Quality Review Report

2018-2019

Stuyvesant High School
High School 02M475
345 Chambers Street
Manhattan
NY 10282

Principal: Eric Contreras

Dates of Review:
January 9, 2019 - January 10, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Kimberly Bradley
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

Stuyvesant High 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
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</tbody>
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#### 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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff. School leaders and staff effectively communicate high expectations using emails, memos, and during professional development sessions. The school’s online student information system and parent handbook provide clear communication of expectations to families related to a path for college and career readiness.

Impact
Communication and professional development focused on high expectations results in a culture of mutual accountability. Partnerships with families support students to ensure they are college and career ready.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders use varying means to ensure that all staff is aware and understand what is expected. Expectations are communicated through emails, memos, during professional development sessions and through observation reports. Active intellectual engagement, formative assessment and coherent planning aligned to instruction are the instructional focus for this school year. As such, observation reports include specific language addressing the focus and the expectations and practices related to ensuring its realization. “Who am I teaching? What am I teaching? How will I teach it? How will I know if the students understand?” are the questions for teachers to continually reflect upon. Through a carefully developed professional development plan, training around the instructional expectations is provided for teachers and is referenced in teacher observation feedback and department meeting agendas. As a result of clear communication and strategic professional learning opportunities, teachers are supported in meeting the school's expectations.

- A review of department meeting agendas and minutes evidence regular discussion addressing the instructional focus by teachers and their assigned assistant principal. Teachers are expected to provide a course syllabus at the beginning of the year that outlines expectations for students, teacher and parents and states the class grading policy. In an agenda from the math department, the guiding question for the meeting stated, “How do we distinguish compliance from engagement?” The agenda and minutes indicate that the teachers engaged in a teacher-to-teacher discussion about how the design of activities promotes student engagement. Agendas and minutes from the English department indicate teachers are reviewing the grading policies to ensure alignment and coordinating the selection of readings across course offerings. Through clear and frequent communication, staff understands the high expectations of school leaders and holds each other accountable.

- Guidance counselors work closely with students and ensure they are on track towards graduation. Parents spoke of the strong partnership they had with the school and specifically referenced how counselors are pushing into classes to support students in learning how to handle stress and are making contact with parents about students who may feel overwhelmed. Parents are provided a clear understanding of the college application process and how to apply for financial aid through meetings and workshops. At PTA and School Leadership meetings, school leaders inform parents of student progress and the progress being made toward achieving the school’s goals. Parents spoke positively regarding the availability of the principal. The weekly updates, monthly calendars, and their inclusion in the goal-setting and improvement process were praised. Parents explained that expectations are also provided through the school’s online student information system, parent-teacher conferences, and the parent handbook. A successful partnership exists with families to support students.
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 assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that align to the school's curricula, and provide opportunities for students to self-assess via checklists and reflection. However, these practices do not yet offer a clear portrait of student mastery.

Impact
Teachers provide actionable feedback to students, and assessment practices lead to appropriate adjustments to meet the learning needs of all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the school each department has a specific grading policy that is reviewed on a regular basis. Tests, quizzes, class participation, projects, reports, labs, and homework are used to assess a student’s performance. Student work samples include the use of rubrics to provide feedback to students. An example of teacher feedback from an English assignment includes, “This has many strengths. It contains some sophisticated analysis and presents a compelling argument. It is weakened, however by a lack of cohesion on the third page and a lack of evidence in some sections.” A scoring rubric in AP United States history lists categories including, thesis, contextualization, evidence, analysis and reasoning. A review of student work and speaking with students reveals that students receive feedback on their work most of the time, but sometimes do not see the rubric until the assignment is given to the teacher for grading. Although feedback allows students to revise individual tasks, the feedback does not always allow students to make meaning across subjects and tasks.

- In meetings with students, students reported that they receive consistent and actionable feedback on their assignments. They explained that it depended on the teacher how often they receive information regarding their progress or if the grade is updated online. In meetings with school leaders and staff, they acknowledged that they have reduced the number of different grading programs used by staff from twelve to three and they were currently having schoolwide discussions focusing on implementing a common policy for how and when grades would be communicated to students and families. The school has developed and is refining a schoolwide student information system that will support more frequent communication about the progress of students.

