Quality Review
Report
2018-2019

Renaissance High School for Musical Theater and the Arts
High school 08X293
3000 East Tremont Avenue
Bronx
NY 10461
Principal: Maria Herrera
Dates of Review:
February 28, 2019 - March 1, 2019
Lead Reviewer: Lenneen Gibson
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

### Instructional Core

<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>1.1 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>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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

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

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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
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<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>Well Developed</td>
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<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>Well Developed</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

School leaders and staff articulate high expectations on instruction and professionalism via the Renaissance Newsletter. Expectations toward college and career readiness are articulated to families through college application workshops and online platforms such as PupilPath and Kinvolved.

Impact

Mutual accountability for expectations on instruction are exemplified through intervisitation. Students are aware of their next educational steps via advisory and enrolling in college level courses.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders articulate clear expectations for instruction and professionalism to the staff via written and verbal structures. The Teacher and Special Education Handbook delineates expectations for instruction such as providing six approaches to co-teaching and unpacking various ways to differentiate instruction. The teacher-created Renaissance Newsletter articulates each department’s accomplishments and goals emphasizing WICOR (writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, reading) in science, Saturday Regents preparation in mathematics, norming of common language in English Language Arts (ELA), and scaffolding questions in Social Studies. Professional development sessions are grounded in the Danielson Framework for Teaching and are tiered for novice and veteran teachers. The professional development plan shows that workshops are categorized in “buckets” of the Danielson components such as using assessment in instruction. Administrators hold teachers accountable for these expectations through the observation process. Teachers hold themselves accountable via their grade team meetings and conducting intervisitations.

- Members of the school community provide ongoing communication to parents about their children’s academic progress. Parents and students have a handbook that articulates the school’s expectations. Parents receive regular communication from teachers via PupilPath, Kinvolved and phone calls. Parents mentioned invitations to workshops on the college application process with one-on-one support, and financial aid workshops. Weekly parent engagement meetings provided parents with academic supports for their child. Parents spoke emotionally of how the school partners with families to encourage individualized programs, college application supports, social emotional supports through Peer Group Connections sessions on growth mindset and fostering organizational and time management skills. Parents stated that their children have flourished academically as a result. Parents mentioned volunteering at the school and being kept abreast of their children’s performance.

- Teachers and other staff have set clear systematic structures such as advisory and college counseling for articulating high expectations leading to college and career readiness. The advisory program has a specific focus for each grade starting with organization, social skills, and independent learning skill expectations. Upper grades engaged in the college application process by learning about the different types of college, applications, and paying for college. Students talked about how advisory has helped in creating action plans to better their grades, remain accountable for their grades, and emphasize the importance of attending college. Students get additional support in the college admission and college planning process by looking into scholarships and analyzing financial aid packages from schools. Students visit college campuses starting in grade nine. Students also have opportunities to take Advanced Placement classes, College Now classes, and in some cases students work at their school. As a result of these practices, students are aware of their next educational steps. At the time of this visit, seventy-five percent of the Class of 2019 are on track to graduate.
Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
Practices such as What am I Looking For (WILF) and clear learning objectives that are scaffolded exemplify the schoolwide beliefs about how students learn best.

Impact
Teaching practices consistently demonstrate the schoolwide beliefs and consistently provide multiple entry points to the curricula; however, there were missed opportunities for strategic provision of multiple entry points and extensions into the curricula so that all students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teacher practices reflected and supported the schoolwide beliefs that students learn best when there are explicit success criteria WILF, clear learning objectives, and students exemplifying the Common Core instructional shift of writing from sources. In a ninth-grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) Global History class, the learning target of the lesson tasked students with investigating the causes for the fall of the Aztec and Inca Empires. Students used varied resources such as laptops, textbooks, and thought partners to investigate the topic. In an Advanced Placement Language and Composition class, students analyzed and discussed the thematic events of the novel *Black Boy* by Richard Wright. Students answered varied prompts such as, “What does Wright’s reaction tell us about his understanding of growing up in the south during the time of Jim Crow?” Students wrote their answers and substantiated them with evidence from the text, thus exemplifying the schoolwide belief system; however, this practice was not evident in the vast majority of classrooms.

- In an Earth Science class, students analyzed the properties of the atmospheric layers. The learning objective and WILF were explicit and required students to distinguish tiers of the atmospheric layers, and analyze the effect of temperature, pressure, and water vapor changes as altitude increases. Using the See, Think, Wonder protocol, students analyzed a graph of the atmospheric layers and noted the differences in the atmospheric pressures in the layers. In an eleventh-grade English Language Arts class, students analyzed and critiqued media in reference to the Little Rock Nine. WILF was displayed and differentiated for English as a New Language students and cited the use of accountable talk stems. Students were observed reading, annotating, and citing evidence from the text on their scaffolds.

