Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Frederick Douglass Academy III Secondary School

High school 09X517

3630 Third Avenue
Bronx
NY 10456

Principal: Jumel Carlos

Dates of Review:
February 8, 2018 - February 9, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Clarence Williams Jr.
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

Frederick Douglass Academy III Secondary School serves students in grade 9 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.

### School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</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>
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</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

<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>1.4 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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum
Rating: Well Developed

Findings
School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks.

Impact
Unit and lesson plans demonstrate coherence across grades that promote college and career readiness. Lesson plans show how students with disabilities and English as a New Language students are required to demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Across all grades, teachers use Individualized Education Program (IEP) at a Glance to support lesson plans to promote higher-order thinking skills and rigor for students with disabilities. An example was presented in a grade nine science class. The document provided the teacher with the name of each student that has an IEP and list the supports that the student will need to provide the same level of rigor as the rest of the class. For example, the document stated that one student will need repeated instruction, sentence starters and simplified directions. The teacher stated that the document supports the higher-order thinking and rigor that is evident and ensures that students with disabilities meet the same standards. An additional example was seen in an English Language Arts (ELA) class, the student was provided graphic organizers and frequent breaks. During an interview a student stated, “The work is difficult, but our teachers support us with extra resources to help us keep up.” As a result, rigor and higher-order was reflected for all students and allow them to demonstrate their thinking.

- All lesson and unit plans reflect strategic integration of the Common Core and instructional shifts. An example was seen in a grade nine ELA unit plan. The unit strategically integrates standards into the school goals and instruction. For example, the unit uses the standard: “Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text.” The instructional shift that was integrated into the unit to support the standard was, “Students will cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of characters.” An additional example was seen in a United States history and government lesson plan. Standards included, “Integrating information from diverse sources into a coherent understanding of an idea or event.” An additional standard was, “Students will write explanatory/informative texts and build on prior knowledge.” The instructional shifts that are integrated into the lesson included, writing with evidence to support the context. These strategic integrations are evident in all units and lesson plans observed.

- College and career readiness is evident in all grades and subjects within the curricula. School leaders and teachers stated that college and career readiness is evident in the curriculum using real world connections and Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questions. In a U.S. history lesson, students were required to understand political, social and economic trends of the Jim Crow era and tie it into current events. DOK questions included, “What impact did the supreme court ruling have on different states?” and “Identify and analyze arguments and ideas presented in the documents.” Teachers have stated that student's interpreting and analyzing information expands their thinking and how they learn. An additional example was seen in a living environment class. DOK questions included, “Explain the different components of the immune response in the human body” and “What is the relationship between white blood cells, antibodies, antigens and pathogens?” DOK questions and analyzing and interpreting information is evident in all units and plans reviewed.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use student work, assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school’s curricula. Teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding. These practices are not evident in the vast majority of classes.

Impact

Teachers use prior Regents, writing rubrics, and student work to provide feedback to students. During instruction, teachers provide actionable feedback to students to adjust instruction. Although the adjustments were evident, this did not apply to the vast majority of classrooms visited.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use prior Regents so that students can self-assess the understanding of their strengths and weaknesses that is evident in their scores. The students use a self-assessment reflection template. The template includes listing each question by number, the skill being tested, whether it was answered correctly or not and what the challenge in the question was. An algebra 2/trigonometry regent demonstrated that a student noted that another student responded incorrectly to question three (factoring). The student recorded that the answer was wrong because of using an incorrect procedure. The student also listed three skills that could have been used to help prepare, they included, “Ask for more help, study and practice. Although an additional example was presented in another math Regents, this level of student assessment was not evident in other classes.

- Writing rubrics are used to provide feedback to students to highlight areas of strength and growth. A grade nine/ten rubric included feedback from the teacher demonstrated that the student scored a level three (proficient) on the areas of development cohesion and language and style. This included the following comments, “I am impressed with your use of vocabulary. Next steps, elaborate more when discussing your evidence and demonstrate your understanding of the topic.” Another example was seen using the same rubric. Feedback included, “Make sure you state a clear and strong claim. That way it will be clear what your essay is about.” Although feedback was actionable, it was not meaningful to support student growth overall not just in the subject matter.

