Quality Review Report

2016-2017

High School of Language and Innovation

High school 11X509

925 Astor Ave.
Bronx
NY 10469

Principal: Julie Nariman

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

Lead Reviewer: Buffie Whitfield
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

High School of Language and Innovation 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</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>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 Culture

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

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

## Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<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>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 1.4 Positive Learning Environment | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

A highly supportive and inclusive “melting pot of cultures” that promotes students’ personal growth and academic development is evident throughout the school.

Impact

Students are adopting effective academic and personal behaviors as a result of a nurturing climate and structures.

Supporting Evidence

- Across all grades and throughout each classroom, a warm and nurturing environment is apparent. All staff members respect students and families as evidenced in conversations conducted with parents and students. All students are known by several adults, including school leaders who demonstrate positive rapport with students. Both parents and students believe that school leaders and staff care deeply about the students and have high expectations for them. For example, students shared work products and were eager to explain how the support they receive from their teachers helps them to be a better student. Students also shared that they have several adults that they can go to if they need help, whether it is academic or social/emotional.

- The mantra of the High School of Language and Innovation is the incorporation of appreciation of diversity throughout the school community. Students stated that they love the different cultures in their school and feel the school is their home away from home. They feel they can speak to any adult in the building. The school engages in many initiatives to continue to create high quality culture, such as cultural assemblies and student council meetings, resulting in a decrease in the number of intercultural conflicts as indicated via Online Occurrence Reporting System. On the 2015-2016 School Survey, 90 percent of students stated their teachers respect their culture/background.

- The school has structures in place to ensure that students’ social/emotional learning needs are well met. The guidance counselor, attendance teacher, and parent coordinator meet formally and informally and share anecdotes about their students, resulting in the school’s 88 percent attendance rate. The school’s social/emotional curriculum enables students to learn language and use vocabulary cues to help them express their feelings and frustrations and learn how to complement each other. The positive impact of this curriculum is evident in the classes, cafeteria, and at recess. A decrease in the number of referrals to the Pupil Personnel Team has resulted. Additionally, the school has partnered with Bronx Arts Ensemble and Korea Taekwondo. Through Bronx Arts Ensemble, the school offers elective courses such as hip hop, fashion design, guitar, keyboard, chorus, African dance, sculpture, and visual arts to support students. The school has extensive after-school programs that offer students and their families a variety of supports, such as homework help, test prep, and arts enrichment programs. Parents readily share their satisfaction with the school’s administration and faculty. Students are welcomed warmly, reminding them of the communal inclusivity of their school.
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

Differentiation and other instructional strategies across classrooms provide appropriately challenging and rigorous learning opportunities that promote high achievement. The use of strategic extensions fosters higher-order thinking as demonstrated through student work products and discussions.

Impact

Across classrooms, multiple entry points support student engagement in rigorous tasks. However, supports and extensions are not always strategically planned so that all learners, including English as a New Language students (ENL), have opportunities to be highly engaged and demonstrate critical and analytical thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use Smartboards to display visuals and discuss the content and skills being taught throughout their lessons. Currently, there is an emphasis on Danielson 3b, “Using questioning and discussing techniques to engage all learners and increase student participation in discussions.” Because of this, teachers use questions to guide the class discussion. In a United States history class, the teacher asked, “Why did the Cold War lead to an arms race?” The teacher did a quick review of World War II to build comprehension of the two super powers and then asked students to stop and jot their thoughts. Students stopped and jotted causes and effects of the Cold War to memorialize their thinking.

- Many teachers provide multiple entry points for English as a New Language (ENL) students as well as learning extensions for higher achieving students. In a few classes, higher performing students were assisting students who struggled with content. In a science class, differentiated scaffolds or supports were not evident, and groups of learners struggled with the activity. Moreover, a group was waiting for further directions from the teacher rather than engaging in a learning extension.

- Across classrooms, students had structured opportunities to engage in tasks on their own or with their peers to build critical thinking skills through an intense focus on project-based and problem-based instruction. In some classrooms, however, tasks are still heavily scaffolded and teacher-directed, hindering student independence and ownership. In a math class observed, students were given opportunities to demonstrate their thinking and justify their answers. In the group practice segment of the lesson, students were observed explaining which formula and strategy they used. Students used the following problem solving protocol: by yourself, start teamwork, explain in your own words, and respond.
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

The school uses curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that promote college and career readiness. The curricula and academic tasks are refined using multiple sources of data collected across classrooms.

