Quality Review Report

2018-2019

Stephen T. Mather Building Arts & Craftsmanship
High School
High school 02M139
439 West 49Th Street
Manhattan
NY 10019

Principal: Larry Gabbard

Dates of Review:
November 15, 2018 - November 16, 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><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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</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>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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
<thead>
<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>Area of Celebration 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>Additional Finding Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

*To what extent does the school...*

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<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 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 Well Developed</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 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 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 Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
The schoolwide Packvisory structure ensures that every student is known well by at least one adult. School staff receives comprehensive professional learning in restorative practices that inform their approach to discipline and social-emotional support to students.

Impact
Formal advisory structures promote the social-emotional development and provide guidance supports for student academic success. Packvisors’ professional learnings enable staff to plan and facilitate classes that encourage students in the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- The Mather Packvisory Program is a four-year sequential advisory course. Upon entering the ninth grade students are assigned to a student pack that remains consistent throughout their high school experience. Each Packvisory is comprised of 10 to 15 students and is assigned a new Packvisor each year, thus enabling students to be known well by multiple adults in the school. Packvisors serve as the primary contact for families and students and track student progress towards meeting graduation requirements and they create action plans as needed to promote students being on track for graduation. Packvisory classes utilize a circle format as a tool for sharing experiences, building community and trust, and engaging in group, collaborative problem-solving. Packvisory supports the social-emotional development of students, thus preparing them for the challenges they may experience during high school and college and careers.

- Several adults, including school leaders demonstrate positive communications and rapport with students as was evidenced across all grades and throughout all classrooms where there is a warm and respectful environment that promotes high levels of student engagement. During the student meeting, all students agreed that they are treated respectfully. One student stated, “The school is really open and tries to make everyone feel included.” School leaders encourage students to take an active role in school improvement initiatives. There is an active Student Government Organization (SGO) that provides Mather students with a voice and enables them to organize and advocate for various school improvement initiatives. SGO advocated for clean drinking water, which led to filtered water fountains being installed throughout the building. Additionally, the school principal conducts “Gab with Gabbard,” a monthly off-campus luncheon with 10 to 15 students as a means to develop a relationship with them and to receive feedback about their experiences at Mather.

- School leaders and social workers provide staff with training to increase their ability to address student social-emotional needs and improve school culture. School social workers train staff to implement the ladder of referral to deal with students in crisis, and understand both reporting protocols and de-escalation. Additionally, more than 50 percent of the staff has been trained to use restorative circles as a tool to strengthen student social-emotional capacity. Furthermore, there is a peer mediation program comprised of students from tenth through twelfth grades who have been trained to be peer mediators. Peer mediators are used to de-escalate conflicts and potential conflicts between students via a peaceful and restorative manner. Thus, adult and student learning experiences are well designed to assist members of the school community with experiences that promote the development of student personal behaviors that lead to success in college and/or careers.
Findings
Teaching practices, evident across classrooms, are aligned to the schoolwide belief that students learn best when they are met at their individual learning levels and provided with multiple entry points, high-quality supports and opportunities to develop higher-order thinking skills.

Impact
Teaching practices are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. Across classrooms, students are provided with multiple entry points, however, at times tasks were not challenging for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leader emphasized that “If teachers provide students with multiple entry points and high-quality supports they will develop higher-order thinking skills and demonstrate growth in the standards being assessed.” Across classrooms teachers utilize The Writing Revolution, (TWR), instructional methods to increase reading comprehension, improve organizational and study skills, enhance speaking abilities and develop analytical skills. Teachers have students use TWR sentence strategies to revise their work across content areas. In an English Language Arts (ELA) classroom students were provided with stickers with the names Hochman sentence activities written on them. Students had to adhere the stickers on paragraphs they had written, in order to identify the places they had used the strategy. If a student could not use a sticker they had to revise their sentences using one of the strategies. During a visit to an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, the teacher provided the students with a model of what was expected. Students were reading and annotating a poem, revising one sentence using the TWR strategy of illustration and emphasis. Consequently, teacher use of the TWR strategies are aligned with and reflect schoolwide beliefs about how students learn best resulting in consistently providing multiple entry points into the curriculum; however this was not observed in every classroom visited.

- During a visit to an Advanced Placement biology class, the teacher allowed student questions about an article they read for homework to frame the enzyme lab that they were going to complete, and it was used to model annotating the text and lab procedures. Additionally, students were provided visual, physical and written materials for the lab procedures. Although during this classroom visit all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, had access to the curriculum and were engaged in a challenging task, this was not the case for all classrooms visited.

