Quality Review Report

2017-2018

High School for Health Careers and Sciences
High school 06M468
549 Audubon Avenue
Manhattan
NY 10040
Principal: Javier Trejo
Dates of Review:
May 30, 2018 - May 31, 2018
Lead Reviewer: AJ Hepworth
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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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></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>Area of Focus</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 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>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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
School leaders and faculty have an effective and transparent process to monitor and adjust curriculum and instructional practices and use organizational resources, including effective assignment of administrators and teacher leaders.

Impact
Coherence of policies and practices exists throughout the school improving student learning, teacher pedagogy, inquiry work, and policies supporting professional development.

Supporting Evidence

- Curriculum and instruction are refined and reviewed on a continuous cycle by grade, department, and subject-specific Professional Learning Cycle (PLC) teams, to ensure tasks are differentiated and meet the needs of all learners. Using the PLC structure, teachers have honed their intervisitation protocols and use data strategically to develop scaffolds and interventions for groups of students. Additionally, PLCs critique lesson plans applying research-based structures aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards, which have led to successful learning experiences and the establishment of high expectations for all learners. School administration, in conjunction with teacher leaders, use the continuous work of the PLCs to review instructional and curricular decisions and further guide professional development decisions. These processes, purposefully implemented across the school, have proven to be effective and transparent by leading to alignment and coherence between what is taught and how it is taught.

- As part of the review cycle of grade and department teams, the school has developed a coherent lesson framework and planning protocols that have been adopted by all teachers. As an extension, a practice of ongoing review of specific lesson plans has resulted in the development of scaffolds and supports for struggling students, students with disabilities, and English Language Learners (ELLs), as well as extensions for those students who have demonstrated the ability for further challenges. These coherent protocols have influenced school systems in three principle areas. First, the school has established fully aligned Common Core Learning Standards curricula. Next, the teacher professional growth system supports the effective implementation of instruction, and lastly, a system for measuring the impact of pedagogy relative to student learning and achievement.

- School representatives regularly attend Collaborative Professional Learning Cycle meetings (CPLCs) with the renewal coach to review data, evaluate teacher teamwork, and develop revised plans for school improvement. School leaders meet with CPLC attendees to ensure outcomes and needs of the CPLC can be supported and achieved effectively. Additionally, teacher leaders support and guide the work of the CPLCs with fidelity to further increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, connected to its systems for improvement. Ultimately, all decisions school leaders and faculty engage in are intentional and support the use of organizational resources across departments which allow all voices to be heard as they work to infuse standards-aligned curricula that includes the school’s focus while maintaining support for the professional learning needs of staff.
Area of Focus

Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy  
Rating: Proficient

Findings

Teaching practices align with the school's instructional foci regarding how students learn best by providing consistent multiple entry points via graphic organizers, manipulatives, and communication devices to support learning.

Impact

Although engagement in appropriate tasks promotes college, career, and life skills that yield meaningful work products by the majority of students, strategic implementation of extensions are not routine, thus limiting students from engaging in higher order thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Instruction is aligned to Common Core Learning Standards by including learning objectives that are grounded in reading and writing. For example, students in a marine biology class used a graphic organizer to capture evidence from a series of articles regarding if people should support and go to aquariums. Students, based on collected evidence, summarized their evidence as a way of determining and supporting their claim. Additionally, the articles were provided in English and Spanish for those that needed access to reading in their native language. Although students read the articles and wrote ideas capturing their thoughts, they answered only the prescribed questions and did not extend their claim to other concepts. Furthermore, the period provided to students to annotate the articles was rushed as evident by several students only annotating and recording evidence on the front page.

- During an English 12 class, a poem was read aloud twice for students to determine the central idea, draw evidence, and then engage in a discussion with peers. During the discussion, students analyzed lines of the poem and challenged each other’s thinking, by asking each other for their understanding of vocabulary, language, and overall interpretation. To further support several students having access to the poem, they were provided with either an enlarged print version, or a copy broken down by stanzas, with each line numbered to focus attention to specific elements. Furthermore, students were provided a conversational roundtable graphic organizer to support them in their discussion as they synthesized their ideas and responses. Lastly, all students had access to a writing strategies checklist to direct their focus when writing their interpretation of the poem. The strategic use of scaffolds supported most students’ access to being engaged in appropriately challenging tasks, however similar clearly purposeful strategies were not implemented with the same level of high-quality supports in all classes. Most classes provided students with uniform anchor charts to apply to their task that were not often used, thus limiting students the ability to extend their thinking.

