Quality Review Report

2018-2019

Robert H. Goddard High School of Communication Arts and Technology
High school 27Q308
138-30 Lafayette Street
Queens
NY 11417

Principal: Joseph Birgeles

Dates of Review:
April 2, 2019 - April 3, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Lisa Reiter
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

Robert H. Goddard High School of Communication Arts and Technology 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

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<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>Well Developed</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 Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

School leaders and teacher peers support the development of teachers with effective feedback and next steps from strategic cycles of both evaluative and nonevaluative observations. Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

Impact

Feedback to teachers from classroom observations elevates their instructional practices. Additionally, feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice, supports teacher development through professional learning, and aligns with professional goals for teachers as well as the instructional focus of the school.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Each rated item is supported with specific, detailed evidence from the class to justify the rating. Included at the end of each report are strengths and next steps aligned with teacher goals and the instructional focus of the school, which this year is on raising the level of rigor across all content areas. As an example, one observation includes feedback to use *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) level three questions to push student thinking and raise the level of rigor. Additionally, included in each observation report are the specific strategies school leaders will be targeting in the next cycle of observations. School leaders prioritize teacher need based on previous observations and teacher growth from *Advance* data from the previous year. School leaders shared, and teachers agreed, that they provide on-the-spot narrative feedback during nonevaluative observations, such as suggesting the teacher include an additional student discussion based on what is observed in the moment. Taken together, these practices elevate instruction and promote the professional growth of teachers.

- Observation reports contain feedback that captures teachers’ strengths and challenges and includes next steps so that teachers can improve their practice and impact student success. Next steps are aligned to teachers’ professional goals. For example, in one observation report, the teacher is commended for incorporating into the lesson plan feedback that the school leader had provided via email. In addition to this, the leader noted the teacher’s detailed lesson plan that included which students would receive targeted support. Next steps for the teacher included continuing to raise the level of rigor and questions, which is part of this teacher’s professional goal. The report also includes a specific strategy the teacher could try to achieve that goal. In the subsequent observation report, the teacher is commended for implementing the previous feedback and making strides toward achieving her professional goal. This practice of providing feedback that supports teacher development and aligns with professional goals was evident across the vast majority of observation reports.

- Teacher peers support the development of teachers through peer observation and intervisitation aligned with the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Each peer observation includes a written reflection on evidence of student learning, student ownership, and strong practices observed. Additionally, the teacher being observed reflects on the peer feedback received and creates an action plan to increase rigor, differentiation, and/or student engagement. As an example, peer feedback from one teacher recommended differentiating handouts and providing students with a guiding question before watching a film clip. In the observed teacher’s action plan, she agreed to incorporate a guiding question into the next lesson. Consequently, teacher peers join school leaders in implementing strategies that promote teachers’ professional growth.
Area of Focus

Quality Indicator: 2.2 Assessment  Rating: Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and checklists aligned with the school’s curricula. Teachers’ assessment practices, such as conferencing, exit slips, and online programs, consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

While teachers provide students with actionable feedback, there are missed opportunities to provide meaningful feedback that consistently elevates student work. Teachers make effective adjustments to meet students’ learning needs; however, there are occasionally missed opportunities to adjust instruction so that students are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use rubrics to assess student work and provide feedback to students on tasks such as essays, math assessments, and other culminating tasks. Across classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher-written, actionable feedback. For example, one student received feedback to maintain a formal writing style throughout his essay. Other examples of written feedback included, “Please check the chord segment theorem to find the error,” “Include more outside information and make connections,” and “Include a written explanation on how you solved the problem.” However, there were also some examples of feedback that did not provide students with clear, next steps for improvement. For example, some pieces of student work included a rubric with the performance level circled, but there was no written feedback to indicate next steps. Also, written feedback was not always connected to the criteria of the task. For instance, a student received scores of three out of four on the rubric for a writing piece, but the written feedback was simply “Great response.”

- One student reported, and all agreed, that teachers provide them with rubrics on most tasks. Additionally, students reported that they apply the feedback they receive. However, not all tasks include written feedback. One student shared a rubric for a PowerPoint presentation he created. This student received a three out of four in two of the criteria. However, while the student shared that he did receive verbal feedback related to his use of vocabulary words, he did not receive written feedback that he could use to meaningfully elevate his work on his next project. There were also a few examples of student work that included only a numeric score or a check mark. Thus, while students receive actionable feedback that can be applied to future tasks, this practice is not yet evident across the vast majority of classrooms.

