Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Harlem Renaissance High School

High school 05M285

22 East 128 Street
Manhattan
NY 10035

Principal: James Caputo

Dates of Review:
November 16, 2017 - November 17, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Clarence Williams Jr.
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Celebration to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Focus to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as Additional Finding. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

Harlem Renaissance High School 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><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<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>Developing</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>Developing</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Area of Celebration

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

### Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations to staff through professional development. Staff communicate college and career readiness expectations to families.

### Impact

School leaders provide professional development on instructional expectations to help teachers meet expectations. Guidance counselors communicate to families to support their understanding of college and career readiness expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- To support college and career readiness, guidance counselors presented a document entitled, "High School Roadmap to Graduation." Parents and students receive this document that list a check off for each course completed as well as Regents exam score and grade promotion requirements. Counselors meet with students and parents to discuss the roadmap. One roadmap presented showed that a student was missing an English class and two physical education classes. The roadmap listed Regents scores and that the student needs to take the global and U.S. History Regents exam to receive a Regents diploma. A parent stated, "The meeting with the guidance counselor allowed me to see where my daughter needs the extra help in order to graduate. She provided a roadmap that allows me to track her progress."

- The principal has stated that student engagement is an expectation that must be schoolwide. Administrators communicate high expectations for student engagement through professional development. A professional development agenda in September included exercises for teachers such as PowerPoint presentation entitled, “A Student-Engaged, Common Instructional Cycle. United We Skill-Build." The presentation included four steps to becoming a learner-centered learning designer that included “shift your mindset, get to know your learner, rethink the learning objectives, and shift the balance of power.” Teachers have stated that the workshop and the discussions on student engagement have helped them in the classroom. This was evident as teachers were developing student engagement practices in most classroom visited.

- Guidance counselors provided an anecdotal report for parents and students that highlights parent outreach regarding college and career readiness and how they help parents understand their child’s progress. Such a report from November stated, “Informed parent of the positive impression that their child made on the staff at New York University during the field trip.” The guidance counselor also has senior meetings with parents. These meetings include going over individual student records, colleges that the student is interested in, and financial aid applications. During an interview the counselor stated that all parents have been spoken to about college and next steps either by phone or in person. A parent stated that the communication with the college advisor/counselor has been helpful in informing her of the steps towards college, and that the counselors and the administration have an open door policy.
Findings

Teaching practices are beginning to reflect a set of beliefs that students learn best through different strategies that ensure students explain their answers in discussions. Student discussions inconsistently reflect high levels of student participation.

Impact

Teaching practices are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. However, students have limited opportunities to engage in appropriately challenging tasks or to demonstrate higher-order thinking still in work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Classroom practices are beginning to reflect high levels of discussion based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching question and discussion techniques. In a U.S. History class, students were involved in a discussion on post-Civil War America. Student were observed looking at pictures of farmers. The teacher asked the students to discuss what they see in the picture. One student stated, “Guys picking cotton,” and another student stated, “They are sharecropping.” Most students looked at the pictures without sharing their thoughts. The teacher asked them, “How did African Americans experience sharecropping?” One student stated, “It’s good for the land owners but not the workers.” Although the question was answered, some students were not engaged in discussion but answering closed ended questions that did not allow for elaboration such as “When was the picture taken?” and “Do you agree that sharecropping was bad for workers?” Discussion techniques are developing in the classrooms. Students are having discussions but discussions are not consistently at high levels.

- An English Language Arts (ELA) class demonstrated few opportunities for student voice during the lesson. The instructor was teaching a lesson on looking at the bigger picture in literature. The teacher asked the question, “In your own words how would you break down pride? What does it mean?” One student stated, “I may not know the answer but because of my pride I won’t ask for help.” Another student stated that they thought that pride was a good thing but one shouldn’t have too much. Although these students shared with the class, there were few additional opportunities for students to demonstrate discussion and engagement. The teacher spoke to the students about the text The Scarlet Ibis and drew comparisons to how the character’s pride did not allow him to see his brother as handicapped. Students were attentive; however, engagement was limited during the lecture. In most classes observed high levels of thinking and participation was limited.

