Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Boys and Girls High School
High school 16K455
1700 Fulton Street
Brooklyn
NY 11213

Principal: Grecian Harrison

Dates of Review:
April 12, 2018 - April 13, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Rod Bowen
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

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

### 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>Area of Celebration</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>
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<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>1.3 Leveraging Resources</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Resources are allocated in support of students’ social-emotional growth, academic success, and college and career readiness. Personnel decisions and student programming support school goals.

Impact

Organizational decisions result in meaningful student work products as well as access to learning opportunities that lead to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has a significant partnership with a community based organization (CBO) that provides various services intended to support students’ social-emotional and academic well-being. *The Men in Progress* and *Women on the Move* programs provide ongoing gender-specific mentoring geared towards student self-awareness and self-sufficiency. Participants in these programs maintain an average attendance rate of 92 percent compared to the non-participant rate of 79 percent. In addition, students in these two programs maintain slightly higher grade point averages relative to their peers. The CBO partner produces advisory curricula for the ninth and twelfth grades that include units on goal setting, peer pressure, organizational skills, and anger management. The organization also provides regular counseling services for approximately 13 percent of the active student population. A staff member stated that one of the school’s goals is to normalize emotional wellness and positive social emotional well-being. The after school enrichment programs offer students with opportunities for tutoring, community service, counseling, arts, and college and career readiness preparation. Seventy-five percent of active students directly engage in some aspect of the programming provided by this partner.

- Resources are also allocated to expanding Career and Technical Education (CTE) options for students. A full-time CTE teacher, who also serves as the CTE coordinator, has been hired. Although state certification has not yet been obtained, CTE courses in electrical engineering, architectural design, and computer technology are offered. Another partnership enables students to take courses in culinary arts, computer science and information technology, and design engineering.

- Funds are used to secure ongoing academic support for those who need it. Saturday Bootcamp, Spring Break Academy, Regents Bootcamp, and after-school tutoring deepen learning and provide extended opportunities for credit accumulation, test preparation, and re-teaching. Along with classroom instruction and other supports, such out-of-normal school day programs have resulted in the school having a higher graduation rate in 2017 than it had in the previous seven years.

- Technology is available in every classroom, including tablets and laptops, enabling increased opportunities for blended learning and on-line research.

- Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus, Literature and Composition, Seminar, and Computer Principles are available as well as College Now courses.
Findings

Assessment practices are loosely aligned to the school's curricula, and although there is a focus on the use of formative assessment, instruction across classrooms inconsistently reflects the use of checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Feedback provided to students is limited, usually not actionable, and effective adjustments to instruction based on formative assessment data are inconsistent.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of student feedback highlighted inconsistencies in the degree to which it is actionable. Two students were unable to read the written comments on their work as they were illegible, resulting in one of them not understanding why she received half credit on the task. Another student who received an 83 on an assignment was not sure what he would need to do to earn a higher score on a similar task. He guessed, “I think I would have to read it more.”

- Students agreed that rubrics are used in a number of classes to support their work. One noted that rubrics tell you how you may be failing. Another stated that rubrics help them not to “mess up” because you can read what has to be done. However, when a student produced a scored rubric that reflected the assessment of his work, he was not able to make meaning of the phrase, “fully develop all evidence.”

- An English Language Arts (ELA) teacher consistently circulated throughout the room as students engaged in a close reading strategy. She encouraged students to follow specific annotation expectations, “I see a lot of us underlining but we need to write in the margins as well.” Her review of student work as they were doing it revealed that students did not fully understand the concept of trait. Such concerted effort in uncovering student misconceptions as they work was not reflected during instruction across classrooms.

- Across classrooms, there were a number of missed opportunities for students to engage each other in discussion and push each other's thinking. During a math class, the teacher posed a series of questions in succession, such as “What does it mean to factor a number?”, “What are the factors of 6, 9, and 2?”, and “What do you do to factor?” However, she did not provide students with time to respond to any of them.

