

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Victory Collegiate High School

K576

**6565 Flatlands Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11236**

Principal: Marcel D. Deans

**Dates of review: May 8 - 9, 2012
Lead Reviewer: Beverly A. Wilkins**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Victory Collegiate High School is a high school with 318 students from grade nine through grade twelve. The school population comprises 89% Black, 8% Hispanic, and 2% White and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 92.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well-developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leadership skillfully manages resources to reflect the school's priorities, amply supporting the drive towards higher standards for students. (1.3)
 - To support the school's instructional goals of effective curriculum planning and refinement of collaborative inquiry work, grade teams meet once a week for "Kid Talk" coupled with content cluster team meetings every day. As a result, teacher teams design curriculum embedded with real world learning experiences. For example, ninth grade students explore urban revitalization, which produces on site research and analyses of a Brooklyn neighborhood, development of an inventive plan based on actual assessment of demographics and need, construction of models, and presentation of culminating projects. One student described this work as a "break away from the usual curriculum allowing students to be creative and teach each other." Thus, optimal use of student and teacher time and consolidation of materials and resources support Intensives, an innovative teacher-designed curriculum, aligned with the school's priority of high quality student engagements.
 - Re-emphasized and validated, as central importance to the school is accountability for student progress evidenced in teacher assignments and student programming. Scrutiny of cohort performance leads to particular teachers advancing to the next grade level with cohorts of students. Hence, the practice of holding all school members accountable to the school's guiding principle of "these are our kids" engenders positive shifts in student performance that result in a greater number of students with disabilities passing advance math courses as well as on-target credit accumulation for a majority of ninth and tenth graders.
- The entire school community demonstrates a culture of mutual respect that inspires commitment to shared values and genuine caring that motivates student achievement and personal growth. (1.4)
 - Teachers and school leadership demonstrate an exceptional level of knowledge of their students undergirded by a strong advisory program. Therefore, students express acceptance of responsibility to themselves and to the community. Thus, P.U.R.P.O.S.E, an acronym for seven core school values, sets the tone for a school environment where students eagerly express pride and comfort in the belief that within four years they will enter college because as stated by the principal, "Failure is not an option." Consequently, weekly individual and group advisory sessions, personalized interventions and daily informal check-ins with students make them secure in their learning. Adults show sincere concern about personal and school issues that may impede success. As a result, parents, students and teachers alike speak positively of the small family-like atmosphere, commenting on a caring community in which decreases in student infractions are a result of personal and academic growth.

- Students are highly motivated to succeed; therefore, they invest in their learning by taking ownership for success. This is evident in advanced Regents coursework and in due diligence to meeting credit recovery requirements. Similarly, the school's expectations of students as reflective practitioners produce student-led quarterly conferences with parents in order to share self-assessments of their overall scholastic strengths. With teacher and parental support, students develop action plans for meeting intended personal and academic goals. In addition, students participate on the School Leadership Team, empower student government and are vocal at Town Hall meetings. Thus, student opinion on the School Survey leveraged the decision to display college acceptance letters and institute Student of the Week in order to exemplify the school's high regard for scholastic achievement.
- School leaders review data that guides the identification of overall school strengths and areas in need of improvement, resulting in adjustments to practice that support increased performance and progress. (2.1)
 - School leaders cull and triangulate an arsenal of school-level data to capture a wide-ranging view of the school that clearly identifies areas of strengths and needs. ARIS Progress Tracker, Regents Competency High School Tests, attendance, scholarship reports, PSAT and SAT results, college readiness indicators, New York City Progress Report data, Learning Rounds observations, student referral rates, and Online Occurrence Report System data analysis lead to next step implications that are shared with staff. Due to this deep inspection, shifts in teaching occur providing all students, particularly English language learners and Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE), with additional scaffolded support. Hence, over 80% of students achieve passing rates on the US History and Integrated Algebra Regents.
 - Disparities between courses and Regents pass rates, gaps in item analysis and periodic assessment performance, student work and coaches' notes result in school leaders working alongside teachers to develop teaching strategies and revise unit assessments. In turn, analytical cognition tasks strengthen students' capacity to read, think and express themselves at higher levels of proficiency. Thus, adjustments to practice catapult progress for individual and groups of students leading to the 81% four-year graduation rate in June 2011.
- Teams of teachers routinely analyze summative information and create thoughtful formative assessments in order to track student progress and make tactical adjustments to instruction. (2.2)
 - Content cluster teams utilize quizzes, mock Regents, exit slips, student self- assessments and class and homework assignments to systemically examine and reflect on the impact of instruction. Currently, Understanding by Design's backward planning is the bedrock of curriculum mapping, leading teachers to align assessments to key areas of deficit such as vocabulary development, number sense and expository writing. Subsequently, a primary focus of the school is to "move from assessments that determine which students failed to learn by a deadline to assessments that identify students who need additional time and

support." This instructional platform results in teachers making hypotheses about student learning and adjusting their practice to incorporate assessment during instruction. This deliberate work results in assessment driven instruction leading to multiple credit recovery models, focus groups during Intensives, afterschool tutorials, Saturday Academy and an Achievement Via Individual Determination program. As a result, students remain on track to graduation.