- Teaching strategies engage students in challenging tasks through appropriate scaffolds. Several English Language Learner (ELLs) with limited English proficiency used a think-write-pair-share graphic organizer during a global history lesson on human rights to plan their responses with prompted questions and memorialize their partners thinking. Additionally, images of human rights violations were provided to help students understand and be thoughtful about the elements of human rights. Although most students were able to remain engaged with the task, the lack of ability to conceptualize the images relative to the context of the lesson’s objectives limited student ability to accurately determine if the images are in fact enough evidence to classify them as human rights violations and demonstrate higher-order thinking aligned with the learning objective.
### 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 ensure lesson plans and student tasks are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, integrate the instructional shifts, and emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills by incorporating decoding and citing textual evidence across grades and content areas.

#### Impact

Coherence and promotion of rigorous college and career readiness skills are embedded throughout instructional planning documents so all students have to read, write, draw, and/or provide explanations of their work.

#### Supporting Evidence

- A schoolwide adopted template design for lesson plans includes content and instructional objectives with an emphasis on reading and writing as a way to ensure that there is coherence of practice and the promotion of college and career readiness. Teachers, with guidance from school leaders, peers, and coaches, emphasize decoding and citing textual evidence in their curricula. All lesson plans reviewed included content standards students would be able to demonstrate as a learning outcome. For example, an English 10 lesson plan identified that students would cite strong evidence from text and determine a central theme in preparation for a collaborative discussion in literature circles. Guiding questions were provided for each of the three books to build coherence amongst students and how they work and collaborate. Additionally, previously administered benchmark results were used as rationale to target the identified skills during this particular lesson.

- Curricular planning documents focus on fostering student engagement by developing lessons that hold students accountable by working on challenging and rigorous tasks. Most lessons incorporate scaffolds that require students to challenge their thinking, reason logically, and collaborate. For example, an Advanced Placement (AP) environmental science lesson plan, includes an instructional objective for students to compare and contrast two geological features and provide a description of the unique formation, using a group work and textual evidence rubric to memorialize the work. The rubric provides the expectations of a completed activity and includes using time effectively and working with partners to provide specific, relevant, and thorough evidence to support ideas. The incorporated scaffolds supported student understanding of rock formations via a song, a video, and a copy of geological process concepts for those students who needed them.

- Teachers plan their lessons for all students, but intentionally include scaffolds and structures that meet the needs of the ELLs as they comprise more than one third of all students enrolled in the school. To maintain the rigor and push student thinking there are procedural checklists, anchor and strategy charts, visual representations, and bilingual resources, such as activity sheets, dictionaries, and feedback forms, in all content areas across all grades. These resources provide students support in rigorous Advanced Placement courses, so students are successful and college ready. Furthermore, math checklists are planned and provided to students to ensure they can remain engaged in the rigorous tasks and follow steps accordingly.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
Teachers use or create common assessments, feedback, and rubrics, across grade levels, that align with the school’s curricula to determine student progress towards achievement.

Impact
Actionable feedback, usually written as glows and grows, provides students with their achievement information and helps to guide next steps. Additionally, teachers use results from student work and assessments to adjust grouping and provide scaffolds during instruction and to plan curricula.

Supporting Evidence

- The majority of math practice worksheets include a Regents problem-solving checklist that aligns to the task. Teachers and students use it to track progress and note feedback related to the task. A problem-solving checklist accompanying student work samples reflected feedback connected to each student’s ability around solving a problem, specifically in the areas of annotation, underlining, and the highlighting of critical information. Students value the feedback they receive on their returned work and understand the next steps needed to improve. One student expressed, “You always want to strive for a 100, and I have a problem with grammar and when to put proper punctuation, [from my feedback], I sit with my teacher to edit the error sentences.”

- Feedback on rubrics and written notes to students, regarding their work, indicates highlights and next steps for growth. During a meeting with students, they shared work samples and explained how they receive and understand the feedback to improve their work. For example, feedback on a student’s ELA personal essay noted the proper use of subordinating conjunctions. Additionally, as the teacher provided a sample the student was able to apply the grammatical rule to his subsequent writing.

- Mock Regent exams are administered to identify student misunderstanding and thus identify possible misconceptions, prior to them actually taking the exam. Mock Regents results highlighted gaps in writing for the data-based questions needed to write an essay. As such, teachers purposefully created data-based question packets and reinforced the skills needed to write strong content essays. Mock Regents results from the January United States History Regents evidenced significant progress from the prior two years.

