Quality Review Report

2017-2018

High School Of Computers And Technology
High school 11X275
800 East Gun Hill Road
Bronx
NY 10467

Principal: David Wills

Dates of Review:
May 8, 2018 - May 9, 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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<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>Developing</td>
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## School Culture

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>
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## Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>
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<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>
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<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>
<tr>
<td>Quality Indicator:</td>
<td>3.4 High Expectations</td>
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**Findings**
The school leader consistently communicates high expectations aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to the entire staff through daily announcements via email and weekly professional development (PD) sessions. Staff members use College Access Research and Action (CARA) curriculum to establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of behaviors to all students.

**Impact**
Communication to staff and PD is centered on high expectations resulting in a culture of mutual accountability. Students take ownership of their learning and progress towards college and career readiness.

**Supporting Evidence**
- The school leaders conduct new teacher orientation prior to the start of the school year. New staff are provided with a handbook that communicates staff responsibilities, philosophy and school model, professional development goals, and a staff “go to” list that identifies key staff members and the support they provide. Teachers provide one another with mentoring. During a meeting with teachers one teacher stated, “They critique and support you to make you a better teacher. The support here is really awesome. Administrators listen and help you.” School leaders provide personalized support to help teachers meet schoolwide expectations.

- School leaders require the college counselor to attend PD provided by CARA College Bridge Program. The college counselor uses the curriculum resources provided by CARA to develop a schoolwide culture of college and career readiness. School alumni are invited to the school to speak with current seniors about their freshmen experience and how they adapted to a large school. Students agreed that the school is preparing them very well for college. One student stated, “College counseling begins in the ninth grade, we go on college tours, and beginning in senior year we have small group sessions with the college counselor to discuss progress with completing our college applications.” School-based support structures have led to an increase of students passing the Regents exams and an increase in the graduation rate. Teachers provide students with tools that promote student ownership of learning including, rubrics, checklists, and outlines. One student stated, “We have to complete the outline that tells you what should be included in each paragraph.”

- The school leaders share daily announcements via email, at the start of each day. The announcements communicate expectations for the week, staff attendance, and PD opportunities. A daily announcement reviewed, informed teachers of online training on identifying, addressing, and preventing bullying and bias-based behavior in schools. All staff were strongly encouraged to participate.

- School leaders provided staff with a curriculum map template aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* that includes the course philosophy, objectives, Common Core Learning Standards addressed, essential questions, and the formative and summative assessments for the unit. All curriculum maps are written on this template. Teachers receive PD to support them in meeting the high expectations of college and career readiness and access to curricula for all students, as established by the school leader. Teachers hold one another accountable for making progress towards meeting these expectations during team meetings, intervisitations, and inquiry work. During a team meeting, teachers were responsible for bringing student work products for the student they were focused on during this inquiry cycle. One teacher stated, “On Mondays teachers share their best practices. The professional development has taught us how to target the students’ learning needs. It has been some of the most effective professional development I have experienced.”
Area of Focus

Quality Indicator: 2.2 Assessment  
Rating: Developing

Findings
The school administers common assessments, including a diagnostic tool and mock regents. Across classrooms, teacher’s assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding.

Impact
Assessment results are inconsistently used to adjust curricula and instruction for individual students, as well as to make effective adjustments to meet students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The use of checks for understanding and feedback from students to teachers about students’ needs is developing across classrooms. Some teachers employ a clipboard with a checklist during instruction to determine grouping after a short assessment. However, this was inconsistently used across classes. Although some teachers use a clipboard to capture conferencing notes during group work or note on a checklist, others did not record these data points. Additionally, in many classes, checking for understanding during the lesson was uneven and often without impacting students’ understanding. In an integrated co-teaching (ICT) English Language Arts (ELA) class, students did not receive modeling, although they used close reading strategies. Checking for understanding was little to nonexistent, resulting in some students who were ready to move forward, while others needed support to complete the task. Some teachers checked on groups, focusing on organizational issues, timing, misconceptions, or directions, but did not adjust instruction to support students’ learning needs.

- School staff administer a diagnostic assessment to all incoming ninth graders to determine a clear picture of student ability. For students taking courses that culminate in a New York State Regents or Advanced Placement exam teachers administer authentic mock assessments that mirror the actual exams. Teachers use a program to disaggregate the data. Results are analyzed for patterns and trends and used to modify the curriculum for future groups of students. However, there is limited evidence that adjustments are made based on individual student formative assessment data.