- Teachers have stated that students learn best when the teacher demonstrates coherent instruction as defined by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. During a living environment class, students were observed working with clothes pins to see how many squeezes it will take before their fingers get tired. They recorded the number and repeated the process and recorded the number to compare. The teacher went around the room to ask students to share their data. One student said, “The first time I squeezed it one hundred and thirty seven times, the second time I squeezed it one hundred times.” One student stated, “The more I do it the less oxygen is in my cells.” Another student stated, “My muscles got tired.” Although the teacher went around the room and randomly asked different students what their numbers were, most did not elaborate on the mechanics of the exercise. Some students did not record their findings. In addition, although the teacher had shown signs of coherent instruction, students were not clear on the objective.
Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

Impact

Curricula are coherent and promote college and career readiness. All students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, are supported to engage in rigorous tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- Unit and lesson plans demonstrate college and career readiness skills for students. The topic for a unit on economics and personal finance was “Money management: banks and banking.” The unit required students to explain personal financial responsibility. The essential question was “Can a bank or credit union help you to acquire wealth?” Materials for the class included using online resources from the Council on Economic Education. An additional example was seen in a math lesson plan on quadrilaterals. School leaders and staff have stated that they help students prepare for college by having them reflect on their thinking. The plan includes having students work with portfolios that include subject matter that was covered throughout the unit that will assist them with a final project. The plan states, “The objective of the assignment is to have students reflect on their learning and use the knowledge that they obtained within the unit to complete their culminating assignment.” This also reflects the math shift that requires students to use math concepts for application without prompts.

- Students with disabilities and English as a New Language (ENL) students are supported in the curricula. A geometry unit listed differentiated practices for students that included ENL students being partnered with English proficient students to assist with reading and pronunciation of vocabulary words. Scaffolds included annotated and guided notes for students with disabilities to help solve geometric exercises. Further impact was seen for supports for students with disabilities and ENL students in a living environment plan. ENL students were required to work with bilingual students on defining the terms aerobic, anaerobic and fermentation. Students with disabilities were partnered with other students to assist with an exit slip that is based on a video of a person passing out during a marathon and interpreting why it happened. These supports are designed to promote and support rigorous tasks.

- The school uses metacognitive strategies and Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questioning to support rigor and higher-order thinking skills in curricula. Metacognitive strategies in a pre-algebra class included reasoning abstractly and quantitatively, working backwards, and visualizing the problem by drawing pictures tables or graphs and identifying the parts of the problem they know and did not know. DOK questions in an English Socratic seminar lesson included the level four question, “Analyze the last sentence on page 220. How powerful is the sentence? And what does it signify?” An additional DOK level four question asked was “Is it better to continue with a career that interests you that is in an unfamiliar setting or work in a familiar environment just to be with your peers?” Similar practices were evident across grades for all students in units and lesson plans.
Findings

Across classrooms, instructional practices, such as the use of rubrics, are loosely aligned to the school’s curricula. Assessment practices inconsistently reflect checks for understanding.

Impact

Rubrics and student work reflect limited student feedback to support student achievement. Adjustments to instruction based on student understanding are inconsistent across classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- A four-point persuasive paragraph rubric was presented. The rubric recorded a three for the student in the area of sources; however, the feedback was limited and did not offer next steps. Teacher comments included “You started off citing sources but stopped in the middle.” An additional example was seen in another rubric. The teacher’s comments included “Very strong opening statement” and “Great job not only including evidence but also connecting it to your position.” An additional teacher comment was, “You do have some quotes but do not source your information.” Although the feedback demonstrated support for student achievement, the feedback did not always provide actionable feedback to push student thinking. The rubric was also loosely aligned to the curricula in that it did not include a focus on metacognition that will allow students to reflect on their own learning.

- During the observation of a geometry lesson, the instructor did a check for understanding that resulted in an instructional adjustment. The teacher asked the students, “What makes the opposites never connect?” but no one answered the question. As a result, the teacher asked students to turn and talk to discuss the question. After two minutes the teacher asked for share-outs. One student stated, “After talking to each other and looking at the pictures, the right angles cause the opposites not to connect.” The teacher asked if anyone disagreed everyone was in agreement. This was not evident in all classes visited. In a math class on quantitative data, during whole group instruction the teacher asked the class, “What does my data look like if I have high variation?” Students could not answer the question. The instructor provided the answer and move on to the next topic. There was no assessment practice in place to gauge student comprehension before moving on or to redirect instruction in response to student need.