- Teachers use trackers to capture students' performance and progress on baseline assessments, noting gains and declines. Furthermore, the benchmark data guides student grouping as identified in lesson plan books and curricular documents. A global history lesson plan includes student groupings for Regents prep along with the level of mastery of each student on the assessment standards. Additionally, results are used to assign differentiated online work to support student achievement.
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 to the entire staff and provide common planning time and newsletters to meet the expectations. Additionally, a culture of high expectations for students is evidenced via partnerships, a student center, and course offerings.

Impact

Staff receives training and explicit information regarding supporting students in meeting high expectations connected to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Weekly, the principal uses a newsletter to communicate best instructional practices, including lesson plan expectations. A recent newsletter reminded teachers to embed strategies from the prior month’s faculty conference into their lessons that focused on the instructional strategy of content and conventions in writing. Another newsletter referenced classroom and school environment as needing to be inviting and conducive to learning. Suggestions included sharing classrooms respectfully, maintaining up-to-date bulletin boards with Common Core Learning Standards, including the needed feedback on student work, a task outline, and posting of high quality samples of student work. Additionally, teachers collaborate with school leadership during CPLC sessions, three times a week, to develop best practices for implementation around common strategies promoting student discussion, collaboration, and engagement.

- The principal provides staff with a handbook at the beginning of the year and conducts regular staff meetings regarding instructional and professional expectations. In addition, at the beginning of the year teachers set both professional and personal goals. Most teacher-generated goals focus on instruction in improving reading and writing. Teachers learn how to implement reading strategies during professional development conducted during common planning time, resulting in student progress. Additionally, school leadership tracks, monitors, and provides training to align professional development to both the school’s instructional focus as well as those areas in need of support, such as questioning techniques, student autonomy, and assessment practices.

- Students receive guidance and advisement related to college and career pathway. The student success center supports all aspects of the college application process and helps students “learn more effective communication and leadership skills,” according to one senior. Additionally, in advisory, students are taught how to read and understand their transcript, save long-term assignments, and ask relevant questions regarding their progress towards graduation. Partnerships with community-based organizations allow students to experience college and university visitations, financial aid workshops, and plan college credit bearing course. For example, Advanced Placement courses are offered to all students so they can experience rigorous curriculum and instruction similar to college.
Findings

All teachers are engaged in weekly, inquiry-based professional collaborations that include a consistent analysis of mock Regents data, instructional strategies, and student work.

Impact

Teachers strengthen their instructional delivery while promoting student achievement in their work products and on assessments.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers’ weekly inquiry meeting, across grades and disciplines, provides a venue for ongoing review of student work as a gauge against their planning and how they are assessing students as to their attaining mastery of each unit of study. This collaborative work engages staff, across departments, in developing instructional plans that address the remediation of student skill gaps while honing their own implementation of specific strategies. A recently adopted protocol ensures teachers adhere to their inquiry practices with fidelity and provide students with multiple entry points, demonstrating both department and school-wide coherence aligned to building best practices. Thus, inquiry work around the review of student work supports teacher development in instructional strategies that are then implemented in their classrooms.

- In reviewing the agenda and minutes from a recent math department inquiry meeting, there was evidence of how purposefully provided scaffolds and manipulatives for individual low-performing students helped them complete questions on a task. Teachers noticed students often attempted every problem, however they solved them incorrectly. Furthermore, some weaknesses observed were that students did not show evidence of note taking or annotation when problem solving. Several suggestions included providing students with a highlighter and an exam booklet in a student’s native language. Other wonderings included, questioning the timeliness of the topic relative to the task. As an outgrowth, teachers recognized the need to adjust their curricular planning around written multi-step problems to support student understanding both content and concept. Approaches to improve student achievement included building an understanding of test vocabulary, and holding students accountable for selective underlining and annotating of key information related to the problem.

- Teachers engage in intervisitations to promote achievement of school goals and support their peers with best practices. It is used as a forum to identify common instructional practices in action, engage in structured reflection, and apply new learnings to their own classroom instruction. This has resulted in teachers developing strong collaborative partnerships, improved lesson delivery, and coherence across classrooms. The analysis of teacher intervisitations is aligned to identifying common skills students need on the Regents to complete constructed response questions successfully.