- In an ICT ELA class, students were observed working in groups to complete a character analysis collaborative poster about a character from The Crucible. Some students were provided with modified task sheets to support them in completing the task. While students worked the teacher circulated the room to review student exit slips. The teacher asked students questions in order to help them clarify their understanding. Students were then given an opportunity to revise their response to the exit slip question after conferring with the teacher. Students’ collaborative posters demonstrated higher-order thinking skills; however the task was not challenging for some students.
**Findings**

The *Mastery-Based Learning and Instruction* (MBLI) team supports teachers with looking at student work and analyzing assessment data to refine the curricula. Curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits, higher-order skills and incorporate TWR and Advanced Placement for All suggested instructional strategies.

**Impact**

Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized for all students, across grades and subjects, including ELLs and students with disabilities. Planning for differentiated learning helps ensure that a diversity of learners have access to the curricula.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Most lesson plans reviewed contain a section entitled “differentiated strategies” that identifies approaches that promote access for a diversity of learners. Differentiation strategies from a ninth-grade algebra lesson plan included purposeful grouping, adjusted tasks, assignments for co-teachers and a hands-on component that requires students to sort function cards into one of two categories, function or non-function. A lesson plan from Lessons in Navigating College Transitions (LINCT) course included tiered discussion cards for students to use during classroom discourse. Additionally, the plan included differentiated exit slips. One exit slip included sentence starters and prompts to support students in developing a single paragraph outline that evaluates Maslow’s Theory of Needs. Thus, academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and assessment data, promoting access to rigorous academic tasks for students, including ELLs and students with disabilities.

- A review of curricular documents reveals purposeful planning aligned to the schoolwide instructional focus on writing across grades and subjects. Lesson plans consistently detail high-level student discussions and writing. A twelfth-grade lesson plan included guiding questions and sentence starters for students to use when analyzing ideas presented in a text. For example, one guiding question asked, “Are our choices made freely or are they driven by factors outside of ourselves?” Sentence starters required students to support their claim with evidence from the text, Factors like [blank] might drive our choices because [blank]. Students were expected to fill in the blanks to support their claims while engaging in discourse. In addition, TWR strategies are integrated across all grades and content areas.

- Teachers conduct item analysis using the previous year’s Regents data to inform changes that need to be made in curricula and lesson plans. After analyzing Regents data, the science team identified 10 priority standards that are scaffolded throughout the courses for grades nine through twelve. Additionally, data from a mock Algebra Regents was analyzed to determine which Common Core Standards students struggled with the most. The math department then developed tasks to address the misconceptions that students experienced, thus promoting access and cognitive engagement for diverse students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.
**Additional Finding**

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

Schoolwide, MBLI is used to assess student mastery level and provide them with feedback regarding their progress. School staff uses assessment and benchmark software to analyze the results from common assessments.

**Impact**

Analysis of assessment results are consistently used to adjust curriculum and instruction, thus promoting student learning and performance. Teachers provide students with feedback that supports them with improving their work.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Schoolwide mastery-based competency rubrics aligned to the curricula are designed to be student-friendly and allow students to see where they are on a particular skill and what they need to do within a standard to work to the next level. Furthermore, the use of these mastery-based competency rubrics allows teachers to provide students with actionable feedback as well as act as a student self-assessment relative to achieving mastery. Also, teachers provide students with actionable feedback verbally and in writing that supports them with improving their work.

  Feedback to a student on evidence and presentations was, “I like the way you expanded to make thoughtful connections, next time explain the great visuals you provided.” Feedback to another student was, “A command needs to be an action. Read that out loud to yourself, does that sound correct? Remember a “but” sentence is supposed to be a change of direction.”

- Across the school, *Mastery Connect*, an online tool that organizes student performance data from coursework and monitors progress towards graduation, informs adjustments to individual student supports and small group instruction. Teachers regularly enter grades regarding recent student work, check on updates on student progress from other teachers, and then are able to provide students with real-time feedback. Thus, the tracker provides teachers with access to a comprehensive picture of a student, informs differentiation and small group instruction, and guides feedback to students. Students believe that teachers are always aware of what they have done and what needs to be done, and students are aware of their next learning steps. A student expressed that everything is on the tracker and if something is incomplete or in the revision state you can see it. Another student stated, “We use rubrics. They give it to us before we start the task. It helps us know which stage we are in.” Consequently, the feedback students receive is meaningful and aligned to mastery-based competency rubrics and teachers are able to adjust individual student instruction accordingly.

- School faculty administers pre-unit assessments that assess standards found throughout the unit so that they can identify individual learning needs of students. Based on the results, teachers plan standards-based instruction relative to the summative assessment at the end of the unit. Students are then able to compare their performance from their results on the pre-unit assessment and measure their progress towards achieving mastery.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations, as determined by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, to the entire staff through an annual staff handbook, weekly Mather Dispatch newsletter and Dispatch meetings. School leaders and staff successfully partner with families and effectively communicate expectations for college and career readiness through an online grading platform and student led conferences.