- A clear set of data driven goals, supported by the entire school community, accelerate student learning. (3.1)
 - The Comprehensive Educational Plan, Principal Performance Review objectives and school-wide instructional goals reflect annual and interim benchmarks supported by action plans for grade 9 through 12. A needs assessment driven by the New York City Progress Report, past Quality Review and State accountability data result in interconnected plans that improve students' ability to graduate, attain mastery levels of sciences and be successful after high school. In addition, databased goals serve as a framework for inquiry work and curriculum writing. All stakeholders are involved in creating Victory Individualized Graduation plans, resulting in 90% of tenth graders and 85% of eleventh graders meeting credit accumulation targets.
 - As a result of vetting goals at School Leadership Team meetings and with the school's parent leaders, the entire school community endorses the direction of the school and hold themselves accountable for success. Parents report college bound goals compel them to take advantage of the assistance the school provides for completing financial aid applications. Teachers and students work in tandem to closely monitor and refine achievement goals. Thus, buy-in of all stakeholders furthers attainment of annual and interim goals.
- A variety of feedback structures for teachers elevates expectations of practice with a clear focus on improving instruction. (4.1)
 - A culture exists where instructional protocols result in all energies being directed at improving instruction and achievement. Hence, school leaders conduct weekly formal and formative observations providing supervisory and collegial feedback to teachers within two domains of the Danielson's framework: questioning and discussion techniques as well as using assessment in instruction. As a result, Learning Rounds, Tenure Academy, Opportunity to Learn, and Observation 360 help all teachers gauge where they are in their practice in order to become better teachers. This is evident in teachers' support of each other's professional growth such as co-teaching with teachers new to the professional and cluster leaders serving as mentors to those developing their craft. Hence, effective sharing of best practice leads to improved chemistry, physics, and integrated algebra coursework.
- The school maintains internal and external supports that have a positive impact on students' social-emotional and academic development, ensuring post-secondary readiness. (4.4)

- The Culture Office is the "heart and soul" of the school and where advisory and guidance address key areas of student academic and social success. The value placed on Respect for All training is evident in each faculty members' adoption of 10 - 12 students for whom they provide ongoing social-emotional and academic support, enabling a culture of mutual respect and productivity. Consequently, work around character development, habits of mind and college exploration results in a school community that celebrates students' personal and academic achievements.
- A clear pathway to postsecondary opportunities fuels internal and external partnerships. Executive Internships provide seniors in good standing with real life work experiences in fields of interest and need. In addition, through established partnerships with the National Honor Society, Kaplan, Educators for Social Responsibility, the Hero Foundation, prestigious higher education institutions and community-based organizations, students develop the ability and desire to succeed. Consequently, there is a high number of students applying for and receiving acceptance into colleges and universities.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop rigorous curriculum that engenders higher order thinking for all students. (1.1)
 - The school aligns its curricula with State standards and broadens its work of raising the level of higher order thinking by making shifts in content to emphasize Common Core Learning Standards and key understandings across all grades and subjects. Thus, students profess they are being prepared for college. However, the use of the Depth of Knowledge matrix across the school has not yet matured. Therefore, instruction does not consistently advance higher order thinking similar to that observed in an eleventh grade Trigonometry class. As a result, not all lessons suitably challenge all learners.
- Strengthen classroom practices in order to maximize learning opportunities, which consistently stimulate rich discussion. (1.2)
 - Evident in all classrooms, the school has adopted the jigsaw model among its instructional beliefs about how students learn best. Hence, students work on assigned group tasks at their level of ability and interest to facilitate and share responsibility for learning. However, lessons observed did not reveal varied learning aids for the diversity among learners. In addition, teacher and student questioning techniques stimulate only general levels of student thinking and participation, which hampers accelerated growth.
- Fortify teachers' responses to all student work to reflect guiding comments that convey clear learning steps relative to level of performance. (3.3)
 - Student work is available in well-organized folders and academic portfolio assessments compile and celebrate students' best efforts and inform instruction, but needed adjustments are not communicated in written form

on student work products. Therefore, not all student work provides feedback for students and families to assess mastery of learning expectations.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Victory Collegiate High School	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score				X
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			X	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			X	
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?				X
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?				X
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?				X
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?				X
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?			X	
Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?				X
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?				X
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?				X

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?				X			
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?				X			
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?				X			
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, guidance/advisement support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X			
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?			X				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?				X			
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?				X			
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?				X			
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed