

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**High School of World Cultures**

**12X550**

**1300 Boynton Avenue**

**Bronx**

**NY 10472**

**Principal: Ramon Namnun**

**Dates of review: December 19-20, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Jill Herman**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

High School of World Cultures is a High school with 377 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 7% Black, 74% Hispanic, 1% White, 4% Asian students and 13% other students. The student body includes 63% English language learners and 0% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 92%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders make informed curricular and organizational decisions in order to improve students' learning outcomes. (1.3)
  - The two assistant principals' work solely focused on instruction. One works to improve the social studies curriculum and guide the common core requirements to improve Regents' results and meet State requirements so students graduate with their cohort. The other serves as dean and college advisor and fulfills tasks generally covered by teachers so that students' instructional time is maximized to help them achieve acquisition of English language and mastery of course content, as evidenced by improvement in Regents' pass rates.
  - Students are carefully programmed based on credits received from their country of origin, coupled with English language skills, so that they can accelerate their content knowledge in home language, simultaneously build competency in English, and successfully meet requirements of a Regents based diploma. In addition, many teachers who work after school, Saturdays, and vacations with students, share strategies, and techniques that support and strengthen their dedication to students and promote students' attainment of academic mastery.
- The entire school community demonstrates a culture of mutual respect that motivates students to achieve academically. (1.4)
  - The Learning Environment Survey, which revealed an above average score on safety and respect, is reflected by students who go promptly to class without any reminders, and an attendance rate close to 90 %. Students, who are attentive in class, relate well to each other and the adults in classrooms. The school's calm and caring environment, as reported by both students and parents, supports learning to be the main focus.
  - Students report that they want to do well in school; they love their teachers, and want to attend college. They state that their teachers meet with them during lunch and after school to help them improve in their academics, prepare them for Regents and graduation. This support strengthens students' own sense of ability to achieve. The students are goal oriented and most stay after school willingly in order to improve grades and accelerate their own learning.
- School leaders and staff gather a wide range of data in order to understand the strengths and areas of need at the school. (2.1)
  - School leaders examine school survey, attendance, scholarship reports including course pass rates, Regents' pass rates, performance index, cohort data, and share the information with staff in order to surface strengths and areas of need. Students who are in the 2012 cohort are listed on a posted chart in the principal's office with different color notations to indicate progress towards graduation. Teachers' data on

English competency levels for students in their classes is used to capture a complete view of the school so that the school community identifies areas where students need additional support and teachers are able to develop strategies to better monitor progress of individuals and groups of students.

- In response to an identified trend that students were passing English language arts, (ELA), classes and not passing the Regents with a score above 65, the school uses and compares results from periodic assessments, item analysis, and class work that is aligned to language goals, to provide additional and targeted information to support student mastery in passing of Regents.
- A clear set of data driven goals are designed to accelerate student learning. ( 3.1)
  - The school's setting of explicit yearly goals of 80% graduation rate, 3% improvement in math and ELA Regents are linked to the long-term goal of 90-90-90 (graduation rate, passing rate, and attendance) and reflected in both the Principal Performance Review and the Comprehensive Education Plan. The goals and action plans, created to improve students' ability to graduate, attain further mastery of English, and for them to be successful after high school, also serve as a framework for inquiry work and curriculum writing.
  - As a result of a review of data, combined with the monitoring and ability to revise curriculum, a newly assigned assistant principal is focused on improving Global Regents' pass rates, leading Common Core implementation efforts, and coordinating writing in different content areas. Currently, targeted writing skills are being addressed in classrooms and bilingual and advanced placement courses have been added to the school's program to address the various needs of students.
- The entire school community consistently communicates high expectations to students and families in ways that are inclusive, promote participation, and buy-in. (3.4)
  - Parents who report that this school is like a family are provided with access to an on-line grading program, Skedula, as well as ARIS, which informs them of their children's progress. Parents find teachers accessible and are kept informed regarding their children's progress via progress reports and semester grades. Workshops that are offered are well attended, as reported by parents, and address academic and social/emotional needs so that families better understand adolescent development in order to further their children's success.
  - An additional college readiness course that is supported by an assistant principal focused on college counseling provides students with note taking and other skills that motivate them to think more deeply about post-secondary plans. The wide range of course offerings, coupled with teacher's personal academic support, enables students to report that they feel prepared to pass the necessary exams to graduate high school and be successful in college.