Impact
School leaders’ use of an effective system holds staff accountable for schoolwide instructional expectations. Families are aware and understand their children’s progress towards meeting high expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders issue a weekly Mather Dispatch to effectively communicate schoolwide expectations for instruction, assessment and professionalism and MBLI team meetings support teachers with meeting schoolwide instructional and assessment expectations. Additionally, teachers receive professional development through the partnership with TWR to develop a uniformed structure for students to express their learning through writing. As a result of the partnership, tracker tools have been developed that enable students, teachers, advocate counselors, administrators, and parents to stay up-to-date regarding student progress, goals, and next steps in their education.

- All staff receive an annual staff handbook that communicates expectation around instruction, social-emotional learning, and professional responsibilities aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Two instructional coaches provide staff with ongoing support to ensure that they meet both the schoolwide instructional and assessment expectations and staff hold each another accountable in that the professional learning opportunities are aligned to each teacher’s professional goals. An end-of-year retreat allows staff to reflect on the year and establish goals for the subsequent year. Additionally, school staff receives a Guide to Grade Team Meetings that communicates protocols for team building, expectations for instructional rounds and protocols for team level discussions.

- School staff conduct a new student orientation in June for the families of all incoming ninth grade students so that they are knowledgeable about schoolwide expectations. Packvisors prepare their advisees to conduct Student Led Conferences (SLC) two times per year. During SLCs, students communicate their detailed progress towards mastery in each of their courses to their families using a script that includes student assessment data, level of mastery of Common Core Standards and their progress toward grade promotion and graduation. Packvisors also conduct positive outreach to families at least two times per year, parents have access to an on-line Mastery Connect portal, receive Remind text notifications and attend end-of-year family night where students showcase their progress, all around keeping them in the loop of their children’s progress. For further support, a college counselor provides college and Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) workshops for students and their families. Consequently, school teams successfully communicate expectations for college and career readiness and partner with families to provide needed support so their children make progress towards achieving identified expectations.
Additional Finding

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

Teacher teams are engaged in structured inquiry work to support the schoolwide instructional foci of improving student discourse and improved learning outcomes by the diverse student population. Teacher teams analyze student data and work to make future adjustments to the curricula.

Impact

Teacher teams’ consistent use of the results of assessments identifies how students are performing in the acquisition of the specific skills required by the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams’ identification of pedagogical practices enable staff to address student learning gaps, improve teacher practice and impacts student assessment data.

Supporting Evidence

- *Packvisors* meet weekly to identify lessons that teachers will facilitate with their *Packvisory* the following week. The lessons are designed to build student social-emotional capacity and support the schoolwide goal of increased attendance rate and decreased in-school suspensions. *Packvisors* engage in a parallel process where they engage in the community-building and social-emotional activities that they will facilitate with their advisees, in order to identify social-emotional supports that may be needed, as observed during the Packvisor teacher team meeting. The work of the Packvisor teacher team is designed to promote schoolwide goals aligned to improved school culture and has resulted in more than 50 percent decrease in school suspensions as evidenced by the Online Occurrence Reporting Systems Report.

- The math department team analyzed data from the January administration of the New York State Algebra Regents to determine the Common Core Learning Standards with which students struggled. After identification, team members then delved further to determine the misconceptions impacting students in order to solve a problem correctly. Based on student misconceptions teachers designed worksheets that assessed the standards and provided students with targeted interventions, which has resulted in significant gains for groups of students. Results from the first administration of the assessment, revealed that students were only able to correctly answer 39 percent of the questions aligned to an identified standard. After targeted instruction and supports, students were able to answer 70 percent of the aligned questions. As a result, assessment data reviewed evidenced increased Regents’ scores for groups of students.

- Aligned to the schoolwide instructional goal of increasing the use of questioning and discussion techniques and engaging students in learning, all teachers via grade level teams are engaged in inquiry-based, professional collaborations during which they analyze key elements of classroom practice. Further, grade level teams participate in instructional rounds as a means to collaborate and identify shared practices, submit and tune lesson plans, make a commitment to an instructional practice, and bring student work to reflect on the teams’ progress towards effective and strategic instructional practice. Teacher performance data reveals that most teachers have made significant gains in the domains from the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* that align to the schoolwide instructional goals. During meetings with teachers, they agreed that the work on their teams is increasing their instructional capacity, progress for groups of students and promotes the achievement of schoolwide goals.