

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**W.H. Maxwell Career and Technical Education High
School**

**High School K660
154 Pennsylvania Ave
Brooklyn
NY 11207**

Principal: Jocelyn Badette

Dates of review: November 9 - 10, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Doug Knecht

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

W. H. Maxwell Career and Technical Education (CTE) School is a high school with 606 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 72% Black, 26% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 30% of the students enrolled and girls account for 70%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 76.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leadership continues to effectively utilize budget, technology resources, and teacher time to improve student outcomes.
 - Investments in technology for the lower grades and on-going support for high quality career and technical education for all students, which are aligned to the school's instructional goals, have hooked many students' interest. Specifically, 9th and 10th graders are more focused as evidenced by their habitual use of laptop computers and online wiki sites as tools to support their learning needs. Students also express being motivated by work-force internships and the various pathways to authentic career opportunities after graduation.
 - Teacher teams meet multiple times per week and are cross-disciplinary, including core subject teachers, Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers, guidance counselors, special education and English as Second Language teachers. As a result, all teachers are regularly discussing the needs of individual and groups of students, which has been a central aspect of the school's overall improvement in standardized test and graduation outcomes.
- A relentless examination of student and school data has led to course corrections and greater attainment for a range of learners, especially students with disabilities.
 - An intensive campaign to target previously underachieving subgroups of students, as evident in an analysis of the school-wide data, has resulted in more exposure in classrooms to content teachers for students with individualized education plans and dramatic test score gains, such as increases from 29% Math Regents Competency Test pass rate in 2009 to 75% in 2011, and from 21% Living Environment Regents pass rate in 2010 to 53% in 2011.
 - The use of large-bore data trends has led to effective alterations in course construction in various disciplines. For example, student struggles in science and history Regents tests have been ameliorated to a large extent by stretching the biological science content over two years and condensing the global history content into one year. Consequently, 54% of students passed the Global History Regents in 2011 as compared to 25% in 2010.
- A genuine dialogue with students, and the commitment on the part of staff and leadership to know every child well, fosters student participation and shapes key elements of the safe and supportive school culture.
 - Teachers, parents, and students are excited to be part of the school's transformation into one in which college-readiness is an over-arching goal. Strong systems of information exchange, from administrative committees to sharing experiences with students in staff teams, surface and socialize the needs of every adolescent and their families, thus

facilitating the school's ability to make this goal a reality for increasingly more students.

- Students take a lead in key school activities, such as peer mediation, in which trained senior year students are at-the-ready outside classrooms to help resolve low-level student conflicts, thus reducing the amount of instructional time that is lost due to behavioral problems. Additionally, CTE programs like "HOSA" foster student esteem by having them represent the school in health occupation conferences and competitions locally and across the state.
- School leaders regularly visit classrooms to deliver formative feedback using Danielson's Framework for Teaching, and this information is collected in a shared tool to inform staffing support decisions.
 - Assistant Principals are implementing a schedule of frequent, short, class visits to all their teachers, as well as time for formal observations, and the Principal shadows the visits weekly in a rotating fashion. All teachers are therefore receiving regular feedback on their practice with a common research-based rubric. In general, teachers have a positive attitude about this increased time on instructional improvement that is resulting in more focus on individual's professional growth needs.
 - The school leadership and its network support team have created an innovative tool to collect and assess the feedback the administration provides teachers. As a result of an initial analysis of this data, decisions to allocate resources and instructional supports to targeted staff members are being made.
- Routine celebrations and incentives ensure that students feel deeply supported by the adults in the school community and are on track to graduate.
 - Students resoundingly laud the self-less principal, whom they say is "magnificent" and "always keeps you on point", and the tireless staff. Celebrations of student success are perpetual and students remark that incentives make a difference. Evidence of attendance rate increases, from 72% in 2009 to 77% in 2011, supports their perception. Career internships and college partnerships have also solidified the connection between academics and socio-emotional development.