## What the school needs to improve

- Ensure rigor and higher order thinking skills, aligned to standards, are embedded in academic tasks across grades and subject areas in order to promote college readiness. (1.1)
  - The school aligns curriculum to State standards in order to have students pass Regents' exams and graduate high school. This year's development and refining of curriculum mapping and process of decision making regarding implementation of common core standards is surfacing key standards to emphasize in both curricula development and instruction. However, depth of rigor in instructional tasks is not yet evident, thus missing opportunities to better prepare students for higher learning.
  - A wide variety of offerings that range from College Now courses to targeted work with Students with Interrupted Formal Education, based on credits earned in one's home country as well as English and native language skills, are considered so that school can meet the needs and engage a true diversity of learners. However, by teachers not examining student work and assignments consistently, they are limiting the ability to refine practices to improve student engagement and accomplishments.
- Strengthen classroom practices to reflect levels and learning styles of the diversity of learners in order to maximize learning opportunities and increase engagement. (1.2)
  - Groupings in some classes are reflective of teachers' intentions to support students. However, in the majority of classes, students are given the same reading material and same writing assignments, resulting in some students' being unable to complete the task, or asking a peer for the correct response, limiting each student's personal growth.
  - Most classroom questioning is for information, and students rarely ask questions or build on each other's knowledge. Participation rates range, often with the same students responding. In some classes, teachers call on students to get a wider response and ask questions to push thinking. However, students' binders that include the Cornell note taking system, quizzes, and short-term assignments, do not demonstrate or reveal students' thinking, thus hindering students' improved learning outcomes.
- Strengthen and vary checks for understanding in order to better inform instructional decisions. (2.2)
  - Currently, a majority of teachers' assessments, including results from quizzes, are used to re-teach and not systematically examine or reflect on the impact of their instruction. Although, the current work on the Common Core is beginning to have an impact in that teachers are rethinking ways of organizing instruction such as interdisciplinary and writing in content areas, ongoing informed decisions regarding curriculum is not yet evident. The loose coupling of clear standards, especially around Common Core, limits the ability to assess classroom effectiveness as well as curricula choices.

- Some teachers check for understanding by going around questioning small groups. Most ask at the end of class for one or two students to summarize, however this practice does not provide teachers with ample opportunity to adjust the lesson, or to check for ongoing student understanding. Consequently, this prevents teachers from gathering sufficient data that promote improved learning for all students during class time.
- Enhance and further promote professional development by developing a clear set of expectations and adult support to achieve those goals. (4.1)
  - Teachers are informally observed approximately three times a week, using an observation protocol that enables feedback relative to teacher development. However, a different form is used for formal observations. Lacking a common and consistent framework, that includes common language, impedes conveying clarity of teacher expectations and improving pedagogical practices.
  - The support of a new network, is beginning to engage teachers in professional opportunities around scaffolding tasks that will support students in being able to successfully complete Common Core activities. Currently, training is primarily focused on the online grading system, use of Smartboards, and data analysis relative to progress towards passing Regents. However, teachers do not yet have consistent opportunities to meet to discuss specific content area curriculum and instructional practices, thus minimizing professional growth.
- Deepen systematic and reflective ways of examining both teacher work along side student work using protocols that will impact curricula design, teaching and learning. (4.2)
  - The team that is working on Common Core is beginning to examine student work. However as currently, they do not use protocols they are limited in identifying and changing classroom practice to promote students achieving higher pass rates on Regents and deepen student learning.
  - Although teachers have choices around classroom materials and content, and the inquiry team focused on Regents' data is collaboratively led, the principal does not meet with team leaders or include them on the cabinet. Thus, key decisions are not articulated to or shared with staff sufficiently so that there is maximum impact on their work in both teaching and learning.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

<b>School name: High School of World Cultures</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		<b>X</b>		
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?		<b>X</b>		
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?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
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?		<b>X</b>		
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?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?		<b>X</b>		
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			<b>X</b>	

<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?		<b>X</b>					
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?			<b>X</b>				
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		<b>X</b>					
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>