- Across classrooms, as well as in a number of curricular documents, there was evidence of formative assessment data being used to inform ability-based student grouping. However, in most cases, the tasks assigned to the various groups did not effectively meet students’ learning needs.
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
Curricular documents reflect a purposeful integration of Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts, and they consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills.

Impact
The approach to curricula development builds coherence and promotes college and career readiness across grades and subject areas for all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- A social studies lesson plan clearly indicates that the instructional shifts relevant to the learning activities are knowledge of discipline, staircase of complexity, and writing from sources. The Common Core Learning Standards embedded in the design include engaging primary and secondary sources to cite textual evidence to support analysis, determining the central ideas, and evaluating various explanations for actions or events. The tasks are aligned to document-based questions found in the New York State Regents exam and include the analysis and interpretation of quotes, graphs, and political cartoons.

- The learning objective of an ELA lesson is for students to analyze the first chapter of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and identify point of view, character traits, and setting with a focus on characterization. Guidance found within the plan shows how students would compare and contrast characters based on their appearance, thoughts, actions, and words. The task of analyzing text to understand characters is evident in the learning objective for another ELA lesson that included students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Students would have to write about the role of conflict in act one of *The Crucible* through the analysis of the relationships and motivations of the major characters. Specifically, they would have to write an explanatory essay that connects the conflicts they identify with a larger theme in the play such as hysteria, intolerance, power, or reputation. Such coherence was not emphasized across grades and subject areas.

- The learning standard that informs a math lesson requires students to “derive the equation of a circle given the center and radius using the Pythagorean Theorem.” Another math plan focuses on the ways in which the math operations impact polynomials. In both cases, math vocabulary is referenced, but there is no strategic or coherent way that such vocabulary is utilized to deepen student understanding of math concepts.

- An idea carousel is the main activity found within a science lesson plan. The higher order skills related to purposeful collaboration and building on one another’s thinking are embedded in the task that requires groups of students to chart what they know about a topic as well as questions and concerns related to it. Groups would then rotate and add onto what was written by including validating or questioning points made and by adding comments.
Additional Finding

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

Instruction across classrooms inconsistently provides students with effective entry points into the curricula as well as opportunities to produce meaningful work products or engage in thoughtful discussion.

**Impact**

Students demonstrate uneven levels of higher order thinking skills, general participation, and engagement in challenging tasks.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In a social studies class focused on the evolution of the United States into a super power nation, the teacher demonstrated the manner in which she expected students to annotate text with a focus on key words. Once independent work started, student engagement was inconsistent, yet those who did annotate did so in ways aligned to what was modeled for them. During a Global History lesson on ethnicity and religion in the Ottoman Empire, the teacher distributed text and directed students to read it together and underline any information that referenced diversity and to circle any words that they did not know. Students did not collaborate in the close reading activity as requested, and a review of their annotation showed many of their efforts were not aligned to the directions.

- Students in a third social studies class utilized an established routine as they took notes on a video clip on World War II. As they watched the short clip, they wrote things they already knew, things that changed their minds or things they learned, as well as things or questions that they were wondering about. Although the small group discussion that followed was uneven across the room, most students had written responses to the prompts. In a science lesson, students watched a video about natural selection. The prompt to guide their viewing was to write down one piece of information they learned. Without more to inform their engagement, only some students wrote down anything. Afterward, as those students shared their responses, the teacher asked students who had not written down anything what they were hearing from their peers. During the latter part of the lesson, the majority of the class was expected to merely listen to the few who were fully engaged in the activity.

- The teacher asked students numerous questions during a geometry lesson, many of which elicited student opinion. Questions included “How many of you agree that this is correct?” and “Which one do you think is right?” However, students were never asked to explain their responses to demonstrate higher order thinking skills. In addition, a few students were tasked with supporting peers that struggled with the class assignment. Instead of supporting understanding, these helpers were observed telling their classmates what to write in order to complete the task, hindering higher levels of thinking and participation.
**Additional Finding**

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations regarding the use of formative assessment as well as literacy across the curriculum. School leaders and staff ensure that parents consistently receive information regarding their children’s paths toward college and career readiness.