What the school needs to improve

- Further leverage the Common Core standards to articulate key college-ready skills for all students, thus integrating more challenging academic tasks into the curriculum across grades and disciplines.
 - Scope and sequences posted in classrooms are co-created among teachers and integrate language of the Common Core standards. However, artifacts and interviews of students and teachers indicate that: key skills are not fully identified – even within the same discipline; these curriculum plans are not always adhered to; and tasks do not require frequent or rigorous analysis, writing, and reading across classes.

Subsequently, numerous students are not being challenged to the degree that they can be by assignments, and some articulate concern that they will not be able to meet the expectations of reading and writing after graduation, particularly in college.

- Harness the infusion of technology into classrooms so that it not only captures students' attention but consistently engages them in high levels of thinking, discussion, and opportunities to learn at their own pace.
 - The presence of technology across classrooms has yielded routine use of Smart Boards, laptops, and online wiki sites created by vendors and teachers, but only a few examples of instruction that is truly a "blended" learning experience for students that individualizes learning pathways. Students remark that they prefer classes that work this way, and both educators and learners are excited by the potential of the technology to transform their everyday learning experiences. However, the lack of consistent differentiated learning opportunities at this point is still limiting academic growth for all students.
 - Lessons typically have clear objectives and opportunities for students to participate in group work or lively discussions. Student assignments, work products and exchanges, though, do not regularly evidence extended thinking or require building off the thoughts of others'. As a result, student learning often remains at the level of searching for the "right" short-recall and conceptual answers, or offering opinions that are not sufficiently substantiated with support from texts.
- Deepen and share the understanding of effective instruction for teachers and school leaders through adult learning opportunities that result in more coherent and challenging curriculum and classroom experiences for students.
 - Although teachers regularly receive feedback and opportunities for voluntary professional development sessions, the results of these investments have yet to produce a common understanding of rigorous curriculum and instruction that aligns to the expectations of college-readiness, inclusive of some instructional leaders of the school. Consequently, there are limits to the impact of individualized feedback to teachers regarding instructional improvement.
 - Professional development has been offered in the use of technology and differentiation, the goal of which is to engage and challenge more students. At this point, while these sessions have clearly changed teachers' thinking and approach, the impact on the depth and diversity of the tasks in which students are engaged is not yet consistently apparent across classes. Thus, learners are not typically accountable for thinking as deeply and writing as often as they are in a few stellar cases.
- Improve teacher team practices of looking at student work and data through structured protocols that are facilitated by various team members so that timely instructional next steps and leadership skills are developed.
 - Administrators and teachers are on the same page in terms of collaborative analysis of student work and data during teacher meetings: the goal is to reflect on the quality of teacher-made tasks and create

interventions for selected students. However, the ability to productively use protocols to do so is uneven, and, as a result, teacher team meetings, though frequent, vary in quality and impact with regards to offering next steps for teachers to guide their classroom practice.

- Leadership of the teacher teams is in the hands of department leaders. Teachers express a lack of clarity, and a few of them have a lack of confidence, regarding their role on the team and the purpose of the meetings; for example, some do not see the relevance of looking at work samples for students who are not in their class rosters or disciplines. Therefore, these teachers' capacities are not fully engaged in, or developed by, the process.
- Ensure that the college-prep expectations of the Common Core influence action planning for the multi-year school goal-setting process and benchmarking success of teacher teams to increase student achievement.
 - School leaders have a rough list of goals and data sources that span five years ahead. And, while rhetoric and actual manifestations of the Common Core standards are clearly being integrated into the day-to-day functioning of the school, the long-term and annual plans do not yet concretely capture these aspirations. Similarly, teacher teams do not consistently have clear long-term and annual goals for targeted students, or groups of students, they are focusing on. For those teacher team goals that do exist, alignment to college-readiness expectations is developing. In total, this lack of articulation to the rigors of postsecondary readiness is inhibiting all constituents in knowing their important roles in moving the students forward in the direction of college as well as career prep. Parents and ninth and tenth graders in particular attest to this fact, which is also evidenced in college readiness skills data that shows 1.3% of students meeting the CUNY criteria for qualifying out of remediation.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: W.H. Maxwell CTE 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