Quality Review Report

2017-2018

H.E.R.O. High (Health, Education, And Research Occupations High School)

High school 07X259

455 Southern Blvd
Bronx
NY 10455

Principal: Kristin Cahill Garcia

Dates of Review:
May 23, 2018 - May 24, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Jacqueline King-Robinson
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>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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<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>1.3 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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings

The school leader consistently communicates high expectations aligned to the Danielson Framework for teaching to the entire staff through the HERO High Teacher Handbook. Staff members establish a culture for learning during recruitment that systematically communicates a unified set of college and career readiness pathways.

Impact

Communication to staff and professional development (PD) is centered on high expectations resulting in a culture of mutual accountability. Partnerships with families supports students taking ownership of their learning and their progress toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Communication to students about college and career readiness begins during student recruitment. Staff members explain the accelerated benchmarks that students will need to meet in order to gain access to associate degree options in nursing and community health. The schoolwide college program and work-based learning activities provide students with regular access to authentic feedback about their progress towards college and career readiness. Early college coordinators update students on progress in early college courses. Advisors meet with social workers monthly to receive assistance to provide social-emotional support to their advisees. This structure allows social workers to identify interventions for students in high-need subgroups. Students meet with their advisors one-to-one on a weekly or monthly basis, depending on the level of support needed for individual students. Advisors provide academic advisement and connect students with academic and social-emotional supports in conjunction with grade-level social workers. Advisors review current student performance in academic classes, student attendance and lateness, and student behaviors. The schoolwide advisory program ensures that students, including high-need subgroups are aware of their progress toward college and career readiness and can take ownership of their educational experience. One student stated, “It provides a better understanding of what will be expected in college.”

- Clear expectations to staff begins during the on-boarding process. New staff members meet one-on-one with the school leader for two hours to review the mission and vision of the school. Staff members receive training on the unique aspects of the school program. A week prior to the start of school goals for the school year are introduced and staff are provided with a handbook that clearly articulates expectations for teaching and learning, lesson planning, PD, supervision, and coaching. Additionally, the handbook provides staff members with grade level targets and a college ready checklist to ensure that students are graduating college and career ready. The schoolwide grading policy and advisory structures promote mutual accountability amongst staff members. Staff members must ensure that grades and behavioral comments are available for advisors to use as talking points during student advisement and goal setting. During the teacher meeting, teachers agreed that PD has supported them in aligning the curriculum to the college curriculum, ensuring a smooth transition to college level work for students.

- Students and families receive career readiness grades on a weekly basis. After each marking period, advisors facilitate a student self-assessment activity, during which students assess their progress for the marking period using grade level rubrics, report out and receive feedback from their peers, identify next steps in learning and identify a plan for accessing additional academic and social emotional support if needed. Students receive the necessary support from adults that enables them to be prepared for college and career.
Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that align with the schoolwide curricula. Teachers administer early college readiness and other assessments, then analyze results to determine student progress towards college and career readiness.

Impact
Analysis of assessment results are consistently used to adjust curriculum and instruction to align with college and career readiness, thus promoting student learning and performance. Teachers provide students with actionable feedback that supports them with improving their work, however feedback to students is not always meaningful.

Supporting Evidence

- School staff administer common culminating assessments for all courses. Culminating assessments are aligned to the standardized assessments that students take when a course terminates. Teacher teams analyze the results of common assessments to make adjustments to curricula and instruction. The math team reviewed data that revealed teachers were spending a lot of time teaching algebra and the other areas, such as statistics, geometry, and Algebra II were receiving insufficient attention. The team decided to incorporate a statistic unit into the curriculum unit.

- Teachers use rubrics to provide students with actionable feedback. Written feedback provided to a student regarding an essay for a college course stated “Good choice of focus but be sure your paragraphs all develop one clear idea in support of your thesis and that the links are very clear in the claims in the thesis. You have the right idea but you can smooth out the phrasing and make those small connections more complete.” Feedback to a student’s response to literature stated, “Solid draft. I’d like to see you be a little more specific in your thesis. And your reading of the story is a little vague. Take a little more time to explain your quotations and explain how you think they support your points. Overall, good work here.” Feedback to students supports the development of skills and is at times transferable to future work.

- Advisors use graduation trackers to analyze student progress to college and career readiness. Data trackers include credit accumulation data, assessment data, career readiness grades, and current grade-point averages. Data trackers are used to measure student progress towards college and career readiness. Advisors provide feedback to students based on evidence in the data trackers that informs students of what college courses they will be eligible enroll in the following year.
### Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
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#### Findings

School leaders and staff utilize Understanding by Design (UbD) to design thematic interdisciplinary units that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically embed the use of annotation and text evidence from nonfiction texts throughout curricular documents. Curricula and academic tasks have been refined using student work and data and consistently emphasize higher-order thinking.