Impact

The curricula implemented build coherence through dual language by promoting cognitive challenge for all, including ENL students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have led faculty through the process of analyzing standards and refining curricula to integrate the CCLS, including essential questions, academic vocabulary, and common formative and summative assessments. 80 percent of students are newcomer English Language Learners (ELLs), with approximately 52 percent of the population speaking Spanish as a native language, while the other 48 percent of students speak Bengali, Arabic, Albanian, French, English, or Chinese. To support students, teacher teams refine units to focus on areas of student need identified through analysis of data and student work. Data revealed that students needed support with acquisition of language. Consequently, teachers revised portions of the English, math, science, and social studies curricula to link content with academic vocabulary. Lesson plans identify supports for ELLs and students with disabilities, while each unit of study across all content areas includes modifications for ELLs, students with disabilities, and advanced students.

- The principal and teachers concur that curricula are live documents that are revised frequently to address the needs of students. Teachers plan and refine curricula in teams using a schoolwide unit planning document that includes key skills and essential concepts, key vocabulary, sentence frames and other linguistic scaffolds, and anticipated misconceptions. Teachers create adapted texts in English Language Arts (ELA), ENL, science, and social studies classes in which students paraphrase the meanings of words and text chunks in their own words, resulting in an increase in the number of grade nine students passing English from 81 percent in 2015-2016, marking period five, to 94 percent in 2016-2017, marking period five.

- Administrators and teachers have spent considerable time over the years, including summer planning time, reviewing, and revising curricula in all content areas and aligning units of study to the CCLS. This revision includes key skills and essential content, key vocabulary, and the increase of linguistic supports like sentence frames across ELA and social studies classrooms. Additional activities incorporate annotation of non-fiction texts in English, science, and social studies, and adopted learning guides in global history and living environment. In Earth science and chemistry courses, teachers incorporated research where students work in teams and give presentations. The development of the grade nine economics curriculum parallels grade nine algebra to increase the practice of financial literacy, statistics, and word problems.
## 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

School leaders and staff align assessments and grading practices, analyzing data from student learning outcomes to make curricula and instructional adjustments on the grade and classroom level. Teachers use ongoing checks for understanding to inform their instructional practices, ensuring that they meet the needs of all learners.

### Impact

The use of common assessments and the data analysis that follows allow teachers to make effective instructional adjustments to improve student achievement.

### Supporting Evidence

- During classroom visits, there was evidence of teachers checking for understanding throughout the lesson. The use of checklists, cold calling, paraphrasing, and exit slips as well as double-entry journals and conferencing with students was observed across classrooms. In a global history class, the teacher walked around the class to observe students' answers. The teacher made in-the-moment lesson adjustments when a few students struggled expressing their comprehension of the material. In an English class, the teachers used a quick-check sheet to assess students’ learning. The sheet included the names of the students and a check was placed next to those students who missed or were unable to answer certain questions from the assigned lesson. Teachers used the data gathered to develop their purposeful learning groups.

- The school uses mock Regents to refine units, make adjustments in activities and lessons, target students who need supplementary tutoring or who can advance further, and inform instructional groupings in classes. Item analysis of Regents exams are used to adjust curriculum and target areas of need in instruction. Departments administer common assessments in teams and use the results to determine what topics and skills need to be reviewed or practiced in “mixed review” as well as to inform instructional groupings and identify students who need small group instruction. Student achievement improved in English and math classrooms due to increased alignment to the CCLS. In a comparison of fifth marking period grades from 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 schoolwide, there was a 15 percentage point increase in the number of students earning a grade of 80 and above in ELA grades and a 12 percentage point increase in the number of students earning a grade of 80 and above in math.

- The use of varied assessments and data analysis of these have resulted in increased student performance. In January 2017, the number of seniors passing the ELA Regents doubled from the previous year due to continual use of mock assessments. Administration analyze common assessment outcomes and meet with teachers to examine scholarship results and teacher plans for responding to student deficits. This helps teachers to plan more effectively based upon assessment results. The principal also meets with students to discuss progress and to ensure that each student is receiving necessary support to realize improvement.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

Findings

The principal and staff provide opportunities through workshops in various languages for families to learn about their children’s progress and to support and assist them with the next level of learning. Teacher teams consistently communicate expectations to prepare students for advancement to the next level.

