Quality Review Report

2018-2019

Benjamin N. Cardozo High School
High school 26Q415
57-00 223Rd Street
Bayside
NY 11364

Principal: Meagan Colby

Dates of Review:
April 11, 2019 - April 12, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Carlos Perez
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

Benjamin N. Cardozo 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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></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>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>
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## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<td>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</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

<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>1.3 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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>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</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>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.3 Leveraging Resources</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

Findings

The use of all resources and other organizational decisions are well-aligned to and support the school’s instructional goals and action plans. The use of staff time is structured so that teams have substantial amounts of time for structured team meetings that focus on goals and instructional work.

Impact

Resource allocations have resulted in meaningful student work products and improved instruction that challenges all students academically.

Supporting Evidence

- Decisions for all resources are done in collaboration with teachers in order to ensure that resources are not only aligned to the school’s instructional focus, but specifically to what students need. For example, as a result of being 58 percent eligible for Title 1 funding, the school assures to allocate sufficient resources in order to supply students with calculators for their math courses in addition to other school items such as backpacks for students. School leaders set aside resources for programs such as AP tutoring as well as the school’s Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) boot camp that tutors, supports and prepares students for the exam. In order to support the belief that students learn best when engaged in work they enjoy, the school runs over 50 different clubs and very easily creates a club whenever students show interest. During the meeting with students, all students praised the school for the amount of extracurricular activities it has. One student stated, “There is a club for just about everyone here, and even if there wasn’t, you could speak up and have one developed for your interest.” As a result, students are engaged and create meaningful work products.

- Staff time is structured so that learning time is focused on and aligned to the school’s instructional focus. Teachers and school leaders agreed to a set amount of days for teachers to meet. For example, teachers meet twice a week for common planning time, twice a week for parent outreach and 1 day per week for faculty meetings or for cycles of professional learning. The budget supports teachers in ongoing cycles of professional learning both in and off campus, this includes the ability to have substitute teachers for those who are out attending professional development (PD). All PD is aligned to the needs of teachers and based on teacher requests and data collected from classroom observation reports. Evidence in teacher planning includes how PD is incorporated into teacher plans, such as English Language Learner (ELL) strategies that were incorporated as a result of teachers attending PD for ELLs. Additionally, attending professional learning specific to lesson planning that has helped many teachers improve their observation scores in designing coherent instruction on the Danielson Framework for Teaching from the start of the school year to the date of this Quality Review. This has allowed stronger coherent instruction that challenges students with rigorous materials.

- Recently the school implemented a new computer lab that includes new iPads and additional interactive whiteboards for classrooms throughout the school. This was made possible through partnerships with a local philanthropist and a local councilman. The school’s partnership and past relationships with the borough president enabled them to receive 1.5 million dollars that they appropriated towards the school’s future robotics and technology facility. An additional donation from a local councilman has enabled school leaders to invest in a new annex that will include a biomedical floor, a journalism floor, and a political science floor. Both teachers and school leaders shared how the school budget is “[A]lways focused on our kids and the balance between academic and social-emotional learning.” This is reflected in through student choice in clubs, and the amount of electives that students can select from based on their interest.
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 rubrics, assessments and grading policies that are aligned to the school’s curricula. Teacher’s assessment practices consistently reflect ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment, most notably through conferencing.

Impact
Most but not yet all of the feedback provided to students captures strengths and offers students actionable next steps. Assessment practices do not routinely result in all students’ awareness of their next steps or teacher adjustments that effectively address all students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- During the meeting with students they shared how feedback from their teachers is offered to them. One student explained that in her U.S. history class feedback is offered in the form of a glow and grow. The student went on to state, “I always know what I did well and where I need to improve.” Another student shared that he consistently receives feedback, such as “Add more details,” in his English Language Arts (ELA) class. Another student explained that his global history class the teacher always goes into depth with the feedback specifically about how he can improve his writing, such as “Add more details from the text to support your claim.” However, those same students and others, shared that although many of their teachers offer them strong feedback, there are a few classes that don’t consistently offer meaningful feedback. One student shared how feedback from her ELA teachers lacks clear next steps. Another student explained feedback from his physics class doesn’t offer the same actionable next steps as in his other classes.

- Throughout classrooms visited, many teachers conferenced or listened in as students worked in groups or pairs. During a tenth-grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) ELA class, the teachers checked for understanding by listening to student discussions and memorializing their responses in a checklist. In addition, the teacher asked for thumbs up or down in order to assure that students comprehended specific sections of the lesson. Students are also given opportunities to peer and self-assess. During a social studies lesson, students presented in groups various examples of how the home front contributed to the battlefront during World War II. As they presented, their peers assessed their presentations and offered each group feedback. However, not all teacher assessment practices displayed a varied use of checks for understanding and use of student self-assessment. For example, during a technology lesson, the teacher asked questions but no other tool was used in order to check for student understanding, thus missing an opportunity to assess and adjust to meet student need.