- The use of ongoing checks for understanding in classrooms is primarily done through teacher questioning to the whole class or to individual students, thus missing opportunities to gather feedback to meet individual student needs. In a few classrooms, the teacher questioned students to clarify their thinking, as observed in a global history classroom visit, in a technology class the teacher used an exit slip, and in a twelfth grade ELA class the teacher observed that students weren’t using strong verbs to develop their collaborative rhetorical essays, therefore she made a mid-lesson interruption to remind students to use the list that identified strong verbs for their use. Additionally, students were observed using checklists to self-assess the work of their groups, during and ELA classroom visit. Although checks for understanding were observed in some classrooms, the results were used inconsistently to adjust instruction to meet students’ individual learning needs.
Findings
School leaders and faculty develop curricula in all content areas that align to Common Core Learning Standards and incorporates the instructional shifts. Teachers use data from mock-assessments to adjust the curricula for the subsequent years.

Impact
Curricula documents evidence the development of coherence across grades and subjects. Refinement of the planned curricula and academic tasks informed by scholar work and data from the previous year’s students promotes access for diverse scholars.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricular documents shows evidence of the integration of the Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) in all content areas. For instance, curricular documents include academic content vocabulary for each unit. Vocabulary terminology for each unit are provided to students in both English and their native language. Lesson plans call for students to cite evidence when making a claim and when engaging in evidence-based discussions. ELA and history units align to ensure a balance of informational and literary texts. Thus, as in this instance, instructional shifts are present and noted throughout planning documents.

- After review of student work and assessment data, ELA teachers found that students were not taking the time to revise their writing based on instruction and feedback from teachers and their peers. Adjustments to a twelfth grade curriculum map for ELA includes skills-based instruction to provide opportunities to instruct students on how to revise and refine their writing based on feedback. Special education teachers support teachers with differentiating instruction using Universal Design for Learning. Teachers provide students with nonfiction reading materials on their functional levels. Word to word translations are provided through the use of technology. During common planning time, English as a New Language teachers support teachers with incorporating strategies for ELLs into the curricula.

- School staff has developed a humanities based curriculum for ELA and history. The curriculum is coupled so that there is continuity across disciplines and grades. The skills that are developed in ELA support students in history, where curricular documents require students to annotate primary source documents, in order to make a claim and support it with text-based evidence. Curricular documents demonstrate coherence across ELA and history at each grade level. Incorporation of the instructional shifts evidenced in the curricular documents reviewed, promote college and career readiness.
Additional Finding

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

Teaching practices reflect the schoolwide instructional belief that students should be provided audio-visual and tactile learning experiences to learn the nuances of computer technology. Students use academic content language when engaging in discussions with their peers.

Impact

Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the classrooms, teaching practices consistently reflect the schoolwide beliefs that students learn best when immersed in a student-centered classroom with student flexibility in working independently or in small groups while having discussions. In an Advanced Placement Statistics class, students were engaged in station activity that comprised of six varied problems that required students to identify the problem as a hypothesis test or an interval estimate based on the data called a confidence interval. Once identified, students either wrote the hypothesis or wrote what was being estimated in the confidence interval. As students travelled to the stations, students mentioned the need to “provide statistical evidence to support the problem.” Students came to a consensus on which stations were a hypothesis test or a confidence interval.

- Students across classrooms are provided opportunities to work on challenging tasks that require critical thinking, analysis, and problem solving. During a physics class with the learning objective, “How does capacitance affect the sound that a circuit will make?” Students in groups built circuits that served as an oscillator (device that produces an oscillating signal to produce a sound). While in groups students used academic language such as voltage, current, resistance and the role they play in building their circuits. In a Global History class, students were observed working in collaborative groups to analyze primary and secondary sources to identify why genocides occur, who does it affect, and how could it have been avoided. Students engaged in a gallery walk to determine the causes of genocide in different regions. The teacher facilitated student discussions, in order to complete a collaborative graphic organizer that summarized each genocide, identified the similarities and differences, and the impact that it had on society. Student discussions reflect high levels of participation and student thinking.

- Pedagogy is aligned to the curricula and informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. The instructional shift of incorporating academic vocabulary has been embedded into the lessons for all students. In a twelfth grade ELA class, the lesson objective stated, “How does the use of rhetorical strategies help the audience receive the author’s purpose?” Student were tasked with collaborating with one another by compiling their individual rhetorical essays into a group rhetorical essay. Students in their groups were overheard referring to the text to defend their claims, using academic content vocabulary to support their claims, and discussing the organization of the group essay using checklists and rubrics as support, which also aligns to the component of the Danielson Framework for Teaching on student engagement.
**Additional Finding**

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

Teacher feedback consistently reflects strengths, areas of growth, and next steps aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. School leaders effectively use teacher observation data to design and facilitate PD.

