

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

FDNY High School for Fire and Life Safety

High School 19K502

**400 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE
BROOKLYN
NY, 1207**

Principal: JAMES ANDERSON

Dates of review: Dec. 5 – 6, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Karen Watts

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

FDNY High School for Fire and Life Safety is a high school with 381 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 74% Black, 23% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 81% of the students enrolled and girls account for 19%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 82.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is Proficient.

What the school does well

- Students benefit from strong and consistent instructional practices, including effective questioning techniques, which promote students' engagement in challenging tasks and increase students' academic outcomes. (1.2)
 - The school's delivery of consistent instructional practices across classrooms is based on the standards of the Danielson Framework, and embraces this year's Citywide Instructional Expectations focusing on Designing and Planning Coherent Instruction, Improving Questioning and Discussion Techniques and Improving Assessment Practices. Administrators and teachers implement Common Core aligned units and lesson plans through the workshop model using similar agendas and a lesson plan template that guides teachers to strongly emphasize questions that helps students synthesize and evaluate information. Additionally, teachers focus on delivering instruction in all classes that focuses on improving literacy skills, including reading and using reading improvement software such as Read 180 and Achieve 3000 to do so. . As a result of students' engagement in well-matched literacy development tasks, students are developing rigorous academic habits, are passing their classes, and are being prepared to pass the challenging Emergency Management Technician, EMT, certification exam.
- The principal effectively uses the school's resources to support its instructional goals leading to improvements in students' achievement. (1.3)
 - The principal has developed a master schedule that allows teacher teams to meet frequently by grade and subject to ensure that the needs of all students across grades and content areas are addressed via teachers' continuous focus on and working on improving their practice. He has hired an assistant principal of administration to support compliance with the requirements of special education and English as a second language delivery of services, and an assistant principal for the supervision of math and an F-Status supervisor of social studies to ensure adequate supervision of the instructional program in math and social studies, respectively. He leverages the services of the Talent Management Coach to help teachers improve their instructional practice by providing professional development around the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The principal is diligent in providing teachers with the tools they need to deliver quality instruction to meet the school's instructional goals. To that end, he has purchased Smart boards, laptops for teachers' and students' use, installed a computer lab, and provided the software teachers need to develop the literacy skills of students. He has purchased good quality non-fiction texts at varying reading levels for students to read in their English language arts classes as teachers implement curriculum aligned to the Common Core as a means to improve students' reading analysis and evaluation skills. He has developed partnerships with the Brooklyn Public Library so that Global Studies teachers and students can visit to use its artifacts and other available resources, leading to more students passing the often-difficult Global Studies and Geography Regents' exam. His partnership with Brooklyn College provides students with a media arts program that is affording them exposure to journalism as they build literacy skills. Additionally, his strengthening of the school's relationship with the Fire Department of New York, FDNY, led to a curriculum and instructors for the EMT and firematics classes, and a literacy coach to ensure that students are reading at the level required so that they will be able to pass

the certification exams to be EMTs and firefighters. These resources have resulted in more graduates working as EMTs and the school now has five graduates who are firefighters.