- Teachers check for understanding during classroom instruction and make adjustments to meet the needs of students. During a chemistry lesson, the teacher did a check for understanding by asking students to put the instructions in their own words. Students stated that they were told to take cups and share a liquid and write the name of the person they shared the liquid with, so they can reverse the process. Students could repeat the directions step by step. However, during the lesson, students failed to record the names of every student, therefore the work could not be tracked. The teacher stopped the lesson to model for the students how the liquid can be traced from student to student based on their name. Examples of checks for understanding that resulted in instructional adjustments were seen in some, however not in most classes.
Findings
Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is evident in work products.

Impact
Through Socratic seminars and student dialogue and discussions, student thinking and participation result in meaning student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- To support student thinking and participation, students were observed participating in a Socratic seminar. During the observation of a grade eleven ELA class, students were participating in a Socratic seminar on the Tony Morrison book, *Beloved*. Students were discussing key points of the book and giving interpretations. During an inner circle discussion one student stated, “The quote on page 20 about the tree is foreshadowing about what is to come, the tree came up a few times.” An additional student added to the conversation by stating, “When I read it I was confused because I didn’t know if we were in the present or past. On page 5, the baby was mentioned as being alive but on an earlier page, it said the baby was dead.” Another student stated that their flashbacks were helpful because it gave valuable background information. Socratic seminars are used in most ELA classes to support student thinking, participation and results in writing projects.

- Teachers and school leaders have stated that students learn best by using the workshop model because it allows students to be exposed to a student-centered environment that enables them to self-discovery. During the observation of a chemistry lesson, students were observed working in stations. The objective was, “How do you prove the law of conservation of mass using multiple sources of learning?” Stations included, a Regents review practice team, a modelling of the law of conservation of mass and an “Alka-Seltzer” mini lab. Students transitioned out of work stations in twenty-minute intervals. One group was observed working with modelling the law of conservation. A student stated, “An example I would like to use is the input of food and the output of waste.” An additional student added that mixing hydrogen and oxygen is another example. An additional example was seen in a geometry class. A student was asked to come to the board and explain his work. The student stated, “I subtracted 360 which is the measure of the whole circle minus 90 minus 40 degrees I got 230.” Most classes visited used a workshop model that leads up to independent work.

- Student voice and discussions were demonstrated in a United States history class. Students were discussing the separate but equal doctrine established by Plessy versus Ferguson. Students were in small groups discussing the court case. When asked to discuss the historical circumstances surrounding the case, one student stated, “Plessy sat on a “whites only” cart on the train but was told to go to the black section, but he refused, and the police were called.” Another student stated, “What he did was considered breaking the law because he bought a ticket under false pretenses.” A student stated that the Supreme Court decision influences them today because now these laws don’t exist. This exercise resulted in a completed work sheet that students filled out answering the following questions, “Explain the Supreme Court decision, discuss the impact of the court’s decision on the United States and describe the historical circumstances surrounding the case.” During the observation of most classes observed, students were engaged in conversations that produced similar work products.
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations that are connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching to the entire staff. Communications also include expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

The principal uses newsletters and memos to communicate high expectations to staff and families. Guidance counselors help families understand student progress toward college and career expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- To support communication of college readiness, school leadership works with the guidance department to support students in preparation for college. The guidance staff has a class called college advisory. The goal of the class is to understand their strengths, weaknesses and talents and how they can be matched to specific college majors. The class has learning objectives that include, improving academic self-concepts, demonstrating dependability and seeking information from faculty, family and peers. The class meets weekly and all grade eleven and twelve students attend. One student stated, “I look forward to advisory class because it reminds me how important my future is.” An additional student stated, “as a tenth grader I look forward to taking advisory because I know what it has done for other students.”

- The principal communicates high expectations to the entire staff. The principal has stated that expectations include, instructional practices in the classroom that include elements of the lesson plan. In a December fourth newsletter, the principal stated that teachers are expected to consider the summary and wrap-up of the lesson, stating, “The main purpose of doing a summary and review of the lesson is to ensure that the scholars will recall or synthesize critical parts of the lesson.” An additional example was seen in a January twenty-ninth newsletter. The principal stated, “Scholars should have the opportunity to write daily and all students should be working on meaningful tasks.” The principal has stated the use of observations and daily observations, result in communication with staff on improving instruction.