- Teachers check for understanding and make effective adjustments in their classes as well as have students conduct self- and peer assessments. As an example, in a Geometry class, students completed an online quiz at the start of class. The teacher then reviewed how to solve the questions that the majority of students had answered incorrectly. In an Algebra class, the teacher used previous exit slips to have students identify common misconceptions or mistakes that were made. Additionally, in a Global Studies class, after reading student responses and conferencing with small groups of students, the teacher informed the class that their answers were too broad and that they needed to focus their responses on the next writing assignment. While checks for understanding were consistent, there were occasionally missed opportunities to assess student learning or the depth of their in-class responses. For instance, in a Global Studies II class, while some students engaged in a Socratic seminar, other students responded to student comments via an online platform. However, those students’ responses were not monitored during the class. Thus, there was a missed opportunity to adjust instruction or deepen students’ thinking.
Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 1.1 Curriculum

| Rating: | Well Developed |

**Findings**

Curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts through the common planning of teacher teams, along with school leaders’ work in assessing the effectiveness of those structures. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

**Impact**

The integration of the instructional shifts has resulted in coherence that ensures that students are using text-based evidence and applying math to the real world across content areas. All students have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged through differentiated groupings.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across the vast majority of curricula, there is alignment with the Common Core and New York State content area standards. Additionally, there is evidence of integration of the instructional shifts. For example, the requirement that students support arguments with text-based evidence, as well as an emphasis on literacy experiences, is addressed across grade and content areas. As an example, included in a grade 12 English Language Arts (ELA) lesson plan is a task that requires students to engage in a discussion on the benefits and detriments of torture using evidence from the novel *1984* to support their responses. In a Global Studies II lesson plan, students engage in a Socratic seminar on the Cold War and whether or not it is an enduring issue through time. Students are required to support their arguments from various sources. Additionally, all lesson plans include a week-at-a-glance which shows that across grades and content areas, there is a coherent focus on including text-based answers and writing from sources. For instance, students are expected to write argumentative, literary, and informative essays in which text evidence is used throughout. Therefore, there is coherence across grades and content areas that promotes college and career readiness for all students.

- A review of curricular documents reveals the strategic integration of math shifts. For example, a task included in a geometry unit plan evidences the shifts of deep understanding and application. The task, titled, “Landscaping Project,” requires students to design a backyard and provide an estimate of the cost. Students determine the perimeter and area of different shapes as they design the backyard. Additionally, there is a written component that requires students to explain how they measured each part of the design and how area and perimeter were determined and used to identify the cost of the project. Furthermore, a task included in an Algebra lesson plan requires students to demonstrate fluency and a deep understanding of factoring by identifying misconceptions and mistakes in previous problems. Thus, curricula and tasks include the strategic integration of multiple shifts in math.

- Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and assessments. These include frequent low-stakes assessments and quarterly exams so that individuals and groups of students, including the lowest and highest-achieving students, are cognitively engaged. All lesson plans include an explanation of how the task is differentiated to support students at all levels. As an example, an English 10 lesson plan for an integrated co-taught (ICT) class includes that groups are differentiated based on the previous day’s exit ticket. Moreover, the plan includes the names of students who will receive an additional mini-lesson. An Advanced Placement (AP) United States History lesson plan includes that students will be placed in differentiated groups based on data from an earlier assessment. While all students are engaging in tasks connected to the social and cultural tensions that resulted from the ratification of the 18th Amendment, students in the highest-performing group have the most challenging task and questions.
Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula, reflecting a coherent set of beliefs that students learn best when presented with learning opportunities that are visual, active, and rigorous. Across the same classrooms, teaching practices strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports.

Impact

Teaching practices across the school result in meaningful student work products, and all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, engage in challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- Instruction reflects a shared belief that students learn best with visual, active, and rigorous lessons. Shared practices across the school include the use of PowerPoint, various online platforms that allow students to engage with the lesson, and discussion structures such as the Socratic seminar, text graffiti, and learning stations. Teachers engage in common planning and team discussions to ensure coherence across the departments. For example, in a Global Studies class, students engaged in a text graffiti protocol in which they discussed the enduring issues of power, ideas and beliefs, and conflict. Each issue was written on chart paper and placed around the room. Students rotated to each issue and either added to a previous group’s comment or created their own comments. While discussing power, one group added that Genghis Khan maintained power by using fear and psychological warfare. Thus, teaching practices reflect a coherent set of beliefs that results in meaningful work products.

- Multiple entry points and high-quality supports are provided for all students. For example, in an Algebra class for students with disabilities, students received a guided note sheet that included some pre-printed notes and space for them to take additional notes. Moreover, students were in strategic partnerships that allowed them to learn from each other. As an example, one student had missed the prior lesson, and his partner explained to him how to solve problems with positive and negative numbers. Furthermore, in a Global Studies class, students were strategically grouped so that some students received additional notes and guiding questions. In another English class, some students, including ELLs, received vocabulary support on the text. Thus, multiple entry points ensure that all students engage in challenging tasks through strategic supports.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<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 to staff through a staff handbook, a lesson plan template, and the instructional absolutes. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning through structures such as student quarterly reflections that communicate a unified set of high expectations for all students.

Impact

School leaders provide training and professional development (PD) around goals and high expectations that result in a culture of mutual accountability. Students, including high-need subgroups, develop ownership over their post-high school next steps.

