Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Mott Haven Community High School
High school 07X557
455 Southern Blvd
Bronx
NY 10455

Principal: Helene Spadaccini

Dates of Review:
February 28, 2017 - March 1, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Heidi Pierovich
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

Mott Haven Community High School serves students in grade 10 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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</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>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 Focus</td>
<td>Developing</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>
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<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>Well Developed</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

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<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>Proficient</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>Proficient</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>
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</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>
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</table>

Findings

The school’s approach to culture building, discipline, and social-emotional support are informed by a theory of action, which is combined with advisory structures in place throughout the school.

Impact

The theory of action results in a safe environment and inclusive culture that support progress toward yearly goals and meaningfully involves student voice. All students are known well by more than one adult.

Supporting Evidence

- The advisory structure, which has been in effect since the school’s inception, is embedded into the fabric of this transfer school, such that administration, cabinet, staff, and students all participate. Social and emotional supports are provided in advisory, where team building activities promote positive relationships between students. Advisory supports students through several measures. Students receive progress reports every two weeks and the advisor reviews these with their students, providing supports for areas of growth and celebrations and awards for achievement. Advisors are not alone in this effort, as teachers conference with students, updating them on areas on which to work weekly. Advisors also refer students to tutoring and Saturday school, and coordinate attendance and behavior. Through the advisory program and the afterschool clubs, students continually work on their personal behaviors with the help of advisors and counselors.

- Student voice is highly respected. One student told of how she has grown from a shy student to one who has adapted to this welcoming environment. “I was asked to do a speech for the [town hall] to explain my experience. I was nervous and they said my voice matters to new comers.” Monthly town hall meetings are organized and presented by students, as each advisory takes turns to facilitate the meetings where the whole school attends. Student voice in the classroom is an outgrowth of advisory and is demonstrated in special classes such as construction and rap studio. A level of maturity and respect for all pervades the school. This is evident in that there are minimal discipline issues at the school. One student stated and others agreed, “I love how [students] accept everyone, no matter who you are, gay, lesbian, from other countries; we are all the same and have respect for each other.” As a transfer school, students are overaged and under credited. Another student summed it up, “We all have the same purpose, to graduate.”

- Many clubs are aligned to academic and personal behaviors. For example, one such program is the rap therapy program, known as rap studio or called studio by students for short, which started as a club and has grown into a major component of the school. Students who attend studio write songs, music, record, mix, produce it, and perform at the annual showcase. A student stated with intensity, “I never liked to come to school before studio. I do not come late anymore, because if you are late, you can’t go to studio or do make up work and [studio] helps me go to school.” Attendance has also improved as students are provided with incentives that are meaningful.

- Advisory and counselors also support a consistent college and career focus through programs for Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) prep, college trips, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) family night, college application week, college-gear day, and career week. Students earn paid internships through the school-to-work program. Students know that if they do not attend school, they lose hours and could ultimately lose their internship. Students stated that they learn important life skills such as navigating to work, job training, writing resumes, interviewing, communicating, and balancing work, school, and home-life responsibilities. The counselors support students’ social-emotional and academic skills. One counselor is dedicated to ensuring that students graduate. Each student has an individual graduation plan that is shared with their family and other counselors.
Findings
The school is developing their use of common assessments to measure student progress toward instructional and individual goals. Across classrooms, teachers’ assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact
Teachers inconsistently used results to adjust curricula and instruction or make effective in-the-moment adjustments to meet students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Staff determined a need to improve data to inform instruction. To that end, last year staff adopted data-driven instruction in all of their classes, such that teachers give a predictive assessment at the beginning of the semester. Teachers analyze the data from the predictive assessments, using the data to create Corrective Action Plans and to address the gaps in students’ content knowledge and skills. Additionally, it is intended that staff use formative assessments to assess students’ progress and adjust instruction and curricula continuously. Although mid-year data does show that there have been some gains based on predictive assessments and January Regents exams, the Corrective Action Plans have general changes to be made to future lessons. These general changes do not designate where in the curricula these will be implemented, nor provide clarity as to the impact of these plans after being taught. Both the data and discussions reveal that staff are uncertain as to whether the plans were effective. This is unclear because there is no measurement to determine the effectiveness of these plans across subjects.

