Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Professional Performing Arts High School
Secondary School 02M408
328 West 48 Street
Manhattan
NY 10036

Principal: Keith Ryan
Dates of Review:
March 13, 2018 - March 14, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Edward Hazen
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

Professional Performing Arts High School serves students in grade 6 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

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# School Quality Ratings continued

## School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Celebration</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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
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## Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<th>Additional Finding</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>Well Developed</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>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>Well Developed</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>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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings

The school's approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional support is informed by a theory of action. Support services allow staff, students and families to collaborate in addressing all students' academic and social emotional learning needs.

Impact

The school leaders and staff maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that contribute to a personalized learning environment that promotes academic and social emotional learning that supports the personal growth of students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's approach to fostering a positive school culture that promotes mutual respect and support is rooted in its theory of action outlined in the Professional Performance Arts School (PPAS) Social Contract. The contract is an agreement that all school community members, including parents, teachers, arts partners, and community organizations must adhere to. Founded on the values of engagement and empathy, the contract is shared among staff, students and their families at the beginning of the school year and serves as a reference as teachers and students establish a positive rapport among each other. Teachers and students report that staff and students reference the contract frequently as it serves as the school's code of conduct and guides everything the school does including academic and behavioral expectations and instructional expectations for creating student-centered classrooms that provide multiple opportunities for meaningful academic discussions.

- Students reported that they feel the school is part of their community and that they have ample voice in schoolwide decisions. For example, students reported that they requested that the school participate in the national walk out movement against gun violence in schools, which was granted by the school leaders. Students reported that the student council was charged with coordinating all aspects of the walk out other than the logistics with school safety officers. The walk out took place during the school visit where students were observed peacefully and respectfully walking out of the school in an orderly fashion led by the student council. The student council president met the students outside and made an impassioned speech to end violence, followed by a silent march around the block. Students later expressed their gratitude for being able to partner with school leadership and provided with the opportunity to have a voice in several school matters, especially around events, issues and concerns that are important to them.

- The school has structures in place to ensure that each student is known well by at least one adult who helps to make sure that students are attending school every day on time. The school has an advisory program in place in which all ninth graders are provided with an advisor who they maintain a relationship with for all four years of high school. This allows each student to get to know staff members very well and ensures that they receive the academic and social-emotional support and advisement they need to adopt effective personal habits that will prepare them for college and career.
## Area of Focus

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

Across grades and courses, teachers use common assessment data to adjust to curricula and instruction. Common rubrics and assessments are used that align with the curricula and Regents assessments across grades and disciplines.

### Impact

The use of rubrics allows teachers to provide feedback to students regarding their progress and performance; however, feedback is not yet meaningful for the vast majority of students. Common assessment data are used to assess students’ progress toward meeting the standards and inform revisions made to the curricula and pedagogy.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across disciplines and grade levels, teachers use common assessments and rubrics that align to the grade-level curricula, Common Core Learning Standards, and content standards. Students reported that the use of exemplars in conjunction with teacher feedback has helped improve their writing, and they feel that it is preparing them for their Regents exams. However, a review of student work indicated that the quality of actionable feedback with next steps to improve their work varied across grades and disciplines. Furthermore, most students were unsure if the rubrics aligned to the Regents rubrics. Students further reported that feedback on their homework varied from class to class, indicating that it is inconsistently reviewed for accuracy or graded consistently across courses. Thus, the level of meaningful feedback to students is dependent upon the class.

- Across departments, teachers use common assessments to determine student progress toward meeting the Common Core and content standards, to identify trends in student achievement, and to make revisions and adjustments to curricula and pedagogy. For example, after reviewing Regents and common benchmark assessment data to identify students' level of college and career readiness, as determined by the College Readiness Index (CRI) and the percentage of students scoring at mastery level on Regents and common assessments, a decision was made to create consistency in assessing student participation in high levels of discourse across grades and subjects in grades nine through twelve.

- To promote the school’s philosophy of using data to personalize and differentiate instruction and to provide students with opportunities to work toward mastery of a skill, school leaders and faculty create their own common assessments. Teachers and teacher teams analyze assessment data to determine the level of student learning to inform how teachers will revise or adjust lesson plans for subsequent lessons so that all student progress toward acquiring the content knowledge or skill. Teachers have follow up meetings to determine whether or not their instructional interventions were successful; those that were are emulated in other classes.
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 staff have a process in place to ensure alignment of the curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and include rigorous academic tasks that are accessible for a variety of learners.