**Impact**
Training, support, and systems for accountability are in place to help staff meet the school’s expectations. The feedback that parents receive supports their understanding of their children's progress.

**Supporting Evidence**

- There is clear alignment between the school's instructional focus and the district's priorities. Both are consistently communicated in the principal's weekly newsletter. Two of the four district priorities are emphasized in ways that support teacher growth and holding them accountable for implementation. One such expectation is that teachers use formative assessment data to adjust instructional decisions. The other is the purposeful integration of literacy strategies across classrooms.

- The school’s emphasis on teachers using formative assessments to make instructional decisions is found in a number of classroom observation reports, which include the recommendation that teachers collect students' written answers or exit tickets and use this data to inform the planning of small groups and the need for re-teaching. Notes from cabinet inquiry work also show a collective effort on the part of the instructional leaders to ensure that teachers are incorporating checks for understanding in their planning.

- There was consensus among teachers that literacy is a big emphasis this year. ELA teachers discussed their shared focus on central idea and having students identify evidence from text. Social studies teachers also prefaced teaching central idea along with a specific writing strategy that requires students to explain their thinking. The science and CTE department has started teaching annotation, while the math team is working to understand student misconceptions that stem from word problems.

- Parents agreed that they receive ample information regarding their children's grades, assignment completion, and overall academic well-being from an on-line grading, communication, and information sharing platform. The ability to communicate directly with teachers is appreciated by all parents who were interviewed. In addition to teachers, success coaches assigned to students also regularly communicate with parents. One parent was aware that her daughter was scheduled to retake a math Regents exam to get a higher grade. Another shared that she receives texts frequently and is kept abreast of missing assignments and tardiness. A few parents stated that there had been instances when some teachers shared websites that could support their children's learning from home.
Findings

The majority of teachers collaborate in inquiry-based grade and content area teams using protocols that require that they consistently analyze student work and performance data as well as their own instructional practices.

Impact

Teacher team efforts strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers while improving outcomes for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Notes from a grade eleven teacher team meeting showed a structured approach to discussing the effectiveness of a specific graphic organizer that supports the instruction of vocabulary in context. While looking at student work, they shared noticings such as, “Higher level students were able to look up the term in the glossary of the textbook, while lower level students struggled to get started”, and, “Students ‘across the board’, developed a clearer understanding of enzymes. It became a more concrete concept when it was broken down in that manner.” Teachers then shared “glows and grows.” According to the notes, one of the benefits of the vocabulary acquisition model is that less writing was required in order for students to show levels of mastery with the content. A challenge included the need to further modify the tool for those who had cognitive issues using the tool. Recommendations included using guided notes for definitions and more frequent use of the glossary. In a subsequent meeting, a consultancy protocol was used to push the practice of a presenting teacher who used the model. The presenter’s dilemma was that students were having difficulties finding definitions of terms using secondary sources, remembering to use prior knowledge, and writing down correct information. Colleagues posed clarifying and probing questions in response. Such practices show an inquiry process focused on groups of students.

- The rolling agenda for the ELA team showed that the primary collaborative activity was working in pairs to review student work on central idea. Noticings included all students managed to get the central idea with varying levels of effectiveness, and most students explicitly annotated the text prior to developing the central idea. The protocol yielded wonderings as to whether annotating the text actually led to better understanding of the central idea, and whether students truly understand the criteria of a statement or central idea. The team then revised their shared understanding of the instructional challenge for students to accurately identify a central idea and communicate it in a succinct and focused manner. They then each connected this deeper understanding to their classroom instruction. One teacher noted, “This activity made me realize that students need to be explicitly reminded that a central idea of a text should be concise.” They agreed to solidify their instructional next steps after reviewing January Regents data in a subsequent meeting.

- The math team posed a priority team question, a student-centered problem, and an instructional problem of practice. In order, they were: “What prevents our students from successful expository stem reading or writing?”, “While students are reading the question and answers, they are unable to apply background info and content to answer the question correctly”, and “While we use various assessments in the classroom, we do not use the assessment data to differentiate for individual students.” Posing such questions and problems supports structured inquiry processes that can improve teaching and learning.