- It is evident that in the English Language Arts (ELA) department teachers are using data to track student progress. Teachers can see growth for some students in their writing process and ultimately in the Regents exams, such as a 20 percent increase on the predictive pre- and post-assessment. However, in other subjects the impact of the use of data to inform instruction and differentiation is not as clear. In the history department, there is one data tracker, but although the formative assessment does demonstrate growth on test part one versus part two, it is unclear as to whether data was used to inform teaching and curricula. Across grades and subjects, although there is some growth on some Regents exams, the incremental growth on student formative assessment is uneven and does not demonstrate how this data is used to inform curricula and instruction. Additionally, it is unclear as to how they are tracking student growth toward goals. Schoolwide, all teachers are not yet able to track student performance and progress towards meeting instructional and individual student goals.

- The expectation is that teachers will know their students and determine the best method for checking for understanding based on the task and students’ needs. Staff are expected to use questioning and some form of documentation. In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) US history class, as students responded to peers’ posts on a blog, the teacher walked around checking for understanding and collecting evidence on a clipboard, and made an adjustment to direct students to consider the consequences for asking other countries for help. Similarly, in an ELA class, while students facilitated their own group’s discussion the teacher moved from group to group noting who responded with evidence and used accountable talk stems. This teacher also made an adjustment when students were stuck on one point by posing a question that supported the group to move forward. Yet these practices were inconsistent across classes, as not all classes collected data or checked for understanding, adjusting to support student learning. In a geometry class the teacher asked questions but did not check for understanding across the class, accepting only a couple of answers as if all understood. In a living environment ICT class, although the teacher had a clipboard, it remained blank as she moved from group to group checking in with students.
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

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects for all students including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Impact

The faculty builds coherence and promotes college and career readiness for all students through rigorous curricula in all subjects that is meant to be cognitively engaging.

Supporting Evidence

- The faculty and administration use EngageNY as a base for several curricula and create their own. Each year, staff spend time during the summer vacation to make curricula adjustments based on previous year's data. Lesson plans are rooted in the Common Core Learning Standards, content standards, and the instructional shifts. Staff create student-friendly objectives as “I can” statements across grades and subjects. For example, in an algebra two/trigonometry lesson, “I can accurately identify the sides of a triangle, I can accurately solve for an angle in a triangle, and I can accurately solve for a missing side in a triangle.”

- Lessons are planned using the workshop model, where the teacher first demonstrates using the “I do” method, then the class works together in a “we do” activity, and finally students work independently on a “you do” activity. Most lessons follow an agreed-upon format that includes a brief overview, higher-order questions, an aim, differentiation or modifications, and assessments. Lessons follow the workshop model using a do now, mini-lesson, independent practice, and summary reflection. Additionally, during intervisitations, staff determined a need to provide anyone picking up a lesson an understanding of where in the unit the lesson falls. To this end staff note the days of the week, period, unit, and a brief synopsis. For example, in an American government lesson, it lists that on Tuesday, February 28 during periods five and six, the focus is on the Articles of Confederation. Staff develop and list higher-order thinking questions, vocabulary to front-load, and assessments that are in support of the enduring understandings presented in each lesson. In preparation for returning absentee students, staff plan for their introduction to the current lesson.

- Staff plan lessons to meet increasing steps of rigor, through spiraling higher-order thinking questions and tasks. Staff include multiple questions to support students moving toward deeper understanding of the task. For example, in an English lesson, students were asked to “Discuss and write about where the opportunities arise in the story Yertle the Turtle that can be seen as examples of Marxist.” Similarly, in a US government lesson, “Could we have survived as a nation under the Articles of Confederation? Explain your response.”

