Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Academy Of Medical Technology: A College Board School
Secondary School 27Q309
8-21 Bay 25 Street
Queens
NY 11691

Principal: William Johnson

Dates of Review:
December 7, 2017 - December 8, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Adam Breier
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><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

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

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

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</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>Additional Finding</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide training to the entire staff. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning.

Impact

Communication and professional development (PD) around high expectations result in a culture of mutual accountability. Grade-level teams foster student ownership of high expectations through an advisory program.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate high expectations through a faculty handbook that contains information connected to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Other sections of this resource address topics such as planning differentiated learning experiences for students, the design, administration, and use of data resulting from assessments, and giving actionable feedback to students. In addition, the schoolwide grading policy, maintenance of a positive school-wide culture, and the professional responsibilities to which all faculty members are accountable are addressed. School leaders have provided PD sessions on the different Danielson *Framework for Teaching* domains, with a focus on questioning. Teachers receive a weekly email that details their individual PD assignments, designed so that schoolwide PD is complemented by content-area specific workshops as well as time set aside for teachers to engage in common planning. Teachers praised these email PD opportunities. While school leaders hold teachers accountable for integration of professional learning into improved instruction, teachers hold school leaders accountable for offering actionable feedback within twenty-four hours of a classroom observation. One teacher reported, and all present agreed, that school leaders promptly respond to requests for them to model instructional strategies in their classrooms.

- A culture of learning in which high expectations are made clear to students is maintained through an advisory program. Advisors regularly review academic progress with each of their students through meetings during which progress reports, report cards, transcripts, and Regents exam progress are analyzed. Students of all grade levels attend college visits and are supported by a college advisor, as well as student employees who work in the college advisement office, to offer additional services to their peers. All students in grade eight are expected to take high school level algebra, Living Environment, and United States (U.S.) History along with the Regents exams that accompany those courses. Additionally, students are expected to take college courses through agreements the school has in place with three colleges. The class of 2018 is on track toward a fifty percent increase in students graduating high school already having earned a minimum of three college credits, up from the previous year’s graduating class. Additionally, students are also benefiting from the expectation that they take Advanced Placement (AP) classes. One student reported that he is able to take AP History in another school while students from that school can take AP Biology at this school.

- The school offers in-school internships for students, employing them in the college office as well as the main office. Students are prepared for careers after high school through the guidance of supervising staff as well as participating in the issuing of advisement for fellow students in the college office. In addition to this, students interview for internships at a local hospital. In order to build career readiness skills, students who have completed that same internship work as mentors for the students currently serving as interns.
Area of Focus

Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy
Rating: Developing

Findings
Teaching practices are beginning to reflect a set of beliefs that students learn best when they are engaged in student-centered conversations. Student discussions inconsistently reflect high levels of student participation.

Impact
Teaching practices are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. While students share work with partners and express understanding of math concepts through movement, there are limited opportunities to engage in appropriately challenging tasks, take ownership of learning, or demonstrate higher order thinking in their work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned with the articulated belief that students learn best when they are engaged in student-centered conversations. In a grade-nine English Language Arts (ELA) class, students were engaging their partners in conversations about the character Curley’s wife from Of Mice and Men, by John Steinbeck. Students charted the results of their conversations over how different populations affect the geographic regions in which they live. However, there were missed opportunities for students to turn to a partner and talk in a lab preparatory activity during which students individually answered fill-in-the-blank questions. Additionally, in a science class the discussion was teacher centered with all questions being asked by the teacher and all student answers directed toward that same teacher.

- All students in a grade-eight social studies class used a Silent Conversation Protocol that required them to answer questions and make comments about different documents concerned with the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire. Students then passed their work to their partners who responded in writing. In an ELA class, students worked with partners to create visual representations for the different characters in Night, by Elie Wiesel. However, not all students participated in an ELA class discussion. Similarly, lack of a discussion protocol resulted in some students not participating in a grade-seven social studies class discussion about how The Proclamation of 1763 barred British colonists from living in the Ohio River Valley.

