

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Cypress Hills Collegiate Prep

K659

**99 Jamaica Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11208**

Principal: Alexander Maysonet

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Lead Reviewer: Simeon Stolzberg

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Cypress Hills Collegiate Prep is a high school with 405 students from 9th through 12th grade. The school population comprises 17% Black, 72% Hispanic, 2% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 80%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school marshals and organizes its resources to create an academic program that meets students' learning needs. (1.3)
 - The use of resources and organizational decisions are well aligned to the school's instructional goals. School leaders have deliberately hired additional staff in order to support smaller class sizes. The school also hires consultants to provide targeted support aligned to priorities, such as Aussies who support implementation of Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) tasks and Cambridge consultants who assist with curriculum development. They have also acquired supplemental programs such as Achieve 3000 and Rosetta Stone to provide supports for struggling students, including English language learners. As a result, 82% of the 2008 English language learner graduation cohort was on track to earn 10 credits by June.
 - Staff and student time is structured to provide teacher teams with opportunities to plan and implement engaging and effective instruction. Programming reflects the school's belief in immersion and inclusion, with creative scheduling that includes extended periods for critical courses. Students travel together in heterogeneous cohorts and the schedule allows students to take needed classes outside of their cohort as needed. Grade and content teams are provided with weekly common time for collaborative planning where they review data and plan lessons. In addition, using the school-based option (SBO) the staff meets weekly and utilizes Critical Friends protocols to evaluate student and staff work; this analysis informs curriculum revisions and modification of instruction to raise student achievement as evidenced by gains on interim assessments.
- The school regularly assesses student performance to inform review and revision of school improvement strategies. (2.1)
 - The school has developed its own interim assessments that are administered four times per year. The school's leadership team regularly examines credit accumulation, Regents pass rate and interim assessment data using color-coded spreadsheets to evaluate the performance of different types of students, including the lowest one-third, English language learners and students with disabilities. The results of these analyses inform curriculum decisions, such as selection of instructional materials, like online programs, and professional development priorities such as questioning and feedback techniques.
 - School leaders conduct regular observations of classroom instruction using a protocol that focuses on implementation of school-wide priorities in teacher practice. For example, school leaders use observation and student performance data to evaluate individual teachers as well as examine school-wide adoption of differentiation, Depth of Knowledge, Universal Design for Learning, and Understanding By Design, leading to very specific, actionable feedback.
- The school monitors classroom teaching and analyzes student performance to inform and improve instructional practices. (4.1)

- School leaders introduced the Danielson Framework for Effective Teaching at the beginning of the year. The principal and two assistant principals also conduct regular classroom visits using an Effective Classroom Observation tool based on Universal Design for Learning, which focuses on student work product and learning strategies. Feedback to teachers has emphasized the quality of questioning techniques, feedback to students and ongoing assessment. All teachers participate in inter-visitations using a school-developed reflection and feedback form. New teachers are provided with veteran mentors. School leaders have used data collected from classroom observations to inform professional development and strategically schedule teachers where they will best meet the needs of students. Teacher evaluation is also used to hold teachers accountable for student achievement; teachers have been rated unsatisfactory who do not perform up to expectations.
- The school utilizes a range of supports to help students succeed in school and prepare students for post-secondary success. (4.4)
 - The school has a partnership with the National Council of La Raza that has supported staff development, including opportunities for leadership. A dynamic Student Support Center sponsored by the Cypress Hills Development Corporation provides the students of all schools in the building with guidance, support and resources to prepare for and enter college. Its staff is highly regarded by students and school leaders. The College Now program also provides opportunities for college level instruction. A health center provides access to significant physical and mental health resources and two counselors each focus on two grades. The school is part of the Mayor's Partnership with Children pilot initiative, which focuses on improving student attendance. The school's advisory program provides a consistent adult relationship by looping over four years. Finally, the schools in the building pooled their resources to hire a campus manager who coordinates extracurricular activities. The school regards this range of supports and programs as critical to improving student performance, which is evident in students' interim assessment results, credit accumulation and personal development.
- The school uses opportunities for leadership and collaboration to focus developing strategies that can lead to improved student learning. (4.2)
 - All teachers are engaged in structured professional collaboration on teams that use an inquiry approach. Both grade teams and content teams are provided with weekly common planning time for collaborative planning. Explicit protocols are used to regularly examine student work and teacher lessons and curriculum. Faculty meet monthly using a Critical Friends protocol that encourages supportive and at the same time critical feedback to help teachers improve their practice. As a result of this inquiry work, the faculty continues to refine its curriculum and assessments, select more effective instructional material, and design differentiated lessons to improve student performance.
 - The school's leadership team, comprised of both school leaders and teacher team leaders, meets weekly to review student performance data and discuss implementation of the school's improvement strategies. Team leaders are empowered to guide teachers in inquiry work and communicate concerns to the administration. In addition, teachers take some responsibility for leading professional development sessions and participate in peer observations and feedback. The school leader has nominated a number of teachers for leadership development opportunities, some of whom have gone on to become school leaders themselves. As a result of these leadership opportunities, teachers have contributed to key

decisions about curriculum and instructional practices, such as implementation of Depth of Knowledge and Universal Design for Learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure rigorous and engaging curriculum and academic tasks are aligned to state standards across all subjects and grades and promote post-secondary readiness. (1.1)
 - The school began work on curriculum mapping last year with the identification of power standards, which are now being adapted to the CCLS. Curriculum maps are organized by week and based on Understanding By Design (UBD) principles. An Aussie consultant has been working with teachers on development of CCLS tasks in English language arts and mathematics. In addition, the school has been working with Queens College to refine its social studies curriculum. The quality of maps varied, with some providing detailed information that would be useful for planning while others repeated the same general statements each week. Some curriculum did not consistently emphasize rigorous tasks and higher order thinking skills. In some classes visited, students grappled with challenging and rigorous instructional materials such as a class using a CUNY curriculum that provided demanding texts, a hands-on science lab exploring radioactive decay, and literature such as a novel by Kurt Vonnegut. In other classes there was evidence of students struggling to engage with material or understand the task as well as students who appeared bored and disengaged as a result of low-level materials. As a result, the school is missing opportunities to engage students and ultimately raise their achievement levels.
- Ensure the delivery of rigorous instruction that consistently engages students in learning activities that promote high levels of thinking and participation by all students. (1.2)
 - In some observed classes teachers had prepared lessons that engaged students in complex learning activities. For example, in a Global Studies class students participated in a simulation that required groups to form alliances based on analyzing data about each groups strengths and weaknesses. In a math class students actively participated in a hands-on lab regarding radioactive decay. In some classes teachers maintained an effective pace and used cold calling to keep all students actively focused on the lesson. In other classes students were not fully engaged in the learning activities or allowed other students in small groups to do the majority of work. Not all teachers noted or effectively redirected students who were not on task, despite often having more than one adult in the room. It was also not evident that cooperative learning was being maximized. For example, in one class students were formed into groups and after a long set of instructions were still not clear on how to do the activity. In other classes students were placed in small groups but all working on the same problems, despite various levels of conceptual understanding and procedural skills. As a result, students are not performing at the highest levels possible as evidenced by Regents and credit data.
- Enhance the collection and analysis of assessment data to inform adjustments to instruction at the team and classroom level. (2.2)
 - Teams of teachers and individual teachers supplement summative data analysis by examining periodic and classroom level assessment data to identify strengths and needs of student subgroups. Grade and content teams meet weekly and use protocols to examine student work and performance data. Interim assessment data is disaggregated and regular attention is paid to the lowest one-third of students, students with disabilities and English language learners. In addition, teachers

- participate in goal setting exercises using interim assessment results, which is intended to drive adaptation of instructional strategies. School leaders have provided training in the use of data; however, the school has a large number of new teachers and teacher teams are in different stages of coherence and effectiveness in using data. As a result, teachers are not consistently using data to improve instruction and effectively impact individual students.
- Across classrooms, teacher assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of on-going checks for understanding and student self-assessment. Teachers reportedly use exit tickets frequently to gauge achievement of lesson objectives. In addition, students noted that rubrics are provided with assignments and they use them to understand expectations and assess their own performance against clear standards. Nevertheless, during classroom observations it was not apparent that teachers effectively monitored student understanding. Some teachers effectively circulated among students and provided targeted assistance based on identified need. While questioning techniques such as cold-calling and observation of student work were employed, in a number of classes it was clear that some students were not grasping concepts or skills under discussion as teachers moved on through the lesson. As a result, instruction is not consistently adapted to meet the needs of all students.
 - Enhance the collaborative analysis of data to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups and students in need of additional support. (3.2)
 - The school has a goal-setting process using interim assessment data and regular checks of credit accumulation and Regents performance. For example, in Spanish students had individualized goals based on their proficiency levels. Individual teachers and teacher teams use data to identify which students need additional supports and set learning goals for those students. Results are used to identify individual students who need additional interventions, such as Achievement 3000 or Regents prep classes. Students who have not passed a class consequently may be placed in a class outside that of their cohort. School leaders and teams focus on the lowest one-third of students and regularly review their performance. While documentary evidence such as goals and protocols indicate the use of data, observed meetings to discuss students appeared to focus on anecdotal information rather than actual performance results. For example, in a Kid Talk meeting with a parent and her sons, actual attendance, credit and Regents data was not utilized. Consequently, the school is not systematically analyzing data to most effectively target supports to students.
 - Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies. (5.4)
 - School leaders are developing systems to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of leadership development and teacher teams. School leaders indicated their belief in distributed leadership and allow teachers to take leading roles in professional development and teamwork. Teacher teams were described as improving as a result of strategic appointment of team leaders and the use of protocols. The school has created a leadership team that includes both school administrators and teacher team leaders; it meets weekly and these discussions are the primary means of monitoring and evaluating teacher team effectiveness. School leaders are beginning to focus on student performance data in their assessment of team efficacy. With regards to leadership development, the school's partner La Raza has previously provided significant leadership support, including professional development for

school leaders and opportunities to observe other schools. However, the school's network has experienced turnover and has not provided consistent support; consequently the school has relied on its partners and own expertise to develop and evaluate leadership opportunities.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Cypress Hills Collegiate Prep	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