- In an English class, students used an essay checklist before giving their essay to a peer editor for review. Some of the self-check statements included, “The thesis statement is at the end of the introduction and presents a clear, unified argument. Topic sentences present an argument rather than a plot summary. Each body paragraph contains direct quotes that support the thesis. Lead-ins are used when inserting direct quotations and context is provided. The language is appropriate and free of colloquialisms.” At the student meeting students explained that while they have opportunities to reflect on their work and next steps, those opportunities occur more often in their ELA classes than in other subjects. As a result, students are not as yet regularly provided opportunities across subjects to self-assess their progress and identify next steps.
Findings
Curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills such as, intellectual engagement and citing textual evidence are evidenced in academic tasks that emphasize the school’s instructional focus.

Impact
Curricular alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts results in coherence across grades and subject areas promoting college and career readiness for all learners. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills require that all students demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Lesson plans consistently challenge students to utilize rigorous habits in the course of instruction. Learning objective statements in lesson plans include, “Students will get an overview of the complexities of the nervous system.” and “Students will determine the limits of protected speech and compare the cases and the different rulings that protect speech in school”. Students are to consistently write and connect their writing to evidence from the text. Lesson plans evidence detailed high-level questions. Examples include, “To what extent is political speech protected by the Constitution?”, “How can you use a particle diagram to distinguish between a real gas and an ideal gas?” and “How can we characterize Vladek and Artie’s relationship with the past?” A review of course descriptions indicates that the school offers over 60 advanced course offerings beyond Advance Placement classes across all content areas and that students on average take 15-20 courses beyond the high school graduation requirements.

- Lesson plans, unit plans and curriculum maps reflect full integration of the instructional shifts embedded in Common Core Learning Standards across content areas. For example, lesson plans in English emphasize the value of text-based evidence in argument through close textual analysis. One task required students to identify the ways that multiple pieces of text speak to the various aspects of the American identity while citing specific textual evidence. In math rigor is evidenced in a Geometry lesson that requires students to provide an argument for the formulas addressing circumference of a circle, area of a circle, volume of a cylinder, pyramid and cone.

- A review of curricular documents demonstrates academic tasks that promote college and career readiness for all students. A lesson from a computer science course with a focus on systems level programming includes student groups working on an end of semester project. Students were to illustrate their understanding and use of various programming techniques such as allocating memory, working with files, networking and user interface. Each group had to submit a proposal that includes the statement of the problem, how the project will be used, and a description of the technical design. An AP French lesson asks students to discuss with their peer the impact of Big Data based on the article they had read and to justify their argument based on textual evidence. A Chemistry lesson requires students to use questioning and discussion to understand the impact of pressure and temperature on the volume of a gas. An English lesson plan has students reading *Maus II* and making textual references while identifying and discussing the ways the characters Vladek and Artie are impacted by their experience at Auschwitz.
Findings
Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs that students learn best through intellectually engaging experiences and peer-to-peer discourse. Across classrooms, student work products and discussions critical thinking.

Impact
Students produce meaningful work products and take part in discussions that reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- During a biology lesson, students worked in small groups on a bell ringer requiring them to place note cards in order to show how an action potential is carried down a neuron. Student groups then worked on creating a GIF that shows the movement of an ion during an action potential based on scenarios assigned to each group. One of the scenarios addressed the action potentials in the nerve cells and pain receptors before and after the administration of the drug procaine. Another task focused on action potentials impacted by multiple sclerosis. During the group activity, students reviewed their scenario and each member of the group selected a group role such as chief administrative officer, chief visionary officer, chief sustainability officer and chief data/analytics officer. Students were provided manipulatives to create models of each step of the process. After completing their models, students wrote an explanation and justification of their selected GIF symbol selections. They provided feedback to two other student groups about their GIF symbol. Across most classrooms, there was evidence that students were involved with intellectually engaging experiences.

- In a ninth-grade global studies class, students worked in groups of four as they read and annotated excerpts from the textbook about the Byzantine Empire. Each group had a different piece of text and was required to answer specific questions such as, “How did Eastern Orthodox Christianity differ from Roman Catholicism? How did links to Byzantium transform the new civilization of Kievan Rus? How was Byzantine art related to the cultures around it?” Students first read, annotated and responded to their assigned questions independently, then shared their response with the other members of their groups. Groups took turns presenting their response to the rest of the class. As students shared out in both small group and large group, the other students in the class were expected to take notes on the presentations with a focus on identifying the five characteristics of a Byzantine society and making connections to the characteristics shared by the United States. As a result of strategies such as these the majority of students in most classrooms demonstrated high levels of participation in class discussions.

