Quality Review Report

2017-2018

High School M560 - City As School

High school 02M560
16 Clarkson Street
Manhattan
NY 10014

Principal: Alan Cheng

Dates of Review:
February 7, 2018 and February 9, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Buffie Whitfield
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

High School M560 - City As School serves students in grade 10 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](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>
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</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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</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><strong>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding: Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</strong></td>
<td>Area of Celebration: Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding: Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding: Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding: Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding: Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding: Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings
In this established culture for learning, high expectations in preparation for college and career are systematically communicated to all students, from recruitment through graduation, and mutual accountability occurs amongst teachers.

Impact
Faculty ensure that all students advance toward high expectations, are prepared for the next levels, and own their educational experience.

Supporting Evidence
- The school’s leaders and faculty are committed to not only communicating high expectations to students, but also to providing the ongoing support that is required to meet those expectations and promote ownership of student academic work. The staff has a set of clear, systematic structures, such as guidance, college preparatory advisement and assistance, and career counseling that ensures that students are aware of their progress toward their college and career goals. 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 their careers and colleges.

- To improve their pedagogy, all teachers receive on-site professional development linked to their needs. Additionally, teachers receive professional development at sites that feature training in instructional strategies, such as the use of data to inform instruction and curriculum refinement. Participants at teacher team meetings noted that peers sometimes model teaching strategies for other teachers, and a professional learning calendar shows that several teacher leaders collaborate with school leaders and external support specialists to facilitate professional learning events for all staff. Teachers reported being trained to implement the New York Performance Standards, Consortium rubrics, subject-area rubrics that are aligned to State standards and normed across Consortium schools, the Common Core Learning Standards, and the unifying instructional framework of The Four Traits, representing college and career readiness skills that integrate the Common Core Learning Standards, to maximize student learning. Teachers participate in study groups such as Culturally Sustaining & Responsive Curriculum, Experiential Learning, Deeper Learning and Flow, College and Career Readiness, Making Learning Visible and Celebrating Student Work, Trauma Sensitive Practices and Attendance and Expectations. As a result, teachers share they are constantly learning through study groups and intervisitation opportunities that improve curricular and instruction.

- High expectations are consistently communicated to incoming students at all recruitment events, and an overview of the school curriculum sequence and academic expectations are provided by guidance counselors upon admission. Students shared that in preparation for the decision towards an internship, counselors present information about course requirements and the selection process and students participate in internship seminars where they engage in activities related to being career ready. Counselors and college office faculty are assigned to oversee each internship and provide ongoing advisement and support for students at every grade level. Furthermore, the faculty systematically communicates expectations to students relative to them engaging in college-level work within courses and they share information about career readiness, including industry and technical education courses. Students shared that they have a future. Numerous students stated that transferring into the school and participating in internships has given them direction and career choices. “I did not see a future before but interning in a music program I want to attend college, now.” The documentation of 300 internships and part-time employment opportunities for students further promote college and career readiness.
Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use pedagogy aligned to the school's belief that real world experiential activities provide students with entry points into the curriculum and they use a variety of discussion and planning strategies to support student discussions and work products. Although classrooms have begun to incorporate extension activities and high-quality supports, this practice is evident in the majority but not every classroom.

Impact

High level opportunities for discussion challenge most students and provide occasions for them to share their thinking and produce high-level work; however, the absence of high quality supports in a few classrooms limits some student's thinking and hinders chances for them to take ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, instructional practices are aligned to the school’s articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. One of the overarching schoolwide beliefs is that the pedagogy must engage students in purposeful and real-world experiences to strengthen their capacity to exhibit high levels of learning. All projects that students were engaged in were real world applicable and informed by student interest. Students engaged in creating a two-dimensional world with specific geometric shapes. Students were creating a human brain. When asked what he learned from working on this kind of project he stated, “Now I realize how the human brain functions.”

- Classes and internships lead to culminating projects that engage students in inquiry in connection with a real-world problem and context and experiences. At an internship class at New York University, students participate in the Music/Art/Design (MAD) Academy. The facilitator engaged students in a creative discussion where they brainstormed ideas to create a project for a Clean Green Music Machine Video Project. Students brainstorm scenes and storylines for music video. In a class entitled, “Machines and Happiness”, students examine key features of industrialization and consider what happiness is and how to measure happiness. Students listen and share within their groups what brings them happiness resulting in a consensus on top priorities.