- Most students shared how they regularly use rubrics in their classes. Feedback on many of the student work products include teachers circling and referencing rubric language through glows and grows. For example, on an Enduring Issues Essay assignment, the teacher commended the student for using a strong analysis and historical details and offered the student next steps that included reminding the student that when constructing a body paragraph, to make sure to always include a topic and a closing sentence. However other examples of feedback simply praise the student by saying “Excellent” and “Good job” and didn’t offer actionable next steps that students can build upon.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum
Rating: Proficient

Findings
Curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (Common Core) and illustrate the integration of instructional shifts, such as gaining context from primary and secondary sources. Horizontal and vertical planning allows teachers to collaborate and develop rigorous tasks for all learners.

Impact
Students have access to curricula that is designed to promote college and career readiness. Academic tasks provide opportunities for all students to demonstrate higher-order thinking across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Instructional units for core content classes are aligned to the Common Core and prepare students for taking Regents exams in several different areas. Teachers create units and tasks linked to a variety of texts to provide content for biology, physical science, social science and math research classes. In addition, curricula for courses such as portfolio art, music, dance, college writing, and English Senior Thesis, as well as for a financial literacy and a physical education leaders program, further infuse college and career readiness content and tasks for all learners. Content for the DaVinci screened arts program, a Mentor Law program and a journalism program also offers students opportunities that are aligned to college and career readiness. Through the DaVinci program students are exposed to the arts that enables them to gain skills that will be valuable in college. The Mentor Law program gives student opportunities for real-world connections to policy and law and lays the ground work for students interested in pursuing law. The journalism program supports and increases student creative writing abilities and prepares them for rigorous writing at the college level.

- Each curricular unit includes a Common Core-aligned rubric for assessing levels of student mastery of content and skills and suggested strategies for all students to have access to curricula and tasks across disciplines. Lesson plans reviewed included a wide variety of scaffolds that will engage all learners in rigorous activities. For example, an Algebra I lesson plan included a section for student misconceptions and the strategies to be implemented should those misconceptions appear during the lesson. A forensic science lesson plan detailed differentiated groups and the specific reasoning behind each group such as those students who require a graphic organizer and the use of transitions and visual support for ELLs. Other tasks for ELLs include writing a thesis essay about domestic violence faced by women, as part of their reflections on class readings, and requiring components such as citing sources. Planning that consistently emphasizes rigor and higher-order thinking such as this was seen across planning documents reviewed.

- Curricular documents reviewed evidenced alignment to the Common Core and integrate instructional shifts. For example, Advance Placement (AP) psychology planning documents asks students to use text-based answers when writing about the treatment of psychological disorders, the assumptions of cognitive therapies, and the various modes of therapy. Lesson plans for these units include student groupings, interdisciplinary connections, and an extension activity to challenge higher-level students. Planning documents for a Spanish lesson stated the domains that were addressed, as well as key essential questions such as “How do we conjugate reflexive verbs into positive and negative commands?” For other courses, there was a mapping of lessons that also included essential questions and alignment to Common Core, and writing prompts that require students to support responses with text-based answers and sources. Also seen were components such as the aim, objectives, student groupings, and interdisciplinary connections which added to the coherency throughout each content area.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best, such as by having opportunities to justify their thinking through discussions.

Impact

Students produce meaningful work products that reflect high levels of thinking, discussion, and student participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Purposeful grouping strategies challenge students in some classes to engage in rigorous activities. During a mixed grade ELA/English as a New Language (ENL) class, students were asked to justify a diagnosis using textual evidence from a primary and secondary source. The lesson involved students determining whether Blanche is mentally ill or not. Students used text-based evidence to support their claims and worked collaboratively with groups of students who shared the same claims. One student shared the argument that Blanche did not have a mental illness but simply a poor past and cited evidence from the text he felt supported his argument. During an AP psychology class, students worked in groups in order to develop their own psychological disorders poster in order to address the question of what therapy would work best for a particular student and why. Students engaged in a gallery walk to read and evaluate their classmate’s posters offering feedback to each group. These structures ensure that students engage in regular discourse that allows them to justify and explain their thinking.

- Examples of student writing evidenced high levels of research, thinking and writing that included academic vocabulary. Examples of student math work shows how students list each step of an equation and justify their answers in written format or by using multiple methods to answer each problem. During a Spanish honors class, students were able to verbalize as well as write in the target language and answered questions about countries they have visited, such as “¿Cuáles son sus deportes?” to which the student responded, “Los deportes de España son futbol y tienen un equipo nacional. También baloncesto es importante.” Throughout classrooms, student’s discussions and work products evidenced the same high level of rigor with opportunities for students to engage in discourse.

- Across classrooms, teachers challenge students to learn new concepts and skills as they work in groups, pairs or independently. During a social studies lesson students worked in collaborative groups in order to present variety of ways that World War II influenced American patriotism. One group cooked and served poor man’s hash which has Spam as its main ingredient. Students verbally explained and wrote down how Spam was first introduced at the start of World War II and that it was a much more affordable substitute for fresh meat for many families suffering from the tragic events of Pearl Harbor. Students evaluated each other’s presentations using a specific criteria that ased the presentation of the dish, its taste, and the explanation of dish. During a trigonometry lesson students worked in groups in order to solve a rational expression. Students clearly articulated their thinking to each other and supported one another in ultimately solving the equation and sharing with the class their step by step process to successfully solve the equation. Students engaged in active collaboration were seen across many of the classrooms visited.
## 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 and staff create a culture of high expectations for teaching and learning across the school. All staff members communicate high expectations to students and partner with families in order to support all students in meeting the expectations.