Supporting Evidence

- A faculty handbook and instructional absolutes contain information connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Sections of the handbook clearly state schoolwide expectations regarding pedagogical practices, such as a rigor checklist, a differentiation checklist, and a lesson plan template, known as a “Blueprint for Success.” Included in the template are a weekly pacing guide, different components of the lesson with an explanation and example, and a section labeled “Student-Centered, Differentiated Activity.” The instructional absolutes also state that all students receive differentiated lessons that are student-centered. Additionally, the instructional focus for the year is centered on designing rigorous tasks and lessons. School leaders have identified a professional text, *Rigor is Not a Four-Letter Word*, to support teachers in meeting this goal. Teacher teams are assigned sections of the text to use as they design a rigorous task or lesson and then teams facilitate PD for the entire staff on their assigned chapters. Thus, there is a culture of mutual accountability between school leaders and staff.

- Evidence of a culture of mutual accountability for high expectations was expressed at the teacher meeting, where teachers came to a quick consensus that they hold school leaders accountable. For instance, teachers shared that school leaders have an open-door policy to hear concerns or issues. Additionally, school leaders provide staff with numerous surveys throughout the year to ensure staff voice is heard and make adjustments, as needed. For instance, school leaders adjusted the cell phone policy based on feedback from a staff survey, and students in AP Art class had their schedules modified after teachers reported that there was not enough class time to develop the required art portfolios. Moreover, leaders provide follow-up emails on the progress of any adjustment. All teachers agreed that it is a very collaborative school.

- At the student meeting, all agreed that teachers, counselors, and school leaders communicate high expectations through feedback and support to ensure they are prepared for their next steps. One student shared that leaders and his counselor created an individual schedule that allows him to take trade classes, such as carpentry, in the afternoons. All students also engage in quarterly reflections on their benchmark assessments, where they identify a goal for each class and reflect on their progress towards that goal. As an example, one student shared his quarterly reflection that he wanted to earn a nine, the highest score, on his AP literary essay. While noting that one of his strengths was in analyzing evidence, he explained that a challenge he faced was in incorporating broader themes into his essay. To foster high expectations for all students, school leaders and staff expect all students, including those in high-needs subgroups, to take at least one college-level class. Through AP classes and partnerships with various universities, the school is on track for 100 percent of current seniors to take a college-level course. Additionally, the school is expected to raise their CCPI Index (Advanced Course Index) to eighty percent. Therefore, taken together, these practices allow all students to own their educational experiences while preparing them for the next level.
Findings
All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations that engage in one of three different protocols: a data dive, lesson plan study, or intervisitation. A distributed leadership structure positively empowers teachers to affect student learning by allowing them to assume various leadership roles.

Impact
Collaborations within teams strengthen teachers’ instructional capacities, which have led to schoolwide coherence and increased student achievement. Teachers’ voices are integral to decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Content teams examine student work and assessment results using the data dive protocol to identify trends, make curricular modifications, and select supports needed to increase student performance. As an example, the Algebra team identified literal equations as an area of need based on a review of the item-analysis from the June 2018 Regents exam. The team decided to create frequent, low-stakes assessments aligned with this skill that they would use to determine students’ misconceptions and understanding of this skill. One identified misconception was that students were subtracting instead of dividing when solving the problems. At a subsequent meeting, teachers also reviewed an updated lesson on transforming literal equations and collaboratively created a scaffold for students that included guiding questions that connected literal to regular equations. The result of this targeted work was an increase in student performance on this standard from 16 percent to 63 percent on the Algebra Regents exam. Therefore, the use of protocols during content team collaborations has strengthened teachers’ instructional capacity and increased student achievement for all learners.

- The Global Studies team, comprised of both Global I and Global II teachers, met to engage in a date dive around the results of a frequent low-stakes assessment that each course had recently given. After reviewing the results, each team shared their noticing and collaborated to identify next steps for each course. For example, the Global II teachers shared that students struggled to identify the author’s purpose or point of view when looking at historic documents or images. The Global I teachers shared they had similar findings with their students. One teacher suggested that, as a follow-up lesson for the Global II classes, they include key vocabulary and add some text to help provide context for the images. Additionally, in order to meet the demands of a more skills-based Global Studies Regents, teachers on this team have revised the curriculum to include more lessons on point of view, cause and effect, and author’s purpose. In sum, all teachers agreed that inquiry-based collaborations have had a positive impact on their teaching practice.

- Teachers throughout the school have various leadership roles. For example, one teacher oversees the SAT prep program on Saturdays. This includes vetting different curricula and supporting the teachers who teach this program. Another teacher coordinates with a local university to ensure the curricula of the college-level economics and government classes are aligned to the expectations of the State. Additionally, teachers serve as department chairs, which include facilitating meetings and recommending curriculum and additional programs, such as online resources. Furthermore, the PD committee, which is comprised of teachers and school leaders, develop PD for staff. Thus, teacher leadership is embedded throughout the school and results in teachers playing a vital role in decisions that affect student learning and teacher development.