#### Impact

The curriculum is coherent across grades and subjects. All students have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged in challenging tasks that require demonstration of thinking, thus promoting college and career readiness.

#### Supporting Evidence

- All unit and lesson plans reviewed included the Common Core Learning Standards that will be addressed and their connection to the content standards. Curricular documents provide evidence of a focus on developing students’ academic content vocabulary, analyzing text and primary source documents, making a claim and supporting it with text-based evidence. Planning documents include strategies for differentiating academic tasks so that diverse learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities have access to the curriculum. An English lesson plan includes modifications for students who struggle with the language of complex text as well as for ELLs. Modifications required the teacher to provide ELLs with the text for pre-reading and vocabulary development with the support of the English as a New Language teacher. For students who struggle with complex text, assignment as the summarizer in their group enables them to practice general comprehension strategies. Advisors review student achievement data from the graduation trackers, in order adjust and modify the curriculum to meet individual student learning needs.

- A Global History lesson plan requires students to analyze primary and secondary source documents in order to identify the most pressing environmental issues faced in the 21st century. The plan included scaffolded questions for students with disabilities that were based on results from formative and summative assessments administered previously. The plan required annotating the portion of the documents that deals with an environmental topic to write two definitions for new words, and develop one discussion question based on the history rubric. Additional modifications for the special education teacher indicated providing support with completing the annotations and definitions using the rubric as a guide as well as models of rigorous questions. Curricular tasks are planned to provide access to a variety of learners, thus promoting cognitive engagement for all students, including high-achieving and low-achieving students.

- Driven by a schoolwide instructional focus on developing students into self-directed learners, teachers create lessons that require students to self-assess, peer review, provide feedback to their peers, revise work products, and make claims supported with evidence, which reflects an instructional shift. Units ask students to make claims and support their claims with textual evidence, demonstrate a deep understanding of the math they learn, increase academic specific vocabulary across subjects, and develop speed and accuracy when solving a problem. An Honors Biology lesson plan required students to evaluate the mechanism and effectiveness of various reproductive contraceptives by writing an evidence-based argument using scientific language with counterclaims and rebuttals to strengthen their evidence-based arguments.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

Teaching practices aligned to the curricula, reflect the implementation of a set of beliefs about how students learn best through authentic reading, writing and problem solving-tasks, reciprocal teaching, and engagement in rigorous learning experiences. Teachers use scaffolds, questioning, and opportunities for choice to address the needs of diverse learners.

**Impact**

There were high levels of student engagement for all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities. Project-based collaborative learning activities enabled students to engage in challenging tasks.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and reflect the schoolwide belief that students learn best when teachers employ a reading apprenticeship approach to instruction. In most classrooms visited, teachers assigned reading roles that allowed students to collaboratively analyze a text. Group roles included, a general annotator responsible for reading, annotating, and asking questions about the text, a definer responsible for defining three to five difficult words contained in the text, a visualizer responsible for helping the group to see what is happening, and a gist-finder responsible for identifying the central idea of the text, supporting it with evidence from the text. Teachers’ use of a reading apprenticeship approach to instruction promotes access so that all learners, including students with disabilities and ELLs have access to the curricula and are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks.

- Checks for understanding were used in most of the classrooms visited, such as checklists, exit slips, discussion questions, mid-class check-ins, and teacher observations recorded on a tracker. During a Global History classroom visit, the teacher was observed circulating to different groups capturing data using a tracker. In a classroom visit to a Living Environment classroom the teacher was observed conducting a mid-class check-in to ensure that students answered at least one question and completed the exit ticket, prior to the end of the class period. Additionally, a visit to a United States History class evidenced a teacher conducting a mid-workshop interruption to share strategies that were observed as the teacher circulated the room. The teacher also modeled for students how to think about questions and eliminate erroneous answers. Across classrooms, teachers consistently provide students with multiple entry points using metacognitive processes.

- During an Honors Biology course, students were observed collaborating to establish a claim about which method of birth control is most effective. Students were creating a collaborative poster to display their claim and cite evidence from the text to support their claim. The teacher then asked students to consider a counterclaim that a different group could come up with and develop a possible rebuttal. One student stated, “If you can’t prove that the other side is incorrect, then you can’t prove that your claim is correct.” Students were questioning their reasoning and the reasoning of other groups. Across classrooms, teaching practices aligned to the *Framework for Teaching* consistently embed the instructional shifts and promote demonstration of higher-order thinking skills in student work products.
Additional Finding

Findings

School leaders and teacher leaders promote the development of teachers through the use of strategic cycles of observation and feedback that is aligned to schoolwide instructional goals. PD is based on data from observations, analysis of student work and assessment data, as well as mid-year and end-of-year individual reflections with the school leader.