Impact

The curricula reflect planning for the instructional shifts, including tasks with rigorous habits that build coherence across departments and grades, and supports college and career readiness for all learners. Teacher teams use a structured lesson design to ensure that all learners, including students with disabilities, access the lesson and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty have developed a system and structure to ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core and content standards, integrate the instructional shifts, and make purposeful decisions to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students. Across disciplines, teachers are expected to require students to make claims, counterclaims and cite text-based evidence to support their arguments. When planning academic tasks, departments are expected to use Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) to plan cognitively challenging tasks along with scaffolds to support the diversity of learning styles in their classroom. Likewise, teachers are expected to include assessments for learning in their lesson plans, such as exit tickets, to determine the level of student learning that will inform planning of subsequent lessons and units of study.

- A review of curriculum documents across grades and subjects indicates evidence of teacher team and departmental teamwork to integrate the instructional shifts in English Language Arts (ELA), math, social studies, and science. Across content areas and grade levels, students are required to arrive at an informed decision based on learning objective and to cite supporting textual evidence to justify their stance on an issue when making a claim. Additionally, common protocols are embedded into unit and lesson plans to engage students in high levels of discourse such as DOK level 3 and level 4 questions and accountable talk prompts. This further promotes coherence across grades and content areas and ensures that students are being adequately prepared for college and career. For students that are interested in pursuing a career in the law and justice, the school has partnered with several major New York City organizations who provide the core instructional program in the arts via support from industry professionals.

- Staff members meet weekly to collaborate to review and revise curriculum documents and lesson plans to ensure accessibility for all students. Based on the analysis of student work samples and assessment data, including formative classroom assessments or exit tickets, common teacher-created assessments and State assessment and Regents exam results, teachers adjust lesson plans and curricula to include supports such as scaffolds and differentiated tasks. A review of meeting minutes and agendas indicates that most departmental team meetings focus on creating lessons that encourage student-centered conversations, providing whole-class and individualized supports that allow multiple access points into the lesson through differentiation of tasks and planning for leveled student grouping. School leaders confer regularly with team leaders to ensure adherence to the School Instructional Action Plan (SIAP) and that lesson plans include differentiated tasks to ensure students with disabilities have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy
Rating: Proficient

Findings
Teaching strategies align to schoolwide beliefs and provide entry points through purposeful groupings and the use of scaffolds so that all learners can participate in high level academic tasks.

Impact
Students engage in high levels of thinking and discussion leading to the development of meaningful work products across grades and disciplines; however, these practices are not fully implemented in the vast majority of classes.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices align to the school's articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. One of the overarching beliefs is that classroom instruction must engage students in purposeful, higher order academic tasks and discussions to promote college and career ready skills for all students. Consequently, teachers are expected to design student-centered lessons that require students to work in collaborative groups across grades and disciplines to help them acquire the necessary 21st century skills that will make them college and career ready. The instructional leadership team also requires that teachers provide multiple entry points into lessons and differentiate tasks so that all students are cognitively engaged at high levels. As such, cooperative learning groups are to be structured so that students are responsible for their individual work as well as that of their group. The cooperative learning model was observed being utilized across classrooms and grade levels with most students being assigned roles within their group. Likewise, most students were observed participating in group and partner discussions utilizing protocols such as turn and talks, and were provided with scaffolds such as accountable talk stems to keep them engaged in purposeful conversations.

- In most classes, lessons demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of students' diverse learning needs, resulting in academic tasks and activities that engaged students in high levels of cognitive challenge. Most lessons include supports such as scaffolds and generate challenging discourse to engage all students, including students with disabilities and struggling students. However, high quality extensions were not observed in the vast majority of the classrooms visited. Rather, if a student or group completed their task ahead of the rest of the class, they were directed to review their answers, work on homework, or read. Likewise, high quality extensions were not referenced in the lesson plans themselves. In a math class where students had to work collaboratively to write the definition of a function using the proper notation, students that completed the task early were observed sitting and waiting for the next directive from the teacher rather than moving onto a higher level task related to the learning objective of the lesson or unit of study.

- In a tenth grade Humanities class, students were required to write a persuasive letter synthesizing information from the First Amendment. The teacher placed students in predetermined heterogeneous group of four and assigned them partners to provide a range of abilities so that pairs could assist one another with finding textual evidence to support their argument writing. Groups were provided with texts at varied Lexile levels and a writing rubric to reference the expectations for their task. The teacher visited each group to monitor the level of student discussion and provided assistance as needed. Consequently, the use of multiple entry points ensured that all students were engaged in challenging tasks requiring higher order thinking. However, this level of support for groups and individual students was not seen in the vast majority of classes visited.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

The school leaders and faculty consistently communicate high expectations to students and their families. A culture for learning has been established and communicated across the school community.