- During an Algebra II lesson on square root functions, all students were required to use tokens to ensure their participation in the class discussion. However, while students in a Geometry class excitedly participated in an activity during which they danced in a way that revealed their understanding of the different angles projected at the front of the room, only a small number of students could participate at any one time. While groups of students took turns in conducting this activity, all other students watched, without benefiting from a complementary questioning or observing activity. The teacher’s discussion questions after each round were answered by individual students directly to the teacher, limiting the number of students who could participate. Additionally, the lack of a protocol limited the number of students who could participate in a discussion about the results of a photosynthesis experiment in a Living Environment class.
## Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts with an emphasis on the use of text-based evidence. Curricula and tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

### Impact

Curricula promote college and career readiness for all students. Adjustments to material and the tools students use during instruction ensure access and engagement for diverse learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- Curricular documents across grades and content areas evidence consistent alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards and integration with the instructional shifts. For example, in a grade-nine ELA lesson plan, students are tasked with analyzing a non-fiction explanation of a character written by the author of the fictional work in which that character appears. Students are also to analyze all major characters from the same work and support their findings with text-based details. An AP Environmental Science lesson plan includes an assignment in which students are to determine the impact that the world’s population will have on the regions in which they live and support their claims with text-based evidence. A grade-ten ELA lesson plan details the different themes from *Night* to which each student group would be assigned to create a visual symbol that would be supported by text-based evidence. All lesson plans collected during the school visit include the relevant academic vocabulary. Additionally, lesson plans evidence an effort to build students’ knowledge through the reading and analysis of an even balance between fiction and nonfiction texts.

- An Earth Science lesson plan details the Common Core Learning Standards and State content-specific standards to which its learning activities are aligned. This lesson includes a task in which students are required to determine the rate at which carbon decays using strategies found in a narrative piece about that process. After engaging in the subsequent laboratory exercise on radiometric dating, students are to write about the processes in which they engaged and discuss how their understanding has deepened as a result of this assignment. A Geometry lesson plan includes an activity designed to help students increase their fluency through an interactive game of dance that requires students to dance in speed and accuracy in identifying angle pairs and the relationships that are formed when parallel lines are intersected by a transversal. An Algebra II lesson plan indicates that students are to narratively describe their deepened understanding of the processes involved with square root functions.

- Curricula and academic tasks reflect planning so that diverse learners could have access. A grade-nine ELA lesson plan includes a letter that has been adapted so that students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs) could have equal access. Copies of the letter that contain embedded translations for the key academic vocabulary words are available for ELLs while students with disabilities benefit from another version of the same letter that has key sentences and words in bold type for emphasis along with access to character analysis worksheets that contain model answers. A grade-eight Living Environment lesson plan covering photosynthesis includes a modified worksheet with a checklist to be utilized by students with disabilities. This lesson plan also details how students’ Individualized Educational Program (IEP) mandated modifications, along with assessment data results, are to be used in grouping students. Other lessons plans evidence similar data and needs-assessment based student groupings. For example, students are grouped as per their IEP and ELL needs in a grade-six social studies lesson plan as well as a grade-nine ELA plan.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and checklists that are aligned with the school’s curricula to inform feedback to students. School leaders use common assessments to determine student progress toward goals.

Impact

Students utilize teachers’ actionable feedback and use assessment tools in order to increase their achievement. Teachers use data from the State ELA and math exams, along with teacher-designed assessments, to design intervention periods and programming.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, samples of student work included teacher-written actionable feedback that students use for improvement. For example, essays on immigration to the U.S. include feedback that asks students to use at least two different documents in each paragraph and to cite the evidence used to support claims. Other examples reveal teachers’ guidance that students avoid repetition by using synonyms. For math, feedback guides students toward not only identifying a correct answer but also explaining the process, making sure that each axis on a graph is properly titled, and to check all answers to ensure accuracy. Students reported being able to use feedback from their teachers in order to improve their grades. One student discussed how a teacher shared a strategy he could use for explaining political cartoons and how this helped him increase his grade from earning a two out of seven to a five out of seven. Another student shared that her teacher persistently advised her to check and recheck her work in trigonometry and that this has helped her turn that into a regularly used strategy.

- The data from three common reading assessments are used to determine any prevailing areas of need for students in grades six through eight. Students are subsequently placed in one of three tiers, each of which is programmed for up to three periods of reading intervention per week. Additionally, teachers analyze the item analyses from State math exams, along with a baseline assessment administered at the start of the school year, to determine students’ needs. Analysis revealed that students were struggling with the embedded literacy components in math so teachers decided to switch the math curriculum to one more appropriate to address that need.

- Data from item analyses of Regents exam results, along with teacher-designed common assessments that mirror Regents exam questions, are used to determine programmatic and curricular decisions for grades nine through twelve. In order to reverse an observed downward trend in students’ passing rates on the Geometry Regents exam, the decision was made to have all grade nine students take Algebra I and all grade ten students take Algebra II instead of Geometry in order to extend students’ growth in algebra and increase the likelihood that students will graduate with multiple math Regents exams. Additionally, the social studies sequence was changed so that students in grade eight now take U.S. History in order to maximize their learning about U.S. History during grade eight and increase their likelihood of passing the U.S. History Regents Exam. Similarly, this year is the first year that students will be taking Global History in a one-year sequence rather than the two-year sequence previously utilized in order to maximize students’ success on that Regents exam.
Findings

School leaders support teacher development for all teachers, including those new to the profession, with frequent classroom observation cycles. Prompt written feedback captures teachers’ strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact

Official and unofficial classroom visits result in written feedback for teachers in official observation reports and in emails sent to teachers that make clear the expectations for teacher practice and the supports available to help teachers meet them.