- With a student population of approximately 40 percent ELLs and students with disabilities, staff intentionally develop curricula documents that emphasize higher-order skills for all students by incorporating differentiations to making it accessible for all. To support students in rigorous tasks, the instructional focus is two-fold, argumentative writing and academic discourse. In an ICT US government lesson, tasks were leveled which scaled up to meet the objective of explaining the strengths and weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation. Similarly, in a geometry lesson, student grouping includes leveled practice problems. Those who continue to struggle will be provided support during Academic Intervention Service (AIS).
Additional Finding

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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 are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best. Lessons inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula, so that tasks and discussions are not always accessible to all students.

Impact

As defined by the instructional shifts in the Common Core Learning Standards and the Danielson Framework for Teaching, all students including ELLs and students with disabilities, are not yet sufficiently engaged in high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Staff believes that students learn best through instruction that is differentiated and multiple points of entry are provided to meet the individual needs of students. With a student population of 40 percent students with disabilities and ELLs, staff believe students require opportunities to hold academic conversations as it supports their learning. Staff are expected to support student learning as the facilitator as students work in flexible, data-determined groups. However, these practices are inconsistently implemented across classrooms.

- In a couple of classes, a high level of academic discourse was evident in student-to-student discussions, while in others it was uneven. In an ELA class, students facilitated student-to-student discussion of how incidents in Yertle the Turtle align with Marxist beliefs. Students contributed and used accountable talk stems, when they agreed or added on to each other's comments. Similarly, in an ICT US history class students created a conversation in a blog as they posted comments based on evidence from texts. Yet this was not consistent across grades and subjects. Although students did have an opportunity for a quick pair-share in a Spanish class, the level of discussion varied across groups. Students continued to work on the task of summarizing using different wording, with some merely working independently while sitting together. Likewise, in a geometry class, students were paired and discussion was uneven with some pairs speaking and others not. In an ICT ELA class the pacing of the mini-lesson went long and the questioning from teacher to student and back again with a ping-pong effect engaged only those who answered. The teacher accepted answers without probing further or encouraging student-to-student conversation.

- Differentiation and multiple entry points are expected across classes. In an ICT American history class, students watched a video and worked on individual computers to post responses to each other's blogs, providing students with multiple entry points. In a living environment class, students used cards of organs to create their own visuals of the order of organ systems. In a construction class, students worked on wiring an electric socket and then determining with a lightbulb if it was up to code, completing a hands-on real-world example. But not all classes provided multiple entry points or differentiation. In an ICT ELA class, students followed directions to fold a blank piece of paper to create a graphic organizer for vocabulary, but no vocabulary words were provided for its use during the visit. Similarly, in a trigonometry class, students worked in pairs to solve problems. Although sitting together, students mainly worked individually and turned to support their partner at times. When the partner was unable to support the peer, the teacher was called over. Although the teacher used total physical response to demonstrate a concept, the student remained unable to solve the problem.
Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff. Faculty effectively communicate expectations around college and career readiness and successfully partner with families.

Impact

Administration provides training for these high expectations, resulting in a culture of mutual accountability for those expectations. Families support student progress toward high expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Parents stated they communicate with the school through many venues including emails, texts, phone calls, and Jupiter Grades. Parents stated they are highly pleased with the consistent communication with administration and staff, whether it is about attendance or achievement, internships, or applying to college. Parents stated that staff communicate areas to improve and positive messages, including incentives and certificates. One parent stated and others agreed, “It is the whole person that [staff] are dealing with and making sure they are on-track and that we are aware of what our child is doing. We communicate and it is a win-win situation.”

