Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Hudson High School of Learning Technologies
High School 02M437
351 West 18 Street
Manhattan
NY 10011

Principal: Nancy Logozzo

Dates of Review:
November 2, 2017 - November 3, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Kevin Bradley
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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>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>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## School Culture

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Systems for Improvement

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</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>Area of Celebration</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>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Area of Celebration

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

**Findings**

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations as they consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students on which they are focused.

**Impact**

Promotion of the achievement of school goals through the work of teacher teams has typically resulted in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams include grade level teams that use protocols to refine lesson plans and analyze student work products to inform instruction and design intervention strategies for struggling learners. Content specialty teams review literacy professional learning and item analysis. The data team uses data from the STAR Reading Assessment to assess literacy intervention and provides support and protocols for teachers to access and reflect on Regents performance utilizing the item analysis or gap analysis. The data team provides support and protocols for teachers to monitor individual and group progress to graduation.

- Teachers have strengthened their instructional capacity through team collaborations. A teacher reported, “This is our second year working together, and this is the most important part of the week. We leverage this time in a variety ways to improve our instruction to students, to personalize instruction and give them what they need. Our team work leads to co-planning, lesson alignment, and once a week student talk. We know what’s happening in each of our classes.” Another teacher reported, “We spend a lot of time preparing for this meeting, we know it’s a safe place to help us. Sharing of strategies is also very important, that may not be shared if we weren’t meeting as a team, across classes. We have vertical alignment with department teams.”

- Progress towards goals for groups of students is evidenced by a comparison of credit accumulation: 91 percent of first year students have 10+ credits compared to comparison group schools at 81 percent. In 2017 students with disabilities outscored both the comparison group and the city averages on Living Environment and Global History Regents. Students with disabilities outscored the city average on the Common Core Algebra I Regents. In 2017, student’s in the school’s lowest third outscored both their comparison group and the city average in 10+ credits second year, 10+ credits first year, and post-secondary school enrollment. 18 of 22 Right to Read classes showed improvement in Lexile Level via the STAR Literacy Assessment scores from fall to spring in 2016-2017. This student performance gain corresponds with teacher teams’ work to build student literacy capacity.
Area of Focus

### Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy

#### Rating: Developing

## Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula and students have limited opportunities to demonstrate higher order thinking skills.

## Impact

Students are unevenly engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and student discussions inconsistently reflect high levels of student participation.

## Supporting Evidence

- In a ninth-grade English Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, about adding details or features to make more appealing, literacy strategies for breaking down words from Right to Read, used as an example, “What does ‘embellishing’ mean?” Students were working on laptops on an adding details assignment. The same students with hands up were answering teacher questions. The lessons lacked an opportunity for student to student interaction. Not all students were writing something down in their notebooks, as the teacher was talking up front. In a tenth grade Global II ICT class, students read excerpts from The Spirit of Laws by Montesquieu- connecting their understanding of government to their personal understandings and today. They were using Right to Read strategies, to write about the branches of government. Students finished writing in their graphic organizer about political liberty and abuse of power, but there was no opportunity to discuss or share with peers, even though some students were finished and sat waiting for others to finish.

- In an eleventh-grade Chemistry class, students were sitting in pairs, following a teacher centered discussion on acid naming. The teacher modeled problems on board as students took notes in their notebooks. Then the teacher guided students in breaking down words and suffixes of words. Questioning involved some students, a few repeatedly, then a couple of the students answered questions three times each and many other students were not heard from. In an Advanced Placement English class, students were answering the question, “Was the character heroic or a misfit?” Students sitting in trios, discussed the author’s purpose with open ended questions, and included the use of accountable talk. However, while some students were engaged during the discussion, a couple of students were asked to answer the teacher’s questions three times during the fifteen-minute classroom visit and many students in the room did not participate in the teacher to student class-wide discussion.