- Across classrooms teachers guide students in the production of high-level student work, engage them in discussions, and check in with working groups to prompt their thinking and push them forward in their work. Teachers remind students to confirm, challenge or extend the responses of their classmates and students were able to appropriately use discussion stems; however, across a few classrooms student responses were prompted by teachers and teacher support was needed to keep the conversations flowing. Thus, some students have yet to take ownership of the conversations and respond freely to one another.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum
Rating: Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that the educational program is strategically aligned to Common Core and content standards and emphasizes rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects through coursework at the high school and college levels as well providing career-oriented experiences.

Impact

Coherent curricula and rigorous tasks require all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, (ELLs), to demonstrate their thinking and promote successful transition to college and career.

Supporting Evidence

- The educational program promotes college and career readiness for all students, including students with disabilities and ELLs. All new students take a course entitled Making Meaning (MM) and Looking for an Argument to provide support in close reading and citing textual evidence. One lesson plan objective indicates that students explore the evolution of nuclear warfare within the world and conduct a historical debate surrounding the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States. The course integrates instructional shifts of debate, reading, annotating, and writing. Students analyze and synthesize historical texts and current news articles. Similarly, a course entitled Books, Books Books, asks students to read and analyze works of literature, set goals as readers and monitor their own progress towards goals for reading development.

- Rigorous courses are aligned to college-level work and industry application. For instance, students are asked to use their Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, (STEM), Consortium rubric to focus on the principles of bridge design to create their own miniature model. Students test the bridge for efficiency, explore revisions to their prototype and complete a report, designs and blueprints. Students are offered a neuroscience class, in grades eleven and twelve, which explores the organization and biological bases of the brain. Students are tasked to research experiments that focus on optical illusions. Students choose a topic, conduct background research, craft an experimental question, and develop hypothesis and collect data related to their experimental questions, culminating in a science graduation portfolio. Through engagement in rigorous college-level tasks and preparation for the world of work, the major subject area coursework propels students toward college and career.

- Curriculum documents across courses reflect cohesion as well as Common-Core alignment. For example, the curriculum map for the English department articulates grade-specific goals for the year and compulsory written and spoken student work products explicitly linked to the standards. Required texts are specified and options for teacher discretion are evident as well. An English curriculum map reveals that all teachers begin the year with a focus on writing essays and it includes expectations for engagement in work that prepares students for career readiness and college coursework. A skills progression document reflects a cohesive approach in preparation for the English Language Arts Regents.
Additional Finding

Findings
Teachers use PBAT assessments and rubrics aligned to curricula to create a clear picture of student mastery. Results of PBAT assessments, English Regents and student projects are analyzed to make curricular and instructional adjustments across grades and subjects.

Impact
Assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback regarding student achievement so that all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, demonstrate high levels of mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers’ use of rubrics to offer clear descriptions of expected mastery was evident across content areas. A PBAT rubric used to score exams informs students and teachers regarding thesis, organization, analysis, evidence, style and voice and connections. Teachers also use iterations and/or fully adopt the PBAT rubrics in their courses. In one instance, a student shared that the teacher comments supported him to write a stronger analysis requiring elaboration. One student referred to his task-specific essay rubric to share that he needs to work on using consistent voice as he continues to prepare for his PBATs. Additionally, teachers use Consortium rubrics to assess students. During a meeting, one student mentioned, “Before each assignment, we receive rubrics so we have a clear expectation for the level of our work. It is a guide to help us accomplish our assignment at the highest level.” Another student shared, “We use rubrics in all subject areas, and teachers give us feedback via Google Docs and grades based on the rubrics.” This was evident as per a review of student work products and curriculum planning documents.

- Teachers conduct an item analysis of the results of PBATs to determine common student struggles. Teachers specifically addressed incorporating student voice in the next unit, made instructional adjustments to incorporate more voice within lessons and units and subsequently after analyzing student work, concluded that students had improved those skills. Teachers then went on to identify next steps. Additionally, adjustments to lessons are based on a range of assessments, including student projects, and have led to a six-year cohort graduation rate of 66 percent, which is above the city average for transfer schools.