- Parents stated that they check the grading program, Jupiter Grades, to help them know where their children are succeeding or need help, the number of credits earned, or additional needs to graduate. Students agreed that they also check Jupiter Grades often, “to be on top of the graduation goal.” All students have a teacher-advisor who coordinates support for college and career readiness and acts as a liaison between the student’s teachers and parents. Students and parents agreed that advisors and counselors support students as they develop their skills and talents to determine college and career steps. Students attend College Now classes held at Hostos Community College. Students stated that this has supported their understanding of college and what to expect when they attend. Additionally, students attend monthly day-long college trips learning about applications, college life, and courses. Teachers support students as well by reviewing the bi-monthly progress report. Parents stated, “[Staff] treat the students like they are adults and this is how the world works and gives them respect.”

- Teachers set individual goals toward professional growth aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching in the areas of questioning and discussion and student engagement. These goals are also tied to monthly professional development opportunities, which are aligned to the schoolwide goals. Professional development provides all teachers and their special education co-teachers with a focus on lesson study. Lesson study began mid-year as an adjustment to the needs of staff and students. Administration conducts a cycle of observations, but also short visits that include actionable feedback highlighting areas of focus and growth. Administration uses observations to support teacher growth toward high expectations, as evident in teacher observations and noted in Advance. Although staff create and present professional development, administration frames it and ties it back to the schoolwide expectations. Reaching toward goals is a mutual partnership.

- To support students to be college and career ready, the school provides students with course syllabi, which provides expectations for students and families regarding content, homework, and study habits. Students and parents spoke of college trips, and a student stated this has helped him to select schools to apply to. Parents also attend workshops on applications and financial aid. Parents have two-way communication with staff. Parents stated wholeheartedly that this partnership is rooted in consistent communication between the school personnel, including teachers, counselors, and administration. Staff agreed and stated, “We are a family and work as a community to support students.” A parent stated that her daughter is shy and would always ask her to speak to teachers. The mom is proud because now that the counselor spoke with her daughter, the daughter is now able to speak with the teacher as her own advocate.
### Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

### Impact

Professional collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards, strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers who have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are engaged in several teams. Content teams meet during preparation periods, weekly in concert with their special education co-teachers, to support coherent planning. Additionally, all teachers have common planning time embedded into their daily schedules, which occurs during zero period for the whole school. This empowers teachers to meet by content, with the English as a New Language (ENL) teacher or teachers of special education, for collaborative work during the school day and to engage in professional learning.

- One of the teacher teams demonstrated the protocol for lesson study, to analyze student work and data in relation to the lesson plan expectations. Teachers shared with their colleagues a lesson plan with a few examples of student work. Colleagues provided each other with areas of strength and actionable feedback for areas of need, to be posted on a live shared online document. Their next steps include using the student work to determine next steps in review for their following period of common planning time. Teachers express how they support students to learn for themselves, striking a balance when working collaboratively so as not to lean too much on each other. Team members agreed that this has helped them to improve their own practices as, “We are our own resources and rely on one another.” Team members also stated that this new protocol is helping them to positively affect student achievement. For example, the students in ELA are showing growth on using evidence when writing argumentative essays.

- Teacher leadership is rooted in the culture of the school community, where all contribute toward what is best for students. There are a multitude of opportunities for teacher leadership to develop their strengths as aligned to their interests, including Learning Partners, teacher team leaders, professional development, athletic director, budgeting school trips, rap studio and showcase events, and coordinators for school partnerships, school-to-work, and Career and Technical Education (CTE). This is the second year that the staff have been selected as a Learning Partners Host school for three main areas: intervisitations, data-determined instruction (DDI), and implementing new initiatives, especially argumentative writing. Two teachers along with administration, support the other two partner schools of the triad during the school visits. The two teachers also bring back what they have learned from other schools and turnkey it to their colleagues, facilitating the discussion of possible implementation at their own school. Additionally, teachers facilitate the team meetings with the support and collaboration of its members. Teachers are empowered to make decisions that support student achievement. For example, staff determined that there was a need to improve argumentative writing skills. To this end, teachers created and implemented their own program, and developed monitoring and assessment practices as well. This is one initiative that makes them a host learning partner.