

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The Cinema School

X478

**1551 East 172 Street
Bronx
NY 10472**

Principal: Rex Bobbish

Dates of review: April 23 - 24, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Ron Feinstein

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Cinema School is a high school with 133 students from 9 through grade 11. The school population comprises 33% Black, 59% Hispanic, 2% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 0% special education students. Boys account for 44% of the students enrolled and girls account for 56%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 89.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is Well-Developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal effectively uses resources to make organizational decisions that support the instructional goals of the school to meet the pedagogical needs of the staff and increase student outcomes. (1.3)
 - The principal's coherent strategy for Regents preparation prioritizes resources focused on the school's goals to successfully prepare each student for a Regents diploma with advanced designation. Student programs are always grouped to allow them to take the next step toward a more rigorous course in each subject and classes are kept below thirty students, whenever possible. All teachers, regardless of programs they teach, participate in AP preparatory work as well SAT workshops. More than half of the students are on track to qualify for a Regents diploma with advanced designation, and long-range action plans for sustainability are clearly articulate. As a result teachers are focusing on what students need to be successful and support them towards mastery as evidenced in teacher to student feedback and student work products.
 - The principal has scheduled an early release on Wednesdays that allows teachers extended time for collaborative inquiry within the school's structure of ADI. In addition, teachers meet weekly by grade and other configurations. Every teacher's program is strategically designed to have one period/week for advisory driven by the ADI cycle requiring periodic reflection on student progress and strategic discussions between teachers and administrative teams to develop curriculum, differentiate instruction, and devise pedagogical strategies thereby supporting student progress as well as teacher professional development . The school's current small size permits public sharing of all data. As a result teachers are closely monitoring student progress as evidenced by benchmark skills and as part of their observational record and the Teacher Performance Review.
- Individual teachers and teacher teams make good use of assessment data to strengthen collaborative assessment practices, enabling them to create a clear portrait of students' strengths and areas of need. (2.2)
 - School assessment strategies align to instructional goals starting with curriculum design and the identification of enduring understandings. These essentials of key knowledge and skills required are then chunked into the units taught and the specific activities where students will demonstrate understanding. Careful attention is given to key standards such as the instructional expectations for informational text in all subjects and a focus on inequalities and congruence in mathematics. Thoughtfully constructed assessments and accompanying rubrics measure the most rigorous aspects of content. For example, a sophomore humanities rubric evaluates thesis, structure, how their beliefs are supported, and students are required to include an analysis explaining the thesis as well as a meta-reflection on their own process. This type of analysis provides

school leaders and faculty with meaningful and immediately useful feedback for instructional decisions at all levels.

- Twice yearly each teacher presents their Assessment Driven Instruction (ADI) results to colleagues. This embedded system of teacher presentations is an integral part of the continual cycle for monitoring student growth and teacher practice. These formal presentations, as well as data from ongoing checks for understanding, identify students who are progressing and those who still struggle, capturing well the formative data from student work and classroom level assessments as well as more summative such as scores from simulated Advanced Placement (AP) examinations. This data helps teachers to make timely adjustments for both teaching and student awareness of next learning steps. For example, in addition to written feedback on a student essay describing a stable society, teachers' comments include advice to add more specific examples in each paragraph and specific suggestions for revisions that would ensure that the conclusion sounds different than the introduction.
- Teacher development is driven by a research-based framework and ensures that teachers meet professional expectations and goals collaboratively reached by teachers, the principal and assistant principal. (4.1)
 - The principal and assistant principal visit classrooms frequently and subsequent meetings with teachers include examining lesson plans and looking at student work ensure that all teachers are well supported and that include evidence of the integration of Common Core skills. The school is in transition from Kim Marshall's teacher effective rubric to specific references in Danielson's Framework for Teaching. Teachers understand that instructional expectations are aligned to city-wide expectations focusing on developing college readiness and rigor through the school's Assessment Driven Instruction (ADI) initiative is formative and assesses students progress toward benchmark skills aligned to both Common Core and city-wide expectations. Teachers enthusiastically speak to the school's leadership that supports their development. As a result of this strategic support teachers are able to quickly implement feedback and modify plans and lessons.
- School leaders and staff consistently convey high expectations to students and families with supports to assist achievement of these outcomes. (3.4)
 - Teachers set challenge goals early in the fall for students in each of the courses they teach aligned to the expectations articulated in the school's goals for the year. These are termed "deliverables" and action plans are publicly shared. Teachers meet frequently with school leaders and colleagues to plan, monitor and revise lessons to meet these expectations. Teachers analyze student work and use students' misconceptions to reframe instruction and better understand student progress. The principal, assistant principal advisors and teachers convey high expectations to students and their families through a rigorous trajectory of a college readiness model that demands four years of math, science, English and social studies with the goal of all students being admitted to Tier I colleges and universities with an Advanced Regents

Diploma and Advanced Placement coursework. Progress towards these goals comes through regular progress reports and on-line grading systems. As a result of these combined efforts The School Survey reported that 96% of students believe they must work hard to get good grades and 94% reported that they are assisted by adults in the school to know what is needed to succeed. In addition, 98% of parents and 100% of the staff also confirmed that the school has high expectations for all of its students.

- Grading policies and school specific tools enable school leaders and teachers to aggregate and organize meaningful data about student mastery which informs curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions. (2.3)
 - The school's stated goal is to share all data with students and parents. Teachers maintain a Data Binder that contains a detailed analysis of student progress reports. Struggling students receive this report via Daedalus every 3 weeks and all others every 6 weeks. This thoughtful organization of data permits teachers to discuss impact of their instruction in presentations to other faculty using a Critical Friends Protocol using benchmarks identified in formative assessments alignment both to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and AP standards. Every teacher participates in at least two of these rotations each year with feedback from all staff. This facilitates the school's collective response to learning gaps identified of the lower performing students in data analysis and resulting action plans and goals established for students. Teams of teachers use JupiterGrades and Daedalus, both of which facilitate access to trends in performance for students, teachers as well as families and allow school leaders and faculty to make immediate and resourceful school level decisions. This component of ADI ensures cross collaboration around student learning outcomes and the creation, where necessary, of interventions created on an interim and long-term basis.
- The school is safe and inviting; students are actively engaged in learning and appreciate the strong support they receive for both personal and academic development, resulting in students' academic and personal growth. (1.4)
 - Staff and administration use a developmental model for student discipline that provides opportunities for students to redeem themselves and results in a safe and inclusive culture supportive of students' personal growth. 95% of parents, 97% of students and 100% of the teachers surveyed agree that discipline at the school is enforced fairly. All staff take strategic positions in hallways during class intervals and their visibility facilitates smooth transitions in some of the school's shared space. Student progress is closely monitored on benchmark skills as part of the ADI model and twice daily advisory check-ins reinforce academic and social expectations, assure that all homework is and important deadlines are recorded in school planners and communicate important school announcements. In addition, students meet in an advisory class once a week where there is opportunity to discuss a range of from academics and SmartGoals, to review of grades, sex education and HIV awareness, SAT preparation anti-bullying and Respect for All. Faculty advisors further ensure student advocacy and act as the liaison between school and home, positively impacting social and academic well-being and

success, as evidenced by the school's 85% and higher scholarship rates and Regents pass scores of at least 80.

- Teachers use collaborative, data-informed processes for planning and goal setting for individual and identified groups of students to ensure that all students are on a path to mastery and full potential as learners. (3.2)
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers utilize the school's ADI practice, which is an action-research collaborative inquiry model. ADI enables the needs of small groups of learners for which individual teachers are responsible to be targeted on areas of development and acceleration across all the content areas. Teachers effectively and consistently reflect on the conditions of learning for all students including those who struggle and design performance tasks and formative assessments carefully aligned to course design, department rubrics as well as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Differentiated student goal setting and meta-reflection by students on what they should know and be able to do is inherent in the ADI practice and enables teachers and students to develop well the capacities for understanding strengths and weaknesses of all learners. For example, students engage in co- and paired quizzing, pair-switch and grade as part of the meta-cognitive prompting, collaboration and peer evaluation process further facilitating specific learning needs, misconceptions and gaps in understanding to surface and be addressed through multiple and differentiated interventions.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that curriculum consistently emphasizes rigorous habits and higher order skills, and plan and refine academic tasks using analysis of student work across grades and content areas to inform revisions. (1.1)
 - The school has identified key standards, including the support and defense of one's own thinking, and considered the impact of Common Core supported by performance tasks and formative assessments that are keyed to backward planning of content courses using Understanding by Design. However, the decisions to highlight the most salient ideas from the curriculum and focus on those units that directly align to the standards is still an unfolding process that limits the school's focus on promoting post secondary readiness at the highest levels that meet the school's expectations for success.
 - The school focuses on planning and delivery of lessons, school designed assessments and strategies to meet the needs of its identified challenges, however this process is not yet fully extended to ensure that the most successful learners are consistently challenged at the levels necessary for AP success and college readiness. As a result, the school loses the opportunity to accelerate further this large population and ensure constant challenge to their learning.
- Promote greater consistency in differentiation reflected in planning and implementation of consistently challenging tasks and questioning that extends student thinking. (1.2)

- Teachers' classrooms reflect an articulated set of beliefs that include the understanding that students learn best by doing authentic, creative, engaging activities that are aligned to the written curriculum. In literacy this is evidenced in reading that stimulates students thinking, presents opportunities to defend, justify and rationalize that thinking. However, continued discussions at team and school level are necessary to enhance the delivery of the enacted curriculum that currently hinders the assurance that all students produce meaningful work products.
- Across classrooms teachers attempt to create different ways for students to understand content include activities with different roles for students and in some rooms the smart use of technology. However, these practices are inconsistent and quality of strategic use of teacher questioning hinders many students engaging at high levels of student thinking and participation and inconsistent differentiation strategies inhibits many students from the multiple entry points into the curriculum they need to fully participate.
- Refine systems to evaluate the success of teacher teams and leadership development so that professional growth of staff is consistently expanded. (5.4)
 - Although teacher teams have agendas and minutes, the school currently does not have a formal system to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams. As a result, the school is unable to demonstrate the impact of the effectiveness of new hiring, capacity building, evaluation, and retention of teacher to determine whether teacher meetings are effective and meaningful in furthering student learning and in developing effective leadership ability.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: X478 The Cinema 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