



**Department of
Education**

Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

**Quality Review: Quality Review Report
Division of Academics, Performance, and Support
2012-13**

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Abraham Lincoln High School

High school K410

**2800 OCEAN PARKWAY
BROOKLYN, NY 11235**

Principal: Ari Hoogenboom

**Dates of review: Feb 11-13, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Monique Darrisaw-Akil**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Abraham Lincoln High School is a high school with 2595 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 35% Black, 20% Hispanic, 25% White, and 19% Asian students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 88.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders make strategic decisions about space, time and resources that address student learning needs and further school goals. (1.3)
 - School leaders strategically align resources to achieve school goals such as building the capacity of teacher teams to align units of study to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and improving teacher effectiveness by engaging in short frequent cycles of observations. The school has increased common planning time through a school-based option that allows departments and inquiry teams to meet two to three times a week in order to design CCLS-aligned units. There are also new compensatory time positions for teacher leaders to serve as academy coordinators. They facilitate professional development, lead inquiry work and coordinate support for students in their respective academies. School leaders purchased Promethean boards for every classroom to foster the use of technology and teachers received professional development on their use. Additionally, the school has implemented performance based-assessments (PBAs) for all students. This aligns to the school's Comprehensive Education Plan goal to improve its academic environment and inspire students to perform at higher levels. As a result of their involvement in the CCLS lab pilot, school leaders decided to implement PBAs in order to engage all students in work that promotes high levels of thinking. They also created time during teacher team meetings so they could develop or adopt PBAs and look at the resulting student work. One example of a PBA in social studies is a task that asked students to analyze a variety of texts to address the question, "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?" This assignment required students to use evidence to create an argumentative essay. The school's ability to align the use of resources to instructional goals has resulted in students across the school being engaged in meaningful work products like these PBAs.
 - The school has increased the number of team teaching classes for students with disabilities from two Integrated Collaborative Teaching teams last year to six this year. These teams are distributed throughout core content classes across different grades, thus providing more students with disabilities access to challenging curriculum alongside their general education peers. The school also implemented team teaching models in English language learners' classes to ensure that they are exposed to high quality instruction in English language arts. These teacher teams receive professional development in scaffolding and language acquisition strategies as well as dedicated time for co-planning. School leaders use a combination of classroom observations and Regents pass rates to determine teaching assignments and the academy structure allows for small groups of teachers to be responsible for manageable groups of students. School leaders strategically assign the most effective teachers to teach the students who are most in need of support. In teacher team meetings, teachers plan interventions for groups of challenged students with a particular emphasis on the school's lowest third. These programmatic interventions have resulted in increased graduation rates as seen in the school's 71% graduation rate in 2011-2012 up from 64% in 2010-2011.
- School leaders and staff create an engaging school culture that celebrates diversity and encourages student voice, thus promoting positive personal and academic behaviors in all students. (1.4)
 - School leaders solicit student voice through surveys, lunches with the principal and student councils. Principal lunches consist of a monthly invitation to a cross-section of students to discuss student concerns, which ultimately inform key decisions such as the types of electives and extracurricular activities offered. Decisions by school leaders are also informed by a shared set of beliefs around safety, respect, discipline and a student-centered school culture. School leaders take a proactive approach to discipline, such as

using guidance staff and mentors to address students with behavioral issues. Hallways are orderly and school tone is positive and respectful. Students embrace the school's multicultural student body. As one student stated, "We are made of many nations but we are one team." This year the school engaged in an anti-bullying initiative and a school-wide community-building campaign called "Catch the Lincoln Spirit". One of the school's goals for the year is to increase family and community engagement so that over 60% of the parents receive information about what their child is studying in school once a month or more often. In parent meetings, parents stated they receive regular communication about their child's progress and school goals and they feel supported and engaged in the school community. The school's intentional focus on school culture has led to progress towards school goals and improvement in the school's learning environment as evidenced by an increase in the school's environment score from 6.2 out of 15 in 2010-2011 to 8.9 out of 15 in 2011-2012.

- Counselors are embedded in the school's academies in order to support student learning goals and to facilitate communication between counselors and students. Individual and team conferences are held a minimum of twice a term to ensure that students are aware of their progress and know what is needed to reach the next level. The school's small learning communities, where four teachers are responsible to monitor performance and attendance for up to ninety students, are designed around either grades of students or areas of specialization. Staff use Filemaker, the school's internal database system, to record anecdotal notes about student progress on PBAs and address progress towards meeting the CCLS, conferences and interventions, thus facilitating dialogue regarding student needs. Each academy offers report card conferences with students twice a semester in order to inform students of their individual academic progress, in addition to regular classroom workshops on student decision-making in high school and beyond conducted by the guidance counselors. The creation of the new tenth grade academy works to address the school's historic decline in credit accumulation from ninth grade to tenth grade. The school offers a variety of course offerings such as advanced placement courses, College Now and veterinary science as well as clubs, sports and arts programs in order to engage a wide range of students, and students report that these programs keep them interested in school. The school uses Naviance, an on-line college guidance program, to create post-secondary goals for all students. Additionally, the school has partnered with organizations such as Project Home, Counseling in Schools, the Jewish Board and Relationship Abuse Prevention Program to address the social-emotional needs of their students. These offerings and the support services offered by the teachers and counselors have resulted in high levels of student engagement as evidenced by the school's 2% increase in attendance rates and 7% increase in graduation rates from 2010-2011 to 2011-2012.
- The school has a short list of data-driven goals that are aligned to the school's priorities and address both teacher development and student learning. (3.1)
 - Citywide Instructional Expectations, teacher observations and student performance data inform school goals. The school leaders' theory of action is to create a short list of focused goals that are clear and transparent to all members of the school community and then provide a variety of supports to meet those goals. This year's goals, tracked and monitored periodically through surveys, interim benchmarks, and examination of student work and teacher tasks, address teacher effectiveness as measured on the Danielson framework, CCLS alignment of instruction, credit accumulation and family and community engagement. For example, the goal around credit accumulation specifically targeted the tenth grade. In order to assess progress towards this goal, staff analyzed the performance of tenth graders over time and leaders also disaggregated data by subject area. The subsequent creation of the "Tenth Grade Academy" as well as supplemental professional development on reading and writing across the curriculum were implemented in order to provide extensive and personalized supports to this group of students. Additionally, parents,