- In an ICT United States History class, the WILF was displayed and indicated that students were required to examine how nativist feelings impacted the U.S. government’s immigration policies. Students used a differentiated note catcher and differentiated questions for student groups with sentence starters. An example of a prompt was “Which foreign regions were most impacted by the limits created by the Quota Acts of the 1920s? Justify your answer with a detail from the chart.” Students were observed writing evidence from a video viewed and source documents. This practice was evident in most classes but not in the vast majority of classrooms.
Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula have clear success criteria and are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards with the integration of citing textual evidence as the instructional shift of focus. Curricular documents are refined using student data.

Impact

Curricular documents embed the instructional shifts of annotation and WICOR (writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, reading) strategies resulting in coherence across grades and subject areas, thus ensuring curricula and tasks can be accessed by all learners thus supporting cognitive engagement.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers ensure that across content areas, curricular documents make clear what is needed to attain the enduring understandings and key skills. Success criteria also referred to as WILF are articulated in all lesson plans across the content areas. Lesson plans showed alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards with a focus on citing strong textual evidence and determining the central theme. Common elements among the lesson plans included learning objectives, differentiated questions, and assessment plans. As writing across the curriculum is a focus in this school, the Annotation Practices document delineated strategies for annotation across the content areas. For example, in math placing a box around number and units, circling symbols; in science, key words are underlined, brackets are placed around the focus of each question and synonyms are written to support vocabulary. Similarly, a Literary Action plan articulated the needed strategies to deconstruct complex texts through the WICOR strategy embedded across content areas. These practices have resulted in coherence in curricular documents and the promotion of college and career readiness.

- Curricula include appropriate scaffolds and differentiation strategies to engage students and advance them through the content. A science lesson plan indicated differentiation in the difficulty of questions posed to students and the inclusion of differentiated scaffolds to enable students to analyze waves. Students were grouped by their algebraic skills. An Algebra I lesson plan noted specific modifications for individual students such as one-on-one support, resources such as Spanish-to-English dictionaries, guided questions, and frequent check-ins with the teacher, or small group instruction. These strategies ensured that all students have access to the curricula.

- An ELA lesson plan on the choices made towards the media in reference to the Little Rock Nine showed differentiation of skills for the various students based on their language progressions throughout the lesson plan. For example, in the do now portion of the lesson plan, English Language Learner (ELL) students who are transitioning were provided sentence starters, word banks, and rephrasing options. Students who are expanding received examples as a model for their work. Additionally, in ELA, unit plans showed a reflection and revision section of changes made to the unit plans over the years. In a United States History lesson plan, students were grouped based on assessment data. Additionally, Regents passages were modified, and specific groups received differentiated guided questions and scaffolds.
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

Teachers analyze Regents and Performance Series data to inform their practice. Teachers check for understanding during instruction via entry quizzes and questioning to gauge student comprehension of concepts.

Impact

Teachers check for understanding and adjust lessons in the moment to ensure all students’ learning needs are addressed. Assessment data is analyzed to inform curricular and instructional decisions.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers monitor student learning in the lesson by checking for understanding and making in-the-moment adjustments to the lesson to meet all students' learning needs. In an ICT Algebra I class, students analyzed the average rate of change through different representations. Students worked on the Agile computer program which gauges students' prior knowledge. Based on the student results, small group instruction ensued, and students received differentiated instruction on the content. Similarly, in a ninth-grade ICT Global History class, students completed an entry quiz on the Age of Globalization, and the Fall of the Aztec and Inca Empires. The teacher went over the quiz with the students and noted the misconceptions and addressed them, thus meeting the learning needs of all students.

- In a Physics class, the teacher checked for understanding by reviewing the previous day’s exit ticket and highlighted the students' misconceptions. Students then engaged in peer- and self-assessment by interpreting graphs of waves for their amplitude, period, frequency, and wavelength. In an Earth Science class, students analyzed the layers of the atmosphere. The teacher checked for understanding by asking probing questions such as “Do you remember what a sea level is?” “What is happening at each level?” The teacher conducted a mid-lesson interruption by reminding students to refer back to their reference tables for additional support. In some classes, there were missed opportunities for students to engage in peer- and self-assessment.

- Teachers analyze assessment data to glean information on students' performance and learning needs, while adjusting the curricula and instruction. Teachers administered the Performance Series assessments to all students to obtain their Lexile levels. This data informed unit mapping in ELA and tiered reading assignments for students. Mathematics teachers analyzed the previous year’s Geometry Regents data and made modifications to the scope and sequence of the Geometry curriculum. Teachers shifted, added or omitted lessons within the curriculum. Similarly, in Global History, teachers have adjusted the Global History 3 and 4 course calendar based on data from classroom instruction. The calendar chronicles the content and skills that students need reinforcement in and the adjustments made to the calendar as a result. Lastly, teachers across the content areas have analyzed the previous year’s Regents results and chronicled by department an action plan to adjust curricula. In ELA, the inclusion of more complex texts for reading, and the need to teach paraphrasing resulted from the data analysis.
Additional Finding

<table>
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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths, challenges and next steps that are aligned to the school's instructional focus of writing across the curriculum. School leaders utilize teacher observation data to provide tiered professional development sessions.

