

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

High School For Language and Diplomacy

**High School M399
40 IRVING PLACE
New York, NY 10003**

Principal: SANTIAGO MAYOL

Dates of review: February 2 - 3, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Tamika Matheson

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

THE HIGH SCHOOL FOR LANGUAGE AND DIPLOMACY is a High school with 160 students from grade 9 through grade 11 . The school population comprises 16% Black, 37% Hispanic, 4% White, and 43% Asian students. The student body includes 34% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 90.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is Proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty effectively align research-based practices, Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), and State standards to instructional practices across grade levels to impact student learning. (1.1)
 - School leaders and faculty design curricula that incorporate interdisciplinary units and projects across grade levels and content areas. The integration of CCLS literacy and math tasks that are aligned to State standards is evidenced via classroom observations, student assignments, and projects that promote post secondary readiness on all grade levels. Teacher designed units include opportunities for all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, to interact with content in meaningful ways to promote critical thinking. Teachers including special education and English language learner teachers plan integrated units and modify lessons to meet the needs of various learners. Students grouped by ability and language levels are assigned tasks to support multiple entry points while engaging in rigorous learning habits and higher order skills. Students in an integrated math and civics class projected and later analyzed various community resources and needs. Next, students utilized a website to conduct virtual visits to communities to calculate “distance decay” or access to resources with an overarching goal of how teens can create “innovative solutions to address the diverse needs of communities” to be active citizens. This results in higher order thinking and real world application as evidenced during class visits and via student work.
- A common understanding of how students learn best is evidenced by classroom routines and practices that provide various entry points for all students. (1.2)
 - The administration and teachers believe that students learn best when opportunities are provided for students to construct their own understanding of their learning. Teachers redesigned the lesson framework to promote higher order thinking skills by replacing the “aim” and “do now” with “What have we been learning?” “How have we been learning this material?” and “Why have we been learning this material?” As a result, students’ metacognitive awareness has been heightened and students are able to articulate the “what, why and how” of their learning when studying a particular topic or subject. Subsequently, teachers meet in teams to develop curriculum maps and plan lessons that incorporate interdisciplinary strategies, themes, and real world applications, which are scaffolded to support various learning styles, academic needs, and entry points, evidenced via class visits and student work products. Eleventh grade English and social studies teachers designed a government unit on the American judicial system with readings and literacy tasks embedded throughout the unit. Students were divided into groups based on ability and needs. Lesson tasks included opportunities for students to read, write, analyze primary documents, and apply rubrics. Additionally, ELL

students and students with disabilities engaged in opportunities to develop language skills via read alouds, debate and mock trials; and the use of tools such as highlighters and graphic organizers to identify and organize main ideas, details and draw conclusions. Thus, resulting in increased student engagement with content and peers, and enhancing comprehension as demonstrated by high levels of discourse during mock trials, extensive written assignments, and understanding of the judiciary process.

- Strategic organizational decisions effectively align resources that support instructional goals and the academic needs of all students, inclusive of student subgroups. (1.3)
 - School leaders make decisions around resources and hiring practices to support the school's overarching goal of developing students into global citizens. The school strategically partnered with a community-based organization (CBO) focused on developing "global competence" among the people of the world. The CBO has an assigned coach who works directly with individual and teacher teams to develop curricular and tasks to support the school goals. During class visits, activities that foster global citizenship and leadership for students were embedded within units and lesson plans. Additionally, the school leader's careful selection of a Network includes schools with similar populations and academic populations, thus leading to a connection with other schools and school leaders, establishing a support for future growth and development. The school leader's visit to other sites provides opportunities to view best practices and to support his own on-site planning. Decisions around hiring and programming target the needs of specific subgroups such as ELL's. Practices such as hiring additional guidance counselors and English language learner (ELL) teachers, and deliberate programming of students has led to guidance counselors monitoring and tracking student progress and decreased student-teacher ratio, resulting in 93% of Grade 11 ELL students and 95% of Grade 12 ELL students earning 10 or more credits in 2011-2012.
- Teacher teams and individual teachers effectively use assessments practices, and analyze student learning to influence instructional decisions. (2.2)
 - Teachers incorporate assessments and rubrics informally and formally to monitor student progress and to provide feedback. Teacher generated rubrics and checks for understanding were utilized by students during mock trial debates, workstation, or center activities, and to identify and collect artifacts for a research activity. Furthermore, teachers participated in summer planning and adapted Fred Newmann's *Framework for Authentic Pedagogy and Instruction* to develop an instructional framework and norm practices around rubrics and assessments. . Additionally, teacher teams engage in practices that examine, evaluate, and assess student progress using the Asia Society's SAGE (**S**tudent Choice, **A**uthentic Context, **G**lobal Significance and **E**xhibition to an Audience) rubric, assessing the quality of student work products relative to the Graduation Performance Scale (GPS), thus informing instructional decisions to meet the learning needs of all students and promote college readiness. Every teacher as an 'Embassy Leader' of a small group of