Impact

Systems of accountability for students and partnerships with families ensure that all students are aware of their progress toward graduation and college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff implement effective strategies for communicating high expectations about college and career readiness and partner with families to ensure that all students are challenged to meet or exceed those expectations. The school leaders host college-ready workshops to engage parents in discussions about the Common Core Learning Standards, including the importance of reaching mastery level on Regents exams to ensure that students are college and career ready. Faculty, students and parents reported that the expectation is for students to be prepared for the next level by achieving at or above proficiency on the New York State ELA and math assessments at the middle school and achieving mastery on Regents exams in Regents-bearing courses by the end of the school year. By their senior year in high school, students are expected to be college and career ready as measured by the College Readiness Index (CRI) and the number of students receiving advanced Regents credits. As a result of the school’s philosophy of pushing all students toward mastery, the percentage of students identified as college ready on the CRI rose from 49% in 2015 to 62% in 2017.

- The school’s leadership team and faculty are committed to not only communicating high expectations to students but also to providing the ongoing support that is required for them to meet those expectations and promote students’ ownership of their academic work. The staff has a set of clear, systematic structures, such as guidance, college preparatory advisement and assistance, and college counseling, that ensures that students are aware of progress toward their college and career goals. During their freshman year of high school, all incoming ninth graders are provided with an advisor who remains with them until graduation. All students reported that they are aware of the high expectations the school leaders and teachers have set and feel that they are being adequately prepared for college or a career of their choice. Students further reported that they frequently meet with their advisors to ensure that they are on track to graduate college-ready. As a result, the four-year graduation rate was 93 percent in 2017, 19 percent higher than the Citywide average of 74 percent.

- Students and parents reported that they are aware of the school’s expectations to prepare all students for college. They receive regular updates on students’ progress through traditional means such as backpack letters and report cards, but most families opt to use the school’s online system which allows students and parents to monitor their progress in class and credit accumulation on a regular basis. In fact, the majority of students stated that they use the school’s online grade reporting system at least weekly. Parents expressed appreciation that they are welcomed into the school at any time and are invited to participate in a personalized conference with their children and school staff to discuss their pathway to college and career or an alternative career in the performing arts. All parents reported that there is a high level of communication between families and school leadership and faculty and further reported the effective communication has resulted in increased parent participation in the school.
### 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>Proficient</th>
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</table>

#### Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured inquiry-based teamwork to embed the Common Core Learning Standards into lesson plans and units of study. Teacher teams analyze student data to identify instructional practices that will close gaps in student achievement.

#### Impact

Across grades and departments, teacher teams analyze data and student work products, resulting in the implementation of the Common Core and instructional shifts. The work of teacher teams has strengthened teacher instructional capacity and improved student achievement.

#### Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations to promote the implementation of the Common Core and instructional shifts and build coherence across grades and disciplines. Grade level and departmental teacher teams are provided with planning periods to plan rigorous lessons and make revisions to curricula to ensure accessibility for all students. Teacher team analysis of curricula and academic tasks contained in lesson and unit plans results in the identification of gaps in the provision of entry points and academic supports for students and informs next steps in curriculum decisions. For example, teachers reported that the need for a student-centered, small group instructional model to meet the rigor of the instructional shifts while providing differentiated academic tasks for students led teacher teams to use their common assessments and exit tickets to identify gaps in learning so that revisions to student materials could be made to accommodate them. A teacher stated that she uses the data to create student groups and provide them with worksheets at their level.

- Teachers reported that as a result of common collaboration time, there has been a positive impact on their professional practice and student learning, as they have time to share and discuss specific pedagogical strategies and practices that can improve student engagement. Teachers reported that the SIAP identified the prioritized focus of the teacher team work this year as implementing effective instructional strategies and use of assessment data for planning. Teachers report that teams identify a problem of practice and make collective decisions to correct it. For example, teachers identified the needed to add more supports for students with disabilities to provide access points into lessons. Teachers noted that as they added supports to push them to use academic language and accountable talk, students became more responsive to participate in meaningful discussions in class. Consequently, the progress of these groups toward the SIAP goal of increasing student discourse in all grades and classes was met by teacher teams.

- Teacher teams meet regularly to analyze assessment data from a variety of sources, including formal New York State Regents exams, common formative assessments such as exit tickets, and formal summative assessments such as end of unit tests. Assessments in all grade levels and disciplines serve to provide teacher teams with baseline data to inform changes to curricula and instruction and identify instructional practices to address specific needs for groups of students for which they are responsible. The data is used to create instructional groups and provide targeted interventions and supports for struggling students. These practices have resulted in a 3 percent increase on the Regents ELA exam from 86 percent in 2016 to 89 percent in 2017. Likewise, scores on the Algebra 1 Regents improved from 74 to 80 percent during the same time. At the middle level, there was a 6 percent increase on the ELA assessments from 87 to 93 percent from 2016 to 2017 and a 5 percent increase in math from 85 to 90 percent during the same timeframe.