### Impact

School leaders provide training and there is a sense of mutual accountability for all schoolwide expectations. Effective communication of and support for high expectations results in strong partnerships among staff and families, as well as all students owning their educational experience.

### Supporting Evidence

- High expectations are communicated to all staff through a schoolwide instructional focus on instruction that maximizes student thinking and engagement in learning. Teachers shared how school leaders constantly articulate explicit instructional expectations through memos, bulletins, newsletters and conversations at staff meetings. School leaders support all teachers towards success in meeting or exceeding instructional expectations through school-based professional learning activities including workshops, lesson studies and intervisitations. Professional learning sessions include training in planning and delivering student-centered instruction, using assessment during instruction and effective questioning. Teachers hold each other accountable by sharing and providing each other with PD. One teacher explained how she recently conducted a learning session for her peers on supporting ELLs. According to many teachers, this was a very effective session that offered a lot of tools on how to increase engagement.

- Parents shared their extreme content with the school and the manner in which it consistently communicates and offers them support throughout the school year. All parents explained how they are regularly notified and invited to workshops and conferences, where they receive an overview of curricula and learn about classwork, homework, and graduation requirements for their children. Parents further explained how teachers and school leaders communicate expectations to them through text messages, telephone calls, and the school’s website, as well as through the school’s online grading platform. Parents also shared how through a partnership with the school’s Parent Teacher Association (PTA), the schools presents a multitude of workshops informing families about college trips, financial aid, and requirements for college applications. Some parents serve as volunteers in the school’s college office which allows them to be fully informed about deadlines associated with the college application process and to be able to share those deadlines with other parents regularly. During the meeting with parents, all expressed how “wonderful” the communication is. One parents shared and all agreed that it feels as if they are student here themselves, and “If I hear of something I immediately tell my son to make sure he knows of it.”

- The school has a college office specifically to support all students with the college articulation process which, according to teachers, school leaders, and students, begins the moment students enter ninth grade. Staff and students explained that in this office there are staff members and college advisors specifically there for college purposes, including a designated person whose responsibility it is to handle scholarships and financial aid for all students. Students shared that they know exactly who to go to in order to discuss any part of the college process. One student shared, “There is nothing about the college process that is a surprise. We all know who to go for any part our college future.” This has resulted in a national merit scholarship recipient and four students being accepted to Harvard University. Students also explained how clear all of the requirements for graduation are and that all of their results on Regents exams can also be found on the online program.
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams &amp; Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</table>

Findings
Teachers engage in structured professional collaborations that consistently analyze assessment data and student work products.

Impact
Teacher’s instructional capacity is strengthened and as a result, groups of students are seeing progress towards goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher and school leaders both shared how impactful teacher team work has been on teacher’s instructional capacity. School leaders claim, and evidence supports, that through teacher teams lesson planning coherency has increased as most lessons include a language objective, sections for student choice, and the strategic use of scaffolds. Additionally, teachers explained that they are consistently sharing best practices with each other, which according to school leaders is helping to create strong teachers and improve teaching practices throughout the school. Teachers explained that they regularly visit each other in order to learn from each other and strengthen their craft. Teacher reflections on their instruction and intervention cycles indicate that they are focused on gathering additional data to assess the impact of strategies used to date on school goals and to continue to improve their practice daily.

- Through teacher team meetings, teachers consistently analyze student assessment and classroom data. Teachers regularly review exit tickets in order to gauge student comprehension and plan follow up lessons. Teachers track student progress regularly during lessons by consistently conferencing with students and tracking responses that help teachers adjust future lessons and create groups based on data. For example, during an ICT math lesson, the teacher had students complete a do now activity and used data from that activity to create groups. One specific group was given individualized instruction in order to address the gaps that were identified in the do now assignment. Practices such as these have led to increased mastery for groups of students. For example, on the June 2018 ELA Regents exam 579 out of 666 students mastered the skills around determining word meanings, 533 out of 666 students mastered the skills in the central ideas and informational texts section, and 526 out of 666 students’ mastered skills associated with context and informational texts.

- Teacher meet regularly in grade and department teams in order to develop curricula, design learning objectives, design and adjust assessments, and discuss instructional adjustments to lessons based on assessment results. During the meeting visited, teachers worked to analyze quantitative data in order to monitor progress and determine next steps and an area of focus to support students. Teachers utilized the Looking at Data Protocol and spent ample time describing the data, interpreting the data, reflecting on the data, and implementing tools to be used to adjust instruction and support students. Teachers identified that students were still struggling with transition words specifically during the summary section. Teachers agreed that next steps should include explicit instruction of transitions words, scaffolding a body paragraph into an outline with stems, and using paragraphs of various levels along with a specific checklist for students to use when editing.