Impact

Teacher feedback is aligned to their professional goals and promotes professional growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers receive feedback that captures their strengths, areas of challenge, and next steps in alignment with their professional goals in order to promote growth and reflection about their craft. Observation reports showed alignment to the school instructional focus of writing across the curriculum. A review of observation reports recalled the prior feedback that cited the need for the learning target to be visible so that students can self-assess. This was in alignment with the teacher’s goal of deepening in class assessments. The next steps recommended the need to build in assessment opportunities that garners data in the moment that can be used to inform instruction. This feedback is aligned to the assessment in instruction component of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Another observation report cited the prior feedback which detailed the need for opportunities for students to seek out the instructor's assistance during the period. The following observation commended the teacher for their questioning and discussion techniques amongst the students and assessment of student learning in the moment. The next steps expressed the need for more students to participate in the discussion and reading. This feedback is in alignment with the teacher’s goal of incorporating more student-to-student discussion. As a result of the feedback, the 2017-18 Measures of Teacher Practice shows that teachers were one-hundred percent Effective.

- Teachers receive non-evaluative feedback in the form of glows and grows. The trends noted in the glows were classroom environment, student engagement, and planning and preparation. The trends observed in the communication that articulated the grows cited next steps for student engagement, and assessment in instruction. For example, next steps to maximize student engagement mentioned the need for students to build upon their answers by incorporating accountable talk stems. Another recommendation stated the need to change the seating arrangement in order to maximize student engagement. As a result of the feedback and teacher support, at the time of the visit, the Measures of Teacher Practice for 2018-19 shows that ninety percent of the teachers are Effective.

- Teacher observation data is used to inform differentiated professional development which is referred to as buckets. Currently in the third year of the professional development plan, the focus is to enrich and expand this area by incorporating action research. Within the buckets there is alignment to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and a series of workshops aligned to the Danielson component of using assessment in instruction. The workshops are also tiered for new teachers and is presented via lunch and learn sessions such as “Engaging students through critical friends.” Succession planning includes an understanding of a path to leadership. This pathway progresses from teacher, team leader, dean, and assistant principal.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

Teachers are engaged in inquiry work on grade teams that analyze student work using the Analyzing Student Work Protocol. Distributed leadership practices such as Model Teacher, Grade Leaders, and a Peer Collaborative Teacher are embedded in the school.

Impact

Model Teachers, Grade Leaders, and Peer Collaborative Teachers affect student learning across the school by sharing best teaching practices with their colleagues. The work of grade teams has resulted in the embedding of literacy across the curriculum and has improved teacher instructional capacity.

Supporting Evidence

- An ELA teacher team used the Analyzing Student Work Protocol to analyze ninth-grade student work samples on poem interpretations. The teachers noticed that students connected the evidence and analysis to their poem and used literary terms but needed support in the analysis. The teachers devised next steps such as structuring guided groups on gathering evidence from texts, planned to provide guided questions when analyzing the poem, and devised ways to question the author's intention in the poem. Similarly, the teachers looked at grade-ten student writing responses to a prompt from the text *Night*. Teachers noticed that students used transition words in their writing, understood the depth of analysis of the task, and demonstrated sequencing in their writing. However, the teachers noted that the English as a New Language students needed structures such as exemplars for their writing. As a result of their collaboration, the ELA team developed an argumentative essay graphic organizer and an evidence tracker that is used across the grades. Additionally, teachers intervisit with one another to observe best practices. Lastly, the ELA team developed a department-leveled skills guidance document in reading, writing, listening, speaking and literary terms across the grades that delineated the focus skills for each grade.

- A review of teacher team notes showed that they utilized a modified *Atlas* protocol to look at student work. The team sought to assess the clarity of a math task that infused the “3pi” writing strategy that supports annotation. The teachers reviewed student work and assessed the students’ capability to accomplish the task. Students followed the prompts, justified their work in their notes, and used academic language. Students showed difficulty interpreting their process for solving the problems. The instructional implications cited the need to modify the “3pi” strategy to ensure that students understand the problem-solving process. Similarly, a science teacher team analyzed student work to discern if students used evidence and reasoning to substantiate their answers. An evidence and reasoning template was created to support the students in applying the appropriate evidence and reasoning to their problem.

- Distributed leadership practices are embedded in the school so that teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school. Teachers serve in the role of Model Teacher, Peer Collaborative Teacher (PCT) and Team leaders. The Model Teacher works with novice teachers to support their instructional practice and the PCT’s classroom serves as a lab site for teachers to come and observe best practices and new strategies. The team leaders work with teachers to analyze schoolwide data and student work within their respective departments. The team leaders serve as liaisons between the extended cabinet and the teachers to share the work of the teams to administration.