- To support college career readiness information with parents, the guidance uses memoranda that go out to all parents. In a September letter to parents, the guidance counselor wrote to parents stating the services that are available to students which include, group counseling, career counseling and how to schedule appointments online. The letter also informs parents of the requirements for graduation. An additional example of communicating college and career readiness to parents, was demonstrated in a parent action plan for eleventh graders. The plan highlights a schedule of events and timelines for families. For example, the fall highlights include, helping students prepare for their Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT) exams. Winter highlights include Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) preparation and reviewing courses that they will need for their senior year. Parents have stated that one of their favorite things about the school is how it prepares students for college. One parent stated, “Communication is one of the best things about the school. The guidance counselor helps me support my child in preparation for college.”
**Additional Finding**

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### Findings

School leaders support the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with effective feedback and next steps. Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson, *Framework for Teaching*.

### Impact

The principal uses informal observations to support new teachers. Teacher observations provide feedback to support instructional practices and teacher growth.

### Supporting Evidence

- An informal observation of a first-year teacher conducted in January demonstrated how the teacher is supported, based on feedback and follow-ups. In the observation, the principal stated, that the teacher was highly effective in the Danielson area of designing coherent instruction. The principal stated the following, “The sequence of learning activities is coherent and aligned to instructional goals.” The principal identified engaging students in learning as a developing area. The principal stated that the teacher provided students with minimal opportunities for engagement and few opportunities for them to explain their thinking. Follow-ups for the teacher included resource supports that included, cooperating with a mentor teacher on high quality collaboration and working on questioning. The principal stated that there will be follow-up observations after supports have been put into place.

- Strengths and challenges are evident in supports to teaching staff from the principal. Observations include action steps based on areas of focus for the teachers. An example was seen in an observation. The teacher was rated using an area of strength and an area of weakness. The area of strength was, “The teacher displays solid knowledge of the important concepts in the discipline and how they relate to one another.” The area of focus was designing coherent instruction. The principal stated, “There were opportunities for instruction that were not developed. Students were focused on things other than the lesson.” Action steps for the teacher included, planning to ensure questioning and that activities are incorporated into the lesson. Teachers have stated that feedback is clear and concise and allows them to improve on all areas of pedagogy.

- To further support new teacher development, the principal has arranged for new teacher development. The professional development is facilitated by a mentor teacher. These sessions are held on a weekly basis. Supports include inter-visitations mentoring, model teaching and preparing for observations. During an interview a new teacher stated, “I participated in a professional development on how to engage ‘students’ during the co-teaching model. It has helped me plan with colleagues and learn from my co-teachers.” Because of new teacher support, new teachers are effective in designing coherent instruction.
Additional Finding

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

Findings
Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they are focused on. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have built leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions.

Impact
Teachers conduct instructional team meetings to analyze student data. The use of grade leaders and the student with disabilities chair support distributive leadership practices.

Supporting Evidence

- To support distributive leadership that results in the support of students with disabilities, the school leadership includes a special education chair person. The role of the chair included re-structuring the department. An example included, transitioning grade-nine students out of self-contained classes and being placed in integrated co-teaching (ICT) classes. The decision was based on IEP goals. The role of the special education chair also included working with a team in structuring, “IEP at a Glance”, a program that allows teachers to be aware of goals of students with disabilities and the supports that they need for each subject. Because of the incorporation of an IEP chair, the following was noted, one hundred per cent of students with disabilities in an ICT class, scored three out of five on an essay based on a writing rubric. Previously, students struggled in writing while they were in self-contained classes.

- Teacher teams use a tuning protocol to focus on students they share. During an observation of an ELA team meeting, teachers discussed students who had difficulty with the reading section of the Regents, more specifically making a bridge between the central idea and the literary elements and devices. One teacher stated that they have tried sentence starters and extend the review of literary elements and devices. Teachers suggested peer teaching, stating that their students learn from each other when they are heterogeneously placed. Other suggestions included annotating text for some and having others annotate the text. An additional meeting included teachers looking at the January English Language Arts. Data showed that students did not do well on text analysis. Teachers recommended using the chain method, a method that allows teachers to interpret a piece of work and taking the last part of the sentence and allowing it to be the subject of the first part.

- To further support distributive leadership practices in the school, the principal relies on the support of grade leaders. The roles of the grade (leader) teachers are to plan and facilitate department meetings, attend weekly instructional team meetings to provide administrators with feedback on data and student performance. Grade teams also monitor student attendance and model for teachers on their grades. The impact of the grade team leaders was seen in a literacy action plan. A team of teachers with grade level leaders, department chairs and teachers help to create the plan. The rationale for the plan was to improve Regent scores. Goals included improving document-based questions (DBQ) in social studies by having students showing a ten per cent increase in answering questions during in-class assessments to help prepare for the Regents.