students reviews scholarship reports and assists students with setting academic and personal goals. Thereby instructional practices allow for meaningful feedback to students, and fostering of student accountability as evidenced by student goals and work products.

- The school gathers and disaggregates multiple sources of data to generate cohesive actions plans to leverage and accelerate student learning and social emotional growth. (3.1)
 - The school leader uses multiple sources of data such as Instructionally Targeted Assessments (ITA), Acuity diagnostics, New York State English as a Second Language Test (NYSESLAT), Regents' item analysis, and classroom observations, to generate school data reports, which are tracked in Google.docs and excel spreadsheets. Subsequently, the data is used to generate long- and short-term goals that are routinely assessed and revised. As a result, school community members routinely share, discuss, and revise as necessary, long- and short-term goals, thus ensuring input as stakeholders in the goal setting process and strengthening collaborative practices and to make data driven instructional decisions evidenced in class assignments, curriculum maps, interdisciplinary Intercession lessons and projects to accelerate learning for all students.
- School leaders provide frequent feedback to teachers that supports professional growth at various levels to increase teacher effectiveness. (4.1)
 - The school utilizes Charlotte Danielson's domain 2 and domain 3 to support teacher development. During the teacher team meeting teachers discussed the increased frequency of class visits conducted by the principal and coach, and high quality of low inference feedback, in addition to feedback given during informal and formal observations. Furthermore, a first year teacher shared how team discussions and inter-visits conducted by colleagues have "pushed his thinking". Conversely, teachers post inquiries and reflective comments in the *Faculty Parking Lot* located in Google.docs to maintain an ongoing dialogue that is used to set professional goals and as actionable feedback to inform instruction. As a result, a collaborative culture of professional development has taken root and teachers share a common understanding around instructional expectations that translates to rigorous practices to raise student achievement, evidenced via teacher team meetings and student work.

What the school needs to improve

- Design systems to engage families in ongoing discussions regarding student progress and performance as required by the CCLS tasks to enable students to become college ready. (2.4)
 - Although school leaders and the faculty have created a welcoming school environment for families, during the parent meeting most parents were unaware of Common Core standards. The school does not yet build parent capacity or have sufficient opportunities to engage and inform families of the school and Department of Education initiatives and events, thus limiting the support of families.

- School leaders purchased Skedula, an online grading system to manage and monitor grades, and to communicate with families via email and text messages. However, the school does not yet provide sufficient professional development and support for teachers and parents to maximize the use of online data tools thus hindering parent engagement.
- Engage teacher teams in accessing and utilizing accountability tools to identify and monitor student trends to inform curricular and instructional practices, specifically subgroups. (2.3)
 - School leaders have developed tools to disaggregate and organize data, and regularly provide individual teachers and teacher teams with data reports. At this time, teachers and teacher teams do not yet receive sufficient support to learn how to access and organize the data to identify student performance trends and to generate class specific reports. Thus, teachers are not able to capture meaningful data to inform instructional decisions in a timely manner.
- Strengthen data informed processes to support individual and teacher teams in setting interim- and long-term goals for groups of students. (3.2)
 - Teacher teams meet weekly to review qualitative and quantitative data generated by school leaders; however, at this time there are not processes through which interim- and long-term goals are established for subgroups of students. As a result teachers and teacher teams are not intentionally analyzing data to track and monitor the mastery of standards of specific subgroups.
- Refine professional collaborations to build on teacher and team capacity to promote shared leadership and decision making. (4.2)
 - All teachers are engaged in collaborative efforts to promote student achievement. Currently the roles and responsibilities of individual teachers and teams are not yet sufficiently expanded to deepen the understanding of the inquiry process and to foster distributive leadership and shared decision. Thus, a bottom-up approach to positively impact student learning is not part of the school culture.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: High School for Language and Diplomacy	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