or having a dialogue with one another. One pair of students was asked what they were talking about; one student replied, “I’m not sure what we’re doing.” Another student stated. “We are still highlighting from the book.” Questions that students were required to answer included close-ended questions such as: “What are the two halves the author referred to?”; “Who was on top?”; “Who was on the bottom?”

- During a Physics class, students were observed in whole group as the teacher was speaking about how vectors are used to analyze forces. There was minimal higher-order thinking as the teacher asked lower-order questions. Questions asked were, “What is a graphical vector?”; “What is a resultant vector?” During the classroom visit, there was no designated time for small-group discussion or student share out. Some students had discussions with each other; however, the rules of student engagement were not clear.

- During a grade eight observation of a theater class, students were observed doing a reading from the book, *The Outsiders*. Students were engaged in discussing the readings that were performed by their peers. The teacher stated, “Before we go to chapter five, can someone tell me a couple of things that students did well in chapter four and a few things they could have improved on?” One student stated, “They did a good job; they reflected what the book was trying to say.” Another student stated, “They used a lot of details from the book.” Although there was some student engagement and participation, it was from the same group of students, others did not participate or contribute to the discussion.
Findings

Units and lesson plans reflect rigor for all students. Curriculum and lesson plans are revised based upon student work and data.

Impact

Curricula address needs of all learners including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities with specific supports so that they have access to cognitively engaging tasks that are Common Core aligned.

Supporting Evidence

- An art teacher modified the art unit in order to provide a lesson that aligns with what students were learning in their social studies class. The social studies class was studying Native American culture. The art teacher stated that she modified her lesson based on the needs of her students in social studies. The mini lesson required students to reference prior knowledge from their social studies class on how Native Americans lived and what their homes looked like. The lesson states how students will create Tee Pees using cones and paper. Students were also given handouts of traditional Native American design. The lesson plan also demonstrated vocabulary from the social studies curriculum such as Bull boat, Sioux, Tee Pee, Great Plains, nomad, animism and Shaman.

- A grade nine English Language Arts (ELA) unit plan demonstrates the inclusion of instructional shifts and evidence of supports for ELLs and students with disabilities. The unit is based on the book, *The Shawshank Redemption*. Students are required to cite strong textual evidence to support claims and analysis, and determine a central theme. Supports for students with disabilities include different time allowances for completion, and the use of graphic organizers to assist with note taking. Supports for ELLs include having the option to listen to a recording of the book, grouping to support struggling readers with proficient ones and using a Kindle for highlighting text.

- A grade seven science lesson plan on the study of food chains and food webs incorporates literacy standards as well as science content standards. Literacy standards included following multi-step directions and determining the meaning of symbols and key terms that are specific to the content. The lesson requires students to compare and contrast food chains and food webs, and examine the differences between producers, consumers and decomposers. To address the needs of students with disabilities, students received graphic organizers for additional support. The teacher stated that these were added to the lesson based on the student’s Individualized Education Plan.

- A grade 10 unit was revised to target students with disabilities. Revisions were made to the unit based upon data from the English Regents exam. The teacher focused on writing in social studies and English. For example, document-based questions (DBQ) from the Meiji Dynasty and DBQ from the era of Reconstruction were added to the unit. For example, students will identify and discuss one social, one political, and one economic change in American society that occurred as a result of the Civil War or the period of reconstruction."
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

The school has provided a list of assessments used across grades and subject areas that are aligned to the school's curricula. Rubrics and exit tickets are used in most classes. Common assessments are used to determine student progress and instructional revision.

Impact

Students receive actionable feedback highlighting strengths and next steps. Teachers use student assessment information to make adjustments to instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers presented a writing assignment used as a school-wide assessment. The form illustrates teacher feedback and student reflection. Students write about what they did well, what they should have done better and one or two things which they learned about the process. For example, on a student writing sample on a comparison of the stories *Cool Hand Luke* and *The Shawshank Redemption*, the teacher states, “You did a good job of stating characteristics and supporting with details from the text. Paragraphs should contain one idea and should not contain many ideas put together.” Under student reflection, the student stated, “I think I did well writing about the two character’s backgrounds. I could have done a better job writing about the conclusion. I learned how to write multiple pages and stretch my writing.”