- Teacher teams create and analyze the results of common assessments that are aligned to the curriculum to adjust their instruction and promote students' learning. (2.2)
 - The school's comprehensive calendar includes all assessments that students take during the school year, and provides clear expectations around teachers' development, administration, and analysis of common assessments. In addition, diagnostic and daily assessments such as graphic organizers, exit cards, conferencing, quizzes, and quick writes, provide teachers with information regarding students' learning so instructional adjustments are made as needed. Common assessments administered at the end of each marking period are analyzed by teachers, the results of which, along with results from a variety of sources ranging from item analyses to individual student data analysis around what a student can or cannot do and next steps needed for success, lead to identifying differentiated strategies to ensure student success. Teachers also analyze the results of Regents' exams to ascertain areas in which they need to strengthen their instruction so their students perform at higher levels during the next administration of the Regents exams. Teachers also use the results of students' self-assessments to deliver instruction in the areas that students find challenging. Consequently, these assessment practices provide students with feedback regarding their learning and their next learning steps, and provide teachers with information that is used to adjust instruction at the classroom level to address the academic needs of all students, improving their learning outcomes.
- School leaders provide frequent targeted feedback to teachers using a school-wide teaching framework and implement effective supports to improve teachers' instructional practice. (4.1)
 - The school, in its second year of the Teacher Effectiveness Pilot with the same coach is seeing great improvements in teacher practice. The principal and teachers frequently attend professional development in Teacher Effectiveness and in aligning curriculum to the Common Core Standards and are turn-keying that information to all teachers in the school. The principal adheres to a comprehensive observation schedule and provides feedback to teachers after both partial and full period observations. Every teacher self-assessed relative to each component of the Danielson Framework using a scale of underdeveloped, developing, proficient and well developed, and created goals for their improvement in collaboration with the principal. This resulted in a professional growth plan developed for each teacher that is monitored during the school year via the observation process. All teacher observations that are entered into ARIS provides teachers with opportunities to link to videos to see what and how other teachers effectively use strategies to improve areas that they are struggling with. In addition, teachers access the resources on EngageNY, attend professional development at the Network Level to address areas of challenge, and at the school level participate in book studies to improve identified areas in their practice. As a result of these observation and professional development practices, teachers no longer see the observation process as punitive, rather they welcome the feedback and are eager to work with their colleagues whether through common planning or intervisitations, yielding great improvements in teacher practice school wide and the academic outcomes of the students where the four year graduation rate increased by 20% over the past two school years.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance the curriculum by offering advanced courses so that students attain college readiness standards to increase postsecondary success. (1.1)
 - The school has identified key literacy standards in alignment with the Common Core Standards and is emphasizing them in carefully developed curriculum maps, unit, and lesson plans. Teachers stress the importance of receiving a quality education in conversations with students and help them draw a correlation between schoolwork and the real world. The school is the only school in the City that partners with the FDNY to train students to become EMT and firefighters and as such provides a wide variety of thematic elective courses for its students who complete career readiness flowcharts to ensure that they are making adequate progress to be ready for work with the FDNY. Additionally, the school uses the CUNY assessment curriculum as a tool to build urgency towards college readiness. However, the curriculum lacks the breadth of courses that deeply prepare students for college success such as advance courses in math and science, advanced placement courses and College Now courses. As a result, students are not afforded the opportunity to build rigorous academic stamina thereby limiting their preparedness for postsecondary studies.
- Strengthen youth development structures and supports to ensure that students contribute to school decisions and receive comprehensive college and career advisement. (1.4)

The school believes in providing a consistent message about expectations and behavior to the students, which is accomplished through frequent town hall meetings where the FDNY works with students to convey its values of respect, brotherhood, and of saving lives. At the meetings, students are afforded opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback to the administration. Additionally, behavior plans are created for all students who exhibit behavioral issues so that expectations can be discussed with the student and parent, and barriers to academic success addressed. The school works closely with the Interagency Task Force on Campus, ensuring that resources from all City agencies are brought to bear in addressing the needs of students and their families, and there has been a major shift from a penal approach to discipline at the school to one of addressing the emotional needs of the students. Grade level teams of teachers are assigned a cohort of students for whom they are accountable and the teachers know the needs of these students and work to address them. There is a strong senior council in the school that addresses the concerns of the graduating class. But despite all of the guidance/advisement resources that are available, the school has not yet developed an inclusive student government where the voices of all of the students in the school can be heard, resulting in missing out on providing structures for underclassmen to bring their issues of concern to the attention of the administration and limiting their involvement in decision making at the school. Students also reported that they would like more guidance with applications to college and information on non-FDNY careers, thus at this time, students' exposure to non-FDNY career options is limited, thereby impacting their college and career preparedness.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: FDNY High School for Fire and Life Safety	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