students and teachers provide input in the creation of school goals, which, in turn, drive the school's action plans, professional development, inquiry cycles and allocation of resources. For example, as a result of the teacher effectiveness goal that 80% of the teachers will move up one level of proficiency in three out of the six competencies in the Danielson framework, administrators implemented an action plan that includes conducting three brief observations of all teachers by the end of the first semester, entering feedback into the school's database in order to norm feedback among administrators and offering differentiated professional development to teachers based on the feedback. Additionally, the CCLS alignment goal has led to the implementation of CCLS units of study in every core subject and a school-wide focus on using text-based evidence to support arguments. School leaders track and monitor school goals through the use of common assessments, formal and informal observations, and regular data analysis of data in the school's database. As a result, there is evidence of improved teacher practice and support for all students to meet the high expectations the school has set for them, such as all teachers asking students to provide text-based evidence and using rubrics to assess student work.

- Teams work collaboratively to align instruction to standards, plan common assessments and analyze student work in order to support progress. (4.2)
 - Teacher teams use a “Protocol for Looking at Student Essays” to read student work independently, score it based on a CCLS rubric for argumentative writing and then share their ratings with the group while providing evidence for their ratings. They look for gaps in student understanding and collectively determine next steps for instruction, and also use a template to record their findings, allowing them to track current student performance, desired student performance and implications for planning. Throughout all this work there is a shared focus across the school on argumentative writing. Teacher teams also engage in inquiry around performance data of lowest third students and meet with students to discuss improvement strategies. As a result of the teams' collaborative inquiry, there is consistency in the use of templates, rubrics, lesson plan formats, questioning, writing prompts and strategies for providing entry points for all learners school-wide, thus increasing instructional coherence and promoting achievement for all students as evidenced by the 11% increase in the school's College Readiness Index in 2012.
 - The school has created numerous opportunities to develop teacher leadership. Academy coordinators lead teacher team meetings and support the work of the small learning communities, and teacher leaders have input into budget and programming through instructional cabinet meetings. Teachers share responsibility for crafting action plans for student interventions and implementing strategies. These leadership opportunities allow teachers to provide input in school improvement efforts, resulting in improved teacher practice and shared focus on enhanced student learning.

What the school needs to improve?

- Design curricula that ensure that all students are engaged in rigorous tasks that require higher order thinking skills. (1.1)
 - School leaders and staff have identified key standards that are aligned to the CCLS and there is evidence of integration of the instructional shifts in classrooms. School leaders have identified using text to support arguments as a key shift of focus. Evidence of that emphasis can be found in written documents and in classroom discussion. For instance, in an assignment about the Progressive Era in American history, students were asked to analyze the main idea of the quote and cite one piece of textual evidence that supports the main idea. Students with disabilities and English language learners are consistently given access to challenging curriculum, for example in global studies; students in all classes were studying the French Revolution and students in self-contained classes were also studying this theme with access to similar documents with scaffolded supports.

Additionally, the school has implemented a preferred lesson plan format that is aligned to Danielson competency 1e: Designing Coherent Instruction. In spite of the shared lesson plan format and cohesion of instructional practices, curricula and tasks were not aligned in all grades, thus prohibiting all students the opportunity to demonstrate their thinking.

- Improve coherence of instructional practices throughout the school so that all students have entry points into meaningful academic engagement. (1.2)
 - Instruction is aligned to a common set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson framework, although there is inconsistency regarding high-quality questioning and discussion across classrooms. In some classes, questions did not probe students to deeper levels of thinking. While some students were asked to explain their answers orally or in writing, other students were allowed to provide only one-word answers. As a result of this variability in teaching, all students do not benefit from instruction that prepares them for college and careers.
 - Across classrooms there was evidence of common practices such as use of differentiated texts, working in groups or with a partner and the use of graphic organizers in class. The school has instituted a literacy initiative, called “Read 20/Talk 10”, and a common lesson plan format. However, in some classes students were not required to explain their answers, build on one another’s thinking or create their own questions. In one class students spent a great deal of time engaging in making text-to-self connections, which did not increase their understanding of the time period being studied nor of the text they were reading. Giving feedback to students is also an inconsistent practice across the school. Some of the feedback provided to students is very general and does not provide specific next steps for learning. Additionally, it was not evident that student self-assessment or use of rubrics is a school-wide practice, thus limiting the opportunities for students to understand their present level of performance and take ownership of their learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Abraham Lincoln High School	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?		X					
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?			X				
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?			X				
Systems for Improvement							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?				X			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?				X			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed