Quality Review Report

2016-2017

High School of World Cultures

High School 12X550

1300 Boynton Ave.
Bronx
NY 10472

Principal: Ramon Namnun

Dates of Review:
March 27, 2017 - March 28, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Buffie Whitfield
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

High School of World Cultures 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](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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
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</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>Developing</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>Additional Finding</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

To what extent does the school...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>Additional Finding</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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<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>
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<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>Area of Focus</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings
Common assessments, such as mock-Regents, are used to gauge student progress. However, there is remaining work around effectively using data to make meaningful classroom level instructional and curricular modifications so that all students, including English language learners (ELLs), students with disabilities, and higher level students increase their mastery.

Impact
Teachers’ use of data analysis from assessments, informs curricula revisions, and instructional adjustments.

Supporting Evidence
- Common assessments are given throughout the year to monitor students’ progress towards grade level proficiency. These assessments include mock-Regents. The school has established grading policies. However, students during the interview did not know the grading policies for their classes or requirements needed to be successful in those classes.

- Teachers use rubrics across grades and subjects to assess student work. During the student meeting, students spoke about using rubrics in class. Students use online grading platforms to inform them of their progress. In most classrooms, rubrics were on student work and posted on bulletin boards, provided during the student meeting, and viewed across the school.

- Teachers analyze Regents data to measure student growth and to identify gaps of understanding. Teachers performed an item analysis and noticed that students struggled with understanding and analysis of a written passage and students failed to write both the thematic and Document-Based Question (DBQ) essay on the global history examination.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 5.1 Monitoring and Revising Systems | Rating: | Developing |

Findings
The school is developing monitoring systems to ensure rigorous instruction across all classrooms and effective teacher teams so that all students achieve mastery of Common Core Learning Standards goals.

Impact
There are missed opportunities to meet the needs of students through coherent policies and practices, and making the best use of the instructional materials available to the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Weekly common planning meetings provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect on the curricula they have designed, and to look at student work to assess challenges and determine adjustments needed. The school states they use Tri-State Rubric to evaluate the quality and rigor of curriculum materials, tasks, and assessments. Teachers were unable to share about the process of assessing curriculum alignment to the Common Core and overall curriculum implementation. Additionally, it was not clear that there are specific protocols in place for teachers to receive feedback around their curriculum maps. Teachers developed units of study alone and/or with consultants. The school is developing a process to evaluate its effectiveness.

- School leaders observe teachers frequently. In some cases, administrators are not normed or calibrated in their feedback. An administrator will observe a teacher one day and another administrator will observe the same teacher the next day. Additionally, although teachers are involved in an inquiry group to improve students’ academic outcomes, protocols to share team findings on an ongoing basis are less formalized. This limits teachers’ capacity to fully evaluate students’ varied learning needs and make purposeful data-informed decisions on implementing new instructional approaches that maximize students’ achievement across content areas.

- There is no formalized plan to meet to evaluate and adjust assessment, grading practices, curriculum and instruction, to meet the demands of Common Core standards and support the diverse learning needs of all students. This results in highly inconsistent levels of rigor observed in the classes and/or the lack of checks for understanding across classrooms.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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Findings
Curricula and academic tasks inconsistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order thinking for all students. Curriculum planning is beginning to provide access for all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities.

Impact
Consequently, not all students are consistently engaged in coherent and rigorous curricula that emphasizes higher-order skills.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use varied models of templates to plan their lessons. Some teachers use pre-existing modules and others create their own. For example, a lesson in living environment challenges students to determine their stance to solve a mystery using DNA. While lessons like this push student thinking and provide rigorous content-based tasks, others are inconsistent in the emphasis of rigorous tasks and higher-order thinking skills. In addition, tasks for some students do not consistently reflect high levels of rigor. As an example, in a global history lesson plan, all students were assigned identical low-level tasks that did not reflect opportunities for high levels of student thinking and engagement. Across classrooms, students used worksheets. During the student interview, some students did not have artifacts demonstrating their work and some students stated the work is not challenging. Hence, 17 students out of 154 students passed the Global History Regents for June 2016.

- Planning reflects inconsistency of opportunities for diverse students to have access to the curriculum. For example, an English lesson plan indicates objective, essential questions, standards, content and language objective, groupings, vocabulary, prior knowledge, materials, guided and individual practice, closing, and vocabulary. The lesson plan did provide opportunities for diverse learners. However, most lesson plans noted strategies such as providing students with vocabulary support or graphic organizers, though the strategies noted in lesson plans were not consistently specific to individual students. Lesson plans did not provide evidence of planning for a refinement of curricula and tasks so that ELLs would have access to the task. Teachers across content areas align curriculum to the Common Core Learning Standards.

- Most lesson plans provide evidence of planning for alignment to Common Core across content areas. However, planning for rigorous habits and higher-order skills is inconsistent across subjects and learners. Specific differentiation to provide access for higher and lower performing students was ambiguous. Additionally, many lesson plans did not incorporate discussions to evoke critical thinking which further hinders student access. While learning objectives were in evidence in most curricula documents reviewed, the maps did not include purposeful modifications for ELLs or high performers. Therefore, opportunities for students to be prepared for their next academic level were uneven across grades and subjects. Hence, 25 students out of 167 students passed the Common Core Algebra Regents for June 2016.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into curricula or discussions.

Impact

There is uneven engagement in higher-order thinking in student work products, thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Students were afforded opportunities to engage in partnership discussions across some classrooms visited, but there were uneven levels of student thinking and participation. In an English Language Arts (ELA) class, the teacher asked Level 1 Depth of Knowledge questions such as, “Which West African civilization is important?” “What is the most important civilization?” Students called out responses and one male student had his head down. Though, a discussion rubric was posted in the classroom, the teacher did not reference it and students responded to the teacher with no peer interaction. Student to student interaction and discussion was inconsistent across the classrooms. Students who participated in class discussions by responding to teacher-generated questions are beginning to use a discussion rubric. In a few classes, students were prompted to turn and talk but the conversation resulted in students being off track without mutual accountability to each other.

- In an English class, the teacher asked students to collaborate with team members to explain the definition of “pacifist.” When prompted, the students were unable to answer. The teacher shared that “a pacifist is like a pacifier. It is like what babies put into their mouths.” The teacher continued the lesson without clarification. In another class, the teacher asked students to use a rubric to evaluate a children’s book. Although students had a rubric, the teacher allowed students to call out ratings without justification or evidence.

- During a math class, in groups, students worked on the same question. Although some students explained their thinking, other students did not have the opportunity to share different strategies. Additionally, prompts to support students’ thinking to use academic language and engage in a high-level thinking discussion were limited. Thus, preventing students’ engagement in tasks that result in higher level thinking for all learners reaching their potential. In another math class, the teacher asked and answered questions with little student input. The teacher asked questions such as, “What is step 1?” and “What do we do?” Students called out and shared responses chorally. As the teacher modeled the problem from the board, a few students memorialized the material in their notebooks while others were off-task.
### Findings

School leaders are in the process of communicating a set of clear and consistent expectations for all staff members. Teachers are inconsistently communicating high expectations for all students.

### Impact

Although the community is beginning to implement policies designed to raise expectations to promote staff and student learning, there is inconsistent communication of high expectations to students.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school recently has begun many initiatives, such as AM/PM school. Students reported being unaware of any scholarship opportunities. Parents and students did not know the basic graduation requirements. Students shared that there is lack of guidance support and recently the school acquired a guidance counselor. As a result, the school in 2015-2016 received 0 percent on their 4-Year College Readiness Index and only 5 percent of students met City University of New York’s standards for avoiding remedial classes and graduating college ready.

- School leaders, through the observation process, convey expectations to teachers by providing feedback. The team is in the process of using student work as part of the observation process to ground expectations and impact teacher learning. School leaders communicate high expectations by engaging staff in a mock Quality Review. Teachers rated the school on all ten indicators and shared the school’s practice is developing.

- Students stated that the college process starts in the senior year. During the interview, freshmen through seniors shared they wished that they had more assistance with the college process - application, financial aid, and essays. As such, in 2015-2016 only 4 percent of Black and Hispanic males in the lowest third citywide, graduated.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

School leaders ensure that teachers across grade levels engage in structured professional collaborations and the use of inquiry is emerging. A distributive leadership structure is strengthening and leadership capacity is being built.

Impact

As a result, collaboration is beginning to improve instructional practices and teachers are beginning to be a part of decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Distributed leadership is developing across the school. The school has more than 75 percent new staff. With the emergence of new staff, teams are trying to build capacity and instructional coherence. The teacher lead positions have been fluid.

- Collaboration is beginning to improve. The teacher team observed and plan a lesson together. Teachers shared that students struggled with comprehension and academic vocabulary. The newly formed team has been working together since January. Overall, although agendas reviewed indicated that teams meet regularly to discuss their practice and to adjust lessons, there was a lack of evidence linking this practice to student progress.

- Most of the teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations and an inquiry approach is developing across the teams. For example, English teachers on the team had a role on the team such as facilitator or recorder. Teachers analyzed data from common assessments, looking for leverage points for further research. After scoring assessments, they analyzed the results to determine the learning gaps. Other subject specific teams are at different phases of the inquiry approach. At other departmental meetings, topics range to administrative, socio-emotional concerns, attendance, strategies for teaching and progress with individual students on common assessments but consistent analysis of data and student work to improve pedagogical and student achievement varies across teams.