- Student work reflected limited feedback in some classes. Student work displayed demonstrated teacher feedback on a procedure chart that required students to describe and explain a procedure. The teacher stated, “Most of your explanation is good but you must make a good connection to give a detailed example. Also remember that the movement of water is the cause for change in the cell.” This level of feedback was not evident in all work samples. For example, an additional worksheet was observed. The teacher stated, “I appreciate the note taking that you took on your peer’s prior knowledge of the subject.” However, the feedback did not provide next steps or practices on how the student can improve on peer editing.
### Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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#### Findings

School leaders support teacher development with frequent classroom observation cycles and student data analysis. Written feedback captures teachers’ strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

#### Impact

Informal classroom visits result in written feedback for teachers that make the expectations for teacher practice clear. There are supports available to help teachers meet expectations.

#### Supporting Evidence

- An informal observation was reviewed that captured strengths and weaknesses for the teacher that were tied to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Areas of strength included “You displayed effective rapport with your students. This was displayed by the high level of student participation throughout the lesson.” This level of feedback was evident in most observation write ups observed. This is also consistent with the leadership and teacher comments that providing feedback is something that is being worked on. The frequent observations of most teachers has supported teacher development by providing clear expectations so that teachers are aware of their next learning steps.

- To address the math concerns that the data reflects, school leaders use observations to provide supports to help teachers improve on pedagogy. An informal observation that was conducted in October demonstrated support for a teacher in the area of math. The principal recommended that the teacher design instruction that allows for students to make decisions on whether they want to work independently or as a group. The principal also recommended that the teacher use compare and contrast charts and other graphic organizers for students to choose from to better understand student learning preferences. This was impactful as scaffold graphic organizers were evident in most classrooms visited. Teachers have stated that the support through feedback and frequent follow up that include instructional walk-throughs, check-ins and informal observations has been helpful in providing extra resources for students and having a clearer understanding of how to implement them.

- The principal has stated that it was noticed that there was a great deal of teacher-directed instruction in social studies. As a result, observation comments reflected instructional practices to address these concerns as the initiative was to move towards a more student-led form of instruction. An informal observation feedback included, “As you elicit student responses, you may have a student document student-elicited response on the SMARTboard or on chart paper.” Additional responses to support student-led teaching that was documented in another informal observation included, “Invite students to respond to other students comments by handing out questions in advance to allow students to ease into the conversation.”
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: | Developing |

Findings
Most teachers are engaged in structured teacher collaborations that sometimes reflect school goals. Teacher teams analyze student work of students that they share.

Impact
Teacher collaborations do not yet consistently support school goals or lead to improved teacher practice. Teacher team minutes do not reflect data from student work and do not typically reflect student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- The minutes from an English and social studies common planning that used the clearing protocol were reviewed. The objective of the meeting was to implement task and one discussion protocol in the instructional cycle. The minutes showed that teachers were looking at ways to design a meta-tasks that includes cause and effect and using sentence starters that include “I used to think…. but now I think…” Teachers reviewed student work which consisted of reading an article and answering ten questions about the fairness of the judicial system. Questions that teachers asked were “What is being asked of the student?”, “What are the primary skills being assessed?” and “What kind of thinking is required for excellence?” In describing the work, the question was “What do you see in the student work?” Although teachers used a clearing protocol, there was little evidence of how it was aligned to Common Core Learning Standards or how it was connected to school goals to better engage students.

- An ENL and students with disabilities meeting was observed. Attached to the minutes was student writing assignment on interpreting the Declaration of Independence. Although the minutes reflect what teachers are doing to address the needs of students, they do not reflect student progress or samples of completed student work. The meeting did not reflect the goals of student Individualized Education Programs. Teachers have stated that the impact of the teacher meetings was to collaborate with colleagues on best practices. However, this was not evident in the minutes presented from different teacher team minute meetings or observations.

- Teacher team meetings reflect conferencing on students that they share. A math and science meeting minutes observed showed student work that was connected to the agenda. After observing the student work, teachers concluded that students were accurate and knew the scientific terms, but students were not writing to explain their thinking. Discussions did not reflect on how teacher practices would be improved to address the concern. Under possible implications for teacher planning and preparation to design coherent instruction, teachers discussed selecting one task and a range of student work samples and adding more guiding questions so students make more connections in the process.