- In a geometry class, students applied the concept of congruence and similarity to prove relationships in geometric figures. The do now required them to identify which proportions were correct and also why the other proportions were incorrect. Students then reviewed as a class the errors they had identified before working on their assigned problems. As students worked in groups, the teacher walked around the class and addressed any misconceptions they might have such as, not using the entire hypotenuse when setting up the geometric mean. When finished they could work on the extension problems that involved multiple altitudes drawn to multiple hypotenuses. Experiences such as application of understanding of geometric theorems to previous learning gave evidence that students are engaged in high levels of critical thinking.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings
School leaders support the development of teachers, including those completing the tenure process, with effective feedback that accurately captures their strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact
Feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice, supports teacher development, and promotes professional growth for teachers.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders support the development of teachers with frequent cycles of classroom observations. Each assistant principal conducts initial planning conferences at the beginning of the year for the teachers in the department they oversee and reviews each teacher’s professional learning goals for the year. All assistant principals meet regularly with the principal during weekly meetings to review observations and identify teachers that may need additional support. Assistant principals take turns presenting the feedback they provided to the teacher they observed during the week. Using a protocol, the other assistant principals review the feedback, identify areas of strength and additional next steps are suggested for the teacher. As a result of frequent observations and this consistent practice by school leaders improved teacher practice is evidenced in subsequent observations and improved teacher ratings in Advance.

- Feedback from school leaders articulates clear expectations for teacher practice in addressing purposeful planning and designing coherent lessons. An example of feedback stated, “I would ask that you include your specific instructional objectives and a few more explicit notes about differentiated learning in your plan. Designing coherent lesson plans is one of the instructional objectives for the year that the principal has elected to focus on this year so I am pleased that your plan is effective in coherence and rigor.” An example of next steps stated, “You can insist on a set number of questions (a minimum as opposed to a maximum) and a brief activity. This will help foster more engagement for the whole class in their presentations.” A review of the teacher’s next observation indicates implementation of these next steps and provides evidence of improved practice.

- Teachers are engaging in department intervisitations that include peer-to-peer feedback. The foreign language department used an intervisitation form aligned with the Danielson components where participating teachers record low inference evidence, ideas or strategies they may incorporate into their own practice, and questions that surface. A review of Advance observation reports show that teachers join assistant principals during observations of other teachers in their department and by teacher invitation join the feedback conference. Untenured teachers are supported by a mentor teacher and attend tenure meetings twice a month as they prepare for the tenure process. A review of teacher evaluations indicates that teacher development and evidence of continuous growth is positively impacted by these support structures provided by school leaders and peers.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations including a specific meeting time for untenured teachers. Teacher teams consistently analyze data and student work of groups of students.

Impact

Teacher collaborations are strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers and progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

Staff members going through the tenure process form one of the teacher teams. At their meeting teachers reviewed evidence from a lesson each of them had recently taught. A specific learning tool was used to reflect on the low inference notes taken by each teacher during their lesson. Teachers thought about the Danielson component each piece of evidence illustrated and identified areas in their practice that needed improvement and potential supports. The tenure team members also spent part of the meeting on preparing for an upcoming classroom visit. The teacher hosting the visit reviewed what students would be working on during the lesson. Teachers were asked to focus their attention on the types of student-generated questions and the level of student conversations that took place. As a result of the collaboration taking place teachers their instructional capacity is strengthened.

- Teachers from each department meet monthly and review department grading policies, student data, and work on developing lessons and unit plans in alignment with the school's instructional focus. A review of agendas and minutes from department meetings provide evidence of discussions around best practices in responding to student work and strengthening their work around culturally relevant teaching. Minutes from the chemistry and physics department refer to the review and feedback from class laboratory lessons. Minutes from social studies refer to a discussion of the changes in upcoming Regents exams and the revision of the curriculum including the pacing calendar. Teachers in the English department analyzed the grade distribution from teachers teaching multiple sections of the same course. Participation by the majority of teachers in regular meetings focused on the review of the curriculum and student data. This consistent collaboration results in supporting the academic progress of students.

- During the teacher team meetings, teachers shared that meeting by department has impacted their teaching practice as well as some of the course sequencing and course content. For example, a teacher reported that based on the analysis of student data of the incoming freshman students, they have revised the course of study in some freshman classes to allow for additional time to review those skills related to reading a textbook, note taking and organizing work. In art and technology teachers reported the work they are doing making their curriculum more hands on. In English, revisions have led to replacing their British Literature class with Writing in the World making the course more culturally relevant. This ongoing teacher collaboration promotes the achievement of meeting the shifting needs of their students.