**Impact**

School leaders’ feedback to teachers results in improved practice in a number of areas, including those identified as the schoolwide instructional foci, student-to-student discussions, and implementing checks for understanding. Observation data has been used to design and facilitate targeted professional development, elevating schoolwide instructional practices.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher support is driven by Advance data from teacher observations. School leaders use data from classroom observations and conferences with teachers to inform the types of PD and support that is provided for teachers. Emails reviewed evidence a variety of PD opportunities offered through a variety of support offices including the Office of Safety and Youth Division, Career and Technical Education, and the Bronx Field Support Center. Teachers are identified to attend these offsite PD sessions based on their individual goals aligned to the schoolwide instructional goals, formal and informal observation data, as well as individual teacher self-selection. During the teacher meeting, teachers agreed that they are encouraged to attend PD all of the time that are really helpful in supporting them with meeting their professional goals.

- All teachers have met individually with school leaders to receive feedback with next steps both verbally and in writing. New teachers are supported by teacher mentors with planning, use of materials and demonstration of lessons. Some teachers in need are supported by teacher leaders and academic coaches through demonstration lessons and individual and collaborative lesson planning. The principal's open door policy fosters trust and enables teachers to freely discuss lessons that worked well and where they are having continuing struggles. Teachers agreed that school leaders were always available and the support and feedback they receive advances their professional growth.

- The school uses Advance to track observations on a regular cycle and monitor trends in teaching practices. The principal tracks a teacher’s strengths and areas for improvement. Consequently, the principal is able to make precise teacher performance evaluations, provide feedback that informs the quality of each teacher’s work and suggest highly tailored next steps to help them improve professionally. An example of this was seen in an observation report where the principal provided feedback that stressed the importance of students deepening their conceptual understanding behind the work. “The concern for me here is allowing time for students to struggle with learning, to make mistakes and learn from them. If they are given the answer too quickly or bailed out, their cognitive struggle stops and that all-important neural pathway carving is halted. This idea will be a professional development focus for next semester I’d be interested to see any ideas you have to promote cognitive struggle.”
Additional Finding

### Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development

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<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

Teachers are engaged in structured; inquiry based professional collaborations where they analyze data and student work, in order to make future adjustments to the curricula. Teacher teams are working to develop school wide 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. Teacher teams identify teaching practices that address students’ learning gaps resulting in improved teacher practice.

**Supporting Evidence**

- During the eleventh grade team meeting that was observed, teachers were analyzing student work products to determine patterns and trends, in order to develop a grade-level action plan that will be employed by all grade-level teachers. The action plan that was developed included creating a checklist for use when completing tasks, have students repeat directions to ensure clarity, provide instructions individually to the student, and have students describe the prompt. Teachers also identified the focus student for the upcoming week. While teachers are analyzing student work and assessment data to make pedagogical adjustments, adjustments to meet individual learning needs was not in evidence.

- Grade level teams meet three times per week. Tenth grade meeting agendas and minutes reveal that during this time teachers analyze and discuss student behavioral needs that may be impacting academic success and plan interventions, including parent meetings and study hall support. Department teams meet one time per week to adjust and modify curriculum to ensure alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and incorporation of the instructional shifts. Weekly minutes and agendas evidence that teachers received guidelines to drive the revisions of the curriculum maps for all content areas. The guidelines include, but are not limited to alignment to the standards, essential questions, content and skills that will be addressed, and formative and summative assessments. Additionally, vertical department teams are establishing curricular and instructional coherence across grades and subjects.

- The college access team consistently analyze student data, including credit accumulation to determine student progress towards college and career readiness. The college access team provides content and grade level teams with feedback on their curricular documents to ensure inclusion of college and career readiness skills. School leaders state that the focus on including nonfiction texts, reading for information, and citing multiple sources are aligned to the schoolwide goal of college and career readiness for all students and reflect the instructional shifts. Additionally, teachers receive PD from CARA to support them with identifying what skills students need beyond high school and the supports to integrate this information into the curricula. Teacher teams’ professional collaborations are leading to improved college readiness for students entering high school performing at level one and two, as evidenced by the school quality snapshot student achievement data.