Supporting Evidence

- Each school leader directly supervises teachers from their focus grades. Within their focus grades, school leaders first observe teachers new to the profession, the school, their current grade assignment, or teachers who have demonstrated a need for support. Then, all other teachers are observed. Once two teacher observation cycles have been completed, school leaders meet and review the resulting observation data. The schedule for all remaining observations is then created using this data, ensuring that teachers are observed by a variety of school leaders and benefit from the targeted matching of teachers’ needs with school leaders’ areas of expertise.

- Observation reports include feedback that captures teachers’ strengths and weaknesses and are accompanied by next steps that teachers should take in order for them to improve their practice and positively impact student success. For example, in one observation report, a teacher was praised for the different questions asked of students so that their level of understanding could be accurately gauged. This teacher was also advised to design group work with clear roles for each student to fulfill in order to increase student engagement. Another report revealed celebration of students’ use of handheld erasable white boards so that the teacher could accurately capture each student’s progress and regroup them immediately and appropriately. The school leader then discussed how the teacher could assign different groups to share-out portions of a reading and have students use a note-taking tool to capture the noticings from all other groups. Other examples of feedback revealed actionable steps a teacher could take to increase the impact of a Socratic seminar by issuing clear instructions for students in the inner and outer circles as well and the recommendation to a math teacher on the benefits of using accountable talk question stems in order to increase student to student discussion.

- Emails sent by school leaders to teachers in which feedback resulting from unofficial individual classroom observations is shared supplement the reports resulting from official classroom observations. In one email, the school leader praised the teacher’s use of an online journal and for the high level of student engagement. Recommendations to the teacher included assigning students to pairs for peer editing, providing a rubric to students, and requiring students to adhere to seating assignments. Another example revealed advice for teachers to increase planning for differentiating instruction to meet all students’ needs and adjusting the pacing to ensure maximization of instructional time. Feedback is also shared resulting from multi-class walkthroughs. Some of the feedback to teachers resulting from these walkthroughs included planning for the use of scaffolds and supports so that all students could have access to the lesson, checking for student understanding and adjusting the lesson accordingly, and ensuring that all writing assignments are aligned to a rubric that is shared with students.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote achievement of school goals and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Teachers' collaborations strengthen their instructional capacity. Teachers make decisions regarding the power standards that guide instruction across the school and choices of PD.

Supporting Evidence

- The middle school common planning team utilized an inquiry based process to determine next instructional steps for the support of vocabulary instruction. Specifically, students were tasked with writing an argumentative essay detailing whether or not the government should fund embryonic stem cell research. In their writings, students were supposed to use the following words: embryo, paralyzed, theory, investigate, and obtain. Teachers found that all students used at least one of the target words, whether correctly or not. Teachers also found that students were using the correct source material. A common problem that teachers identified was that a considerable number of students only used the target words when they were also inside a direct quotation. In order to address this, teachers discussed possible strategies, such as providing a list of synonyms that might allow students to develop a deeper understanding of the words as well as setting a restriction on the number of target words that could be included as part of a quotation. Additionally, teachers agreed that for students who consistently use target vocabulary words correctly, an extension activity would have students use the target vocabulary words in different grammatical forms.

- In addition to the middle school common planning team's work, evidence from other teams reveals inquiry-based work is improving teachers’ capacity. Science teacher team agendas reveal discussion and planning for strategies around the design of group learning activities and integrating literacy instruction into science lessons. Social studies teacher team agendas evidence that analysis from the previous school year’s data resulted in adjustments to the current school year pacing calendar. Teachers have also engaged in intervisitations within their content-based teacher teams that have resulted in conversations regarding practices and the sharing of strategies at teacher team meetings. Agendas and emails between teachers document conversations around strategies for teaching graphing skills, the use of manipulatives for checking students’ understanding, and purposefully grouping students in order to increase student-to-student discussion.

- Teachers lead the middle school and high school level horizontal literacy common planning teams. Teachers also serve as leaders of vertical content-based common planning teams. One representative from each content-based team sits on the literacy planning team so that the findings and decisions made by those teachers can then be enacted schoolwide by content-based teams. Additionally, teacher voice has been involved in decisions about PD topics and teachers lead the resulting sessions, introducing new systems of checking for understanding, and strengthening the schoolwide use of technology during instruction.