Impact

Schoolwide observations and professional learning structures foster improved instructional practices resulting in improved quality of student work products. Teachers receive feedback that articulates clear next steps for teacher practice that supports growth.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leader conducts six-week observation cycles to provide feedback to teachers utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the standard for professionalism and high quality instruction. Feedback is aligned to schoolwide instructional goals that are established by teachers and school leaders and evident in observation reports. Teachers are required to furnish student work products or any other evidence during the meeting. Teachers leave feedback sessions with a clear plan for next steps. One report contained next steps aligned to schoolwide goal of increasing student independence during instruction, which aligns to the schoolwide belief that high levels of student engagement will promote student ownership of their learning. It read, “I’d like to make the issue of student engagement and urgency a focus of our work in the second semester, particularly the upcoming Shakespeare unit. Let’s work on ways to transfer the same sense of urgency into the work this marking period.”

- Feedback is formally provided to teachers through teacher-team discussions and principal observations. Teachers receive glows and grows with specific recommendations for improved instruction after observations. Additionally, questions are posed to teachers on the feedback forms for them to be reflective moving forward. For example, a school leader asked the teacher, “How can you structure a lecture so that students are practicing some transferable skills related to how they access and process information in that setting?” Feedback often includes schoolwide expectations to ensure instructional coherence among all staff. For example, a recommendation suggested a teacher “make[s] sure a teaching point is clear and evident with evidence of explicit modeling,” which aligns with the school’s instructional expectations. Other recommendations ask teachers to use graphic organizers to assist students at all levels to demonstrate their thinking and raise their level of engagement in the lesson. During onboarding, the school leader establishes clear expectations for teaching and learning. A week prior to the start of the school year, new staff are provided with PD designed to support their development of pedagogy that is aligned to the schoolwide mission and vision.

- School leaders develop teachers and manage PD. School leaders send select teachers to a six-day leadership training program. During the team meeting, teachers shared that they were grateful that school leaders believe in leadership development. One teacher stated, “In my prior schools, the principal did not spend time on developing their teachers. I will always have a sense of gratitude for my school leaders.” Teachers moved into leadership roles from a teacher to an assistant principal, or a teacher to a college counselor or a teacher to a grade or content team leader. Teachers stated, “School leaders have developed us professionally and personally.” During the teacher meetings, teachers agreed that collaborating their peers and intervisitations provide them with a safe space to try new instructional strategies and to learn from their peers. PD has contributed to increased student writing and improved credit accumulation.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings
Teachers are engaged in structured; inquiry based professional collaborations where they consistently analyze data and student work. Teacher teams are developing school wide curricula and instructional coherence.

Impact
Teachers consistently use the results of assessments to identify how students are performing in the acquisition of the specific skills required in the Common Core Learning Standards. The identification of teaching practices strengthens instructional capacity and addresses students' learning gaps resulting in specifically targeted supports for high-needs subgroups and improved student performance.

Supporting Evidence

- Department teams engage in vertical planning, curriculum mapping, and unit planning. Culminating assessments are planned across class and grade levels. The results of these assessments are analyzed in “progress check-ins,” for all students and for subgroups, and instructional and academic and social emotional support shifts are planned in response. These teams identify a work cycle for their weekly meetings that include such activities as intervisitation, looking at student work, and the planning of lessons, units and formative and summative assessments. Teachers agree that teamwork has increased their instructional capacity to provide students with tools and strategies that promote independent learning.

- Observation of a ninth grade ELA team meeting evidences the use of an inquiry approach to their professional collaborations. The facilitator reviewed the next steps from the previous meeting, in which teachers utilized an interview narrative rubric to evaluate the first draft and determined that students needed more lessons on revision. Teachers incorporated a week’s worth of revision lessons and provided students with additional time to complete revisions in class. After implementation of these adjustments, teachers reviewed student work to look for patterns and trends. They noticed that students’ revisions were mostly around word choice. Teachers decided that they would move the revisions unit to earlier in the year for the upcoming school year. Additionally, teachers decided to make it a practice for students to read their work aloud when conducting peer reviews and design purposeful peer review checklists, one for grammar and one for structure. Students will also be expected to create a goal for next steps based on the peer feedback they receive. Teachers agreed that their collaborations have been beneficial. “It allows us to be reflective and receive feedback from our peers.”

- Department teams utilize a progress check-in template to analyze student work and assessment data. The template requires teachers to identify skills and content the assessment addresses, and what percentage of students are exceeding, meeting, or not meeting standards. Identification of the skill or standard that most students experience difficulty with is noted, including the challenges for ELLs and students with disabilities, as well as appropriate next steps. Next steps from a ninth grade progress check-in was to continue to refine the unit and assessment for next year. As a result of teacher team work, student engagement and discussions have improved. A review of teacher team minutes reflects similar practices in the other teams across the school.