- Interviews of students indicated that the practice of having them use rubrics to self-assess and monitor their own work is consistent across grades and content areas. In describing their work samples, students spoke about using rubrics to determine what is needed for a high rating on an assignment and how the feedback supported them in other work products. One student noted that in responding to a task linked to the reading, The Giver, he used a rubric to assess whether his writing met the criteria for all evidence to be fully explained and relevant to the claims he made. Other students stated that they regularly assess their learning to set goals for improvement. Several referenced their use of the online grade platform to reflect on their performance across assessments.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

A strategic, transparent supervisory system includes the observation process that provides effective and accurate feedback and supports administrative decisions to promote continued professional growth for all faculty as well as ways to nurture future school leaders.

Impact

School leaders’ implementation of support strategies and opportunities for growth elevates instructional practices schoolwide and improves the quality of student work.

Supporting Evidence

- Strategically, schoolwide observation write-ups emphasize the use of assessment in instruction. Administrators provide actionable feedback that addresses, “How do you know students are learning?” An observation report for an English teacher conveyed highly effective practices for circulating and listening to student responses, asking questions that checked for understanding, eliciting patterns and noticing gaps in student responses. Another teacher received an effective rating as the observer noted that students opted to receive feedback from peers by placing their work on the board with the teacher then providing a review of specific common problems in the class.

- Systems are in place to use observation data to inform professional development. School leaders reflected on compiled Advance observation data across departments, noting that the lowest calculated averages were evident in the planning and preparation domain, leading to a focus on coherence of instruction, emphasizing making thinking visible. Additionally, follow–up observations note improvements. Administrators guide teachers in building activities through offerings of professional development around recognizing the attributes of student engagement rather than compliance. Consequently teachers revise their teaching strategies to promote more process-driven activities rather than answer-driven tasks. Analysis of Advance data across the school community reflects increased teacher rating averages in planning and preparation.

- The school leadership engages in reflective conferencing and classroom/field visits with each faculty member over the course of the year. The process involves a goal setting conference (IPC) at the start of each school year, a fall observation, a mid-year check-in, a spring observation, and an end-of-year structured review. In addition, observations contain reflective questions. Consecutive observation reports for a non-tenured teacher reflected specific feedback that moved from a developing rating in demonstrating knowledge of questioning and discussion to an effective rating. Administrative comments articulated direct correlation to previous feedback.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations as members of common-planning teams and content-specific department teams, through which distributed leadership structures are embedded.

Impact

Professional collaborations promote instructional coherence and implementation of the Common Core standards, resulting in high levels of student achievement for all learners. Distributed practices foster opportunities for teachers to play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders provide all teachers with programs that articulate specific times for planning with peers on teams. Using Consortium standards and a student work protocol notes sheet, teams meet regularly to examine student work and document their findings, wonderings and next steps. Teachers analyze both quantitative and qualitative data to determine the effectiveness of teaching practices and intervention strategies and to outline additional interventions to address student needs. For example, advisors analyze and plan interventions for students who are not making adequate progress towards promotion and graduation requirements. A professional learning calendar and minutes of meetings reference the use of data to inform credit gap and marking period grade analysis, leading to instructional interventions to help students get on track.

- Teacher teams, such as the Science team observed during the Quality Review, examine samples of work derived from PBATs, as a first step in planning how to improve student performance on the next unit of instruction. Teachers on that team used a student work protocol template to closely look at the PBAT. A facilitator presented information about the task, after a brief silent review of the work samples, participants cited student strengths and weaknesses and discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to help the students navigate the text to complete the task. They followed up with a discussion of how they would incorporate one or more of the strategies, such as presentations incorporated into lessons for students in their respective classes and suggested additional strategies for the presenting teacher to consider when designing the next unit or lesson.

- Teachers at one of the team meetings stated that they provide essential input in school-level decision making, through team leaders who meet bi-weekly with members of the administrative team who in turn then meet with their respective department or grade-level team to implement ideas generated at weekly team leader meetings. Department leaders, mentors, include teacher leaders who work with all staff on initiatives that target improved student outcomes. In collaboration with school leaders, they support all teams with instructional resources, contribute regularly to data gathering and analysis, and reflect on team activities. They also set the agenda for team meetings and facilitate professional learning events for all staff. The teacher teams are integral in infusing teacher voice in schoolwide decision making that leads to improvement in student performance and teacher practice, resulting in movement in the graduation rate.