- In a tenth-grade Algebra Regents prep class, students were solving equations with variables on both sides. Students were assigned first six problems of a Do Now, while the teacher passed out a worksheet, “Steps for Solving Equations.” Students were sitting individually in rows, some on the sides of the room, with a few of students together in a pair. Teacher modeled problems and some students participated in answering the teacher’s questions, a majority did not participate and it was hard to hear some of the answers because not all the students were listening. Even after the teacher went over two problems on the board, not all students had even those problems written down on the page, some had none written down, some had one problem written down. A couple of students had more than two problems written down. In a twelfth-grade participation in government class, students were studying equality and democracy, as some students had laptops and were paired together to look at James Wilson’s “Equality” essay and Abigail Adams letter as primary source documents. Students did not participate in a discussion with peers on task. Teacher centered instruction with questions that were answered, at times, by the teacher and a few students, including a student was called on at least three times as only he had his hand up and most of the room never raised their hands.
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. Additionally, curricula emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects

Supporting Evidence

- Review of curricular documents revealed alignment to the Common Core and New York State content standards where applicable, as well as integration of the instructional shifts across grades and content areas. Curricular documents included evidence of consistent alignment with integration of the math instructional shifts. For example, in a ninth-grade lesson unit plan, students independently can be able to use their learning to compare unit prices for consumer products. Curricular documents included assignments evidencing integration of the English Language Arts (ELA) instructional shifts. One example reads, “Respond thoroughly to questions that ask them to identify information, infer additional information to form conclusions, and make text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections.”

- Unit plans consistently challenge students to utilize rigorous habits. Learning goals in unit plans include, “Students will understand the difference between inference and prediction and how to use these active reading strategies for nonfiction,” and “work with teams to transform their research into a variety of communicable forms which will be transmitted to an audience.” Additionally, students are to consistently use literacy strategies learned in their Right to Read (R2R) class, across content areas. Lesson plans consistently detailed high-level questions. Examples of higher-order questions found in curricular documents are, “How is the term, “equality” used in the founding documents in the United States?”, “How effectively can we communicate our memories and how they defined us to others?”, “How can we determine if different types of foods are healthy or provide the nutrients and energy humans need to thrive?”, and “How do turning points change history?”

- Samples of curricular documents showed an emphasis on rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills across the grades and subjects, while also ensuring access by English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. For example, a “Participation in Government” lesson plan includes a grouping plan based on challenging primary source documents that has students paired by Lexile levels. A co-teaching plan is included with one co-teacher working with students with disabilities, who use an excerpt from the beginning of the Declaration of Independence to answer questions about the document’s use of “equality” and the realism of this claim. The other co-teacher works with students in pairs as they read excerpts from two documents and answer questions calling on them to interpret the understanding of the two people in terms of “equality.” Differentiation includes the grouping plan by Lexile level, the co-teaching plan, and reinforcement of annotation skills to support students based on a recent R2R lesson.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula. School leaders use common assessments to determine student progress toward goals.

Impact
Students utilize teachers’ actionable feedback to increase their achievement. Staff analysis of data from common assessments informs schoolwide curricular and instructional adjustments, particularly the school’s literacy focus.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher-written actionable feedback directing students to the steps they should take to strengthen their work. One example includes, “New ideas were presented here! I did ask myself, “how?” and “why?” a few times. Next time I want to see the pre-writing which will help you be more thorough.” Another example reads, “You came close, you just need to discuss how the rhetorical devices are used to persuade the reader. How the satire is used to grab attention, how logos set the problem up.” Another example is, “You are a good writer and your attention to detail shows. However, you can improve how you communicate your ideas, specifically how you transition between thoughts.” Finally, another example reads, “Your writing and organization is clear and it helps that you typed your document. You immediately start ahead. I am going to challenge you to continue to develop on your flow in your writing and sounding more authoritative.”

- Across classrooms, rubrics are used as tools of support for student growth. Rubrics that are aligned with the curricula, along with checklists, are used across grades and content areas. The English department uses a R2R assignment rubric associated with letter grades A through F, that includes five categories such as expert, experience, progressing, learning/support, and did not complete. Each category includes two general criteria aligned to utilizing and applying the week’s reading strategy and using feedback to revise and improve their work. A R2R self-assessment rubric includes four of the corresponding categories: expert, experience, progressing, and learning/support with eight criteria for students to self-assess their own learning aligned to the teacher used standard rubric. A science lab written response rubric includes a four-point rating scale assessing purpose, procedure, summary results, summary discussion, summary conclusion, and writing conventions. Evidence of students’ use of these tools is posted on student work examples, including electronic feedback and recorded in the school’s Google Drive, and reported by the students themselves.

- Teachers use assessments in English, mathematics, science, and social studies with results then used to adjust the curriculum and classroom instruction. Periodic assessments include English essay assessments, math end-of-unit chapter tests, social studies and science end-of-unit tests. Item analysis of Regents results and mock Regents exams are used to customize instruction based on student need. Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) exams are conducted twice a year. Star Reading assessments are administered schoolwide four times a year. The results of the data analysis of Star Reading assessments refine the implementation and design of the schoolwide literacy program. Data collected regarding student literacy levels from Star Reading exams is used by teachers across content areas in the design of literacy focused instruction to adjust curricula to meet the learning needs of the students.
Additional Finding

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating:</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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Findings

School leaders consistently convey high expectations to staff through ongoing feedback and professional learning aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The school provides ongoing information to families regarding student progress toward college and career readiness.

Impact

Ongoing communication by school leaders found in feedback from observations, as well as within teaching and learning-focused professional development (PD) make high expectations clear. The school communicates the learning opportunities for families to understand student progress towards meeting standards.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the standard for professionalism and high quality instruction. One example of this feedback was, “3b: Using questioning and discussion techniques: In order to be rated highly effective in this component, there needs to be evidence that, ‘Students formulate many questions, initiate topics, and challenge one another’s thinking.’ Creating opportunities for students to converse with each other would help spark this discourse in class. I noticed that you have already adorned the room with verbal cues for accountable talk and holding students to that standard when facilitating the discussion is a next step.” In addition, teachers receive a faculty handbook that covers a wide variety of expectations ranging from the grading policy, professional expectations, classroom management strategies and best practices, to a ladder of referral, and a glossary of guidance and disciplinary interventions.

- Teachers are held accountable for implementing a schoolwide Strategic Instructional Action Plan (SIAP) for meeting the school’s instructional focus and goals. The SIAP includes the schools core beliefs aligned to the instructional framework and the professional responsibilities framework for a system of accountability. PD is aligned to the school’s SIAP instructional focus and provides support for teachers to meet the expectations of the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

- School leaders and staff communicate expectations to students and their families through regular communications via phone and email, as well as a school website and other social media applications to inform parents. Additionally, teachers use an online grading program that keeps families informed regarding academic standing. In addition to Parent Teacher Conferences offered at the school, they had another opportunity in a city neighborhood near more parents to increase attendance and participation. One parent reported about how the school faculty helps parents to support the students at home, “Last year, my son was struggling in algebra, and they had a meeting with all eight of his teachers. They reviewed what was expected of my son and the curriculum. They said, ‘We will teach you and you can teach them at home. I felt that was a great help to him and to me.’”
Additional Finding

<table>
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<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. Written feedback captures teachers' strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact
Formal and informal classroom visits grounded in the observation and analysis of student work result in written feedback for teachers that makes clear the expectations for teacher practice and the supports available to help teachers meet them. School leaders also provide feedback by leading teacher intervisitations via instructional walkthroughs.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Each rated item is supported with specific detailed evidence from the observed class to support the rating. Next steps for teaching improvements are included throughout the class-specific evidence directed to specific categories of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and at the close of each observation report. In addition, school leaders track frequent observation cycles via an Excel observation tracker on the school’s Google Drive. A teacher reported, “One area is questioning techniques, am I asking those deep understanding questions? The feedback I received was to have more open-ended questions, their feedback is pushing my pedagogy.”

- Observation reports contain feedback that captures teachers' strengths and weaknesses and is accompanied by next steps teachers should take to improve their practice and impact student success. For example, in one report feedback states “3b: Using questioning and discussion techniques: To be effective in this component, 'The teacher uses open-ended questions, inviting students to think and/or offer multiple possible answers.' Though you incorporated a question in the entrance / exit slip based on my actionable feedback, I encourage you to continue to provide students with the opportunity to develop their inquiry skills. One method would be to post a range of Depth of Knowledge (DoK) questions starters in your room applicable to science inquiry, then each time a student is reading an excerpt or engage in an observation / experiment, require students to pose a question, as part of their activity.”

- In addition to the reports resulting from official classroom observations, school leaders conduct instructional walkthroughs with teacher intervisitation teams. The instructional walkthroughs include opportunities for several teachers to visit a few teachers’ classrooms and offer feedback. A synopsis of the walkthrough is written up by the attending school leader and distributed as feedback to the visiting teachers and the visited teachers. The walkthroughs include feedback such as “At the end of our Instructional Walkthrough, we surmised that all students were aware of the clear tasks being asked of them. We wondered if the reliance on the teacher-centered model while it appeared to allow many students to be focused, hindered the engagement of students?” Another piece of feedback from administration includes, “After visiting the classrooms, our discussion turned toward whole-school concerns around our current ICT model. Students would benefit from clearly defining roles and expectations for the special educators and the general educators during a lesson. In order for general education teachers to design rigorous grade appropriate tasks for our students, special educators need to create supports that some students may need along the way.”