- A rubric entitled “Trait Writing Model: Rubric for Use of Quotes in an Explanation” demonstrated feedback to a grade six student. The rubric has three categories, appropriateness, explanation and importance. The rubric rates the student from one to four. An example presented showed student’s work received a two in each area. The teacher claimed that the quote does not provide information for clear understanding; the explanation states the obvious and the quote does not give facts. Additional quotes included, “Be sure to select quotes that address your question. In the first paragraph be clear what you will prove.”

- The school community uses summative and formative assessments across grades. Formative assessments include exit slips and homework. Summative assessments include DRP reading levels, class assessments, Regents and State exams. These assessments are used to modify the curriculum. For example, on the middle school level, exit tickets and homework demonstrated the need for more reading exercises for students with disabilities. A forty five minute lesson plan rubric was added to the curriculum that emphasized reading.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings
The principal and administrative team support teachers with effective feedback and next steps that capture strengths and weaknesses from classroom observations.

Impact
Feedback includes expectations and accountability for improving pedagogy that include specific strategies and methodology.

Supporting Evidence

- Frequent cycles of observations are conducted by the administrative team with equal distribution of observations from the two assistant principals divided between the middle and high school. An informal observation from November, 2016 shows teacher support of a new teacher that includes next steps with strategies aligned to The Danielson Framework for Teaching. The teacher was rated developing in the areas of designing coherent instruction and managing student behavior. The principal stated that the lesson pace was so slow that it effected student behavior: “This lesson moved slowly, students were looking for forms of entertainment. The content is there; you need some classroom academic structure so that the students are engaged.” The principal required that the teacher map out a week-long unit so that they can look at it together and plan for engagement activities while the teacher is working with small groups so that they can remain on task.

- Following an informal observation of an ELA teacher, the principal noted that although the teacher was effective in all areas of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, the teacher still required feedback for next steps. Under Component 3b, questioning and discussions, the principal stated, “While the teacher may use low-level questions”, she posed some questions designed to promote student thinking and understanding. The principal stated that the teacher effectively used cold-calls to get students engaged, yet could better utilize turn and talk to support an interdependent model.

- An Algebra Regents informal observation was presented, the principal addressed Component 3c, engaging students in learning. The principal stated, “Too much time is spent on one problem, two problems took twenty minutes.” The principal reflected that there was uneven student engagement during the lesson, and also noted that because students are being exposed to new concepts, the teacher has to use checks for understanding so that the feedback is actionable and provides the students with opportunities to develop and understand the material.
### Additional Finding

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

**Findings**

Most teachers participate in structured team meetings that are inquiry-based. Teachers meet to analyze student work and share findings and practices with their colleagues.

**Impact**

In most cases, teacher team meetings result in improvements in teacher pedagogy and student achievement.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The math department presented minutes from a January department meeting. The focus of the team meeting was to look at takeaways from the learning cycle that was completed. One teacher documented in the meeting that they were able to reflect and analyze their exams and realized that they were too lengthy based on the feedback they received from their peers. Another teacher stated that after receiving peer feedback, they will incorporate academic language into the math word problems. The team also discussed adding sprints to improve on stamina because they felt that some students were working at a slower pace and in order to prepare for the State math test, they will have to do better with completing problems in a timely manner. Finally, one teacher stated, “Word problems need to be clearer. When they are too wordy, students get confused.” They stated that testing data showed that students struggled with long word problems.

- During an observation of a special education meeting, teachers of students with disabilities use a tuning protocol during team meetings to examine how they assess students. They looked at a grade seven ELA writing assignment and discussed the rubric attached to the lesson and the graphic organizer. Students were graded at each stage of the writing process. The assignment was writing about the responsibilities of being an older sibling. The team felt that students could brainstorm about what they want to write about to strengthen their writing, rather than have everyone write about the same thing. The rough drafts also showed that teachers should spend more time on the thesis statement and claim. Takeaways also showed that teachers should spend more time on the thesis statement and claim. Takeaways included, writing multiple drafts is helpful and should be utilized; rubrics should be improved to accurately assess and help identify student weaknesses. Additional supports included annotating and peer assessments.

- A science team presented minutes from a February meeting. The team used student reflections and feedback to address areas of concern relating to instruction and student learning. Students felt that Science was “just a text book”. The team discussed the need for multi-experimental environments and the use of lab experiments. The team also discussed how to apply concepts from science to other classes and discussed using a multi-disciplinary approach. The team stated that they would do this by scheduling meetings with other departments, and mold together curriculum maps.