Impact

High expectations are part of all systems in the school’s operation, thus offering clear direction towards student progress and college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Parents shared that teachers offer guidance and support and regularly send updates on their children’s progress via phone and email. During the parent meeting, it was shared that school leaders and teachers have an open-door policy, allowing them to visit at any time during the school day to discuss their children’s social and academic progress. Parents stated that the school offers workshops on the CCLS to help them better understand the expectations of those standards. Moreover, staff hold several orientations, Family FAFSA Day, and College Information Day. Additionally, other communication systems, such as an online grading program, used effectively schoolwide to monitor student progress and track student data, has increased communication between the school and parents. On the 2015-2016 School Survey, 92 percent of parents stated that their children’s school communicates with them in a language and in a way that they understand.

- Teachers and staff have established a culture for learning through various modalities. Students shared that they have to pass English with a grade of 75 percent or higher on the Common Core ELA Regents; math with a grade of 70 percent or higher on the Algebra or Geometry Regents; attain two credits of algebra 2; and take the highest level classes/Regents every semester. All of these ventures resulted in an eight percentage increase in the number of seniors with college-ready scores on algebra or English examinations in January 2017. On the 2015-2016 School Survey, 85 percent of students stated that adults help keep them on track for college or careers. Each grade is supported through differentiated initiatives. Orientations share information about everything from expectations for high school to family FAFSA and college information. As an extension to college and career initiatives, an outside organization, Futures and Options, facilitates college and career awareness workshops.

- The parent coordinator, teachers, and guidance staff facilitate various workshops such as tutoring and supporting parents in learning English, partnering with parents to support academic, and social/emotional achievement. Additionally, parents stated that, because teachers update grades regularly, they have access to live information regarding their children’s progress, and they praised the school’s guidance counselors and teachers for keeping them informed of the additional academic supports the school has made available for students. These extensive structures of the school community have engaged families as partners and have resulted in an eighty percent graduation rate.
Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations in teams that analyze assessment data and student work and promote the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards.

Impact
Through professional learning community team collaboration, teachers’ instructional capacity and the progress toward goals for groups of students have improved.

Supporting Evidence
- The teacher teams, department teams, and grade teams drive support for teachers and students. The department teams collaborate to write syllabi and unit plans that ensure appropriate tasks are embedded in content courses with consistency across classes. Teacher teams examine student work to identify characteristics or trends of an individual or group to determine where support is needed. Teachers realized students needed vocabulary and grammar mini-lessons to improve writing. Thus, they integrated guides to provide students with a framework. Teachers brainstorm to make modifications, decide actions to take, and execute unified team action plans. Teachers also participate in intervisitation. They discuss findings and prepare feedback for the teachers they visit. Teachers agreed these visits are helpful in improving their own practice.

- Teachers are provided with an opportunity to attend professional development outside of the school, and are expected to share and turnkey their learning with their colleagues during team meetings. Guidance counselors, social workers, the dean, and classroom teachers meet to assess student work and discuss student progress. Teachers appreciate this extended time to work together with colleagues. Grade-level leaders and content area teachers use team meetings to make decisions that are then proposed to the principal for schoolwide initiatives. Teachers schedule visits to one another's classrooms, provide instructional materials and documents for one another, and give each other feedback on strategies in their classrooms. As a result, teachers' opportunities for leadership are being strengthened schoolwide, as teachers collaborate on a regular basis and contribute to key decisions that affect student learning.

- Teachers noticed that on 2015-2016 ELA Regents exam, students' writing and exam results indicated that students copied chunks of text in their essays rather than paraphrasing or using quotes. Teachers integrated scaffolds, such as sentence starters, to support students' writing. Consequently, students were able to understand the text and used the scaffolds to explain their thoughts. Similarly, science, and global history exams showed that students had difficulty explaining the meaning of text and diagrams. Teachers implemented more graphs and visuals into their lessons, which improved students' comprehension skills.