

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**George Westinghouse Career and Technical Education
High School**

High School K605

**105 Tech Place
Brooklyn
NY 11201**

Principal: Janine Kieran

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Lead Reviewer: Holly Reichert

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

George Westinghouse Career and Technical Education High School is a high school with 791 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 80% Black, 15% Hispanic, 1% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 76% of the students enrolled and girls account for 24%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 85.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Continuously refined curricula emphasize rigorous tasks aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and key State and industry standards that promote student learning focused on college and career readiness. (1.1)
 - Across classrooms, students engage in Common Core-aligned curricula that emphasize the key standards of constructing viable arguments, using text-based evidence and critiquing the reasoning and work of others. Instructional shifts focused on academic vocabulary and the use of informational text is evident in core content and career education classes. Parents and students mentioned the importance of the curricular focus on argument writing. Students explained that being able to state and defend a claim orally and in writing as well as being able to back up those statements with relevant evidence are key skills preparing them for college and careers. Furthermore, all curricula are purposefully designed so that skills build from grade 9 to 12. Tasks, with a literacy focus, center on the analysis and synthesis of multiple texts in response to real-world questions requiring students to consider the broader meaning of what they read. The school is purposefully deepening speaking and listening skills connected to constructing viable arguments and use of textual and problem-based evidence. English language arts units of study include Socratic Seminar advancing critical thinking, speaking and listening skills in response to text. Additionally, students formulate questions along the Depth of Knowledge continuum to ask their classmates during discussion. Scaffolds and differentiated supports allow all students access to the same texts and instructional activities. Content teacher teams meet to discuss and revise curricula, tasks, instructional activities and supports. Student work is regularly examined to identify learning gaps and select instructional strategies aligned to student needs. This on-going process to revise lessons, units and tasks aims at recursively addressing learning gaps to ensure mastery. Interim assessments in English language arts and algebra show continued student growth since September 2012. In turn, current data shows increases up to 30% in January 2013 Regents exam pass rates for Global History, Integrated Algebra, and US History compared to pass rates for these exams from January 2012. Fall semester credit accumulation increased 10-20% among the school's lowest one third of students compared to this time last year.
- Strategic leveraging of staff, programming and professional development provide needed time, resources and support to ensure improvement in teacher practice and student performance. (1.3)
 - Dedicated to the accelerated learning of teachers and students, the school carefully aligns resources the instructional goals to improve pedagogical practice and student progress. *Skedula*, an online grading and communication system, provides on-going progress feedback to families and students. PLATO, an online credit recovery program, supports eligible students to earn needed credits. Additional computers were purchased for several classrooms allowing student use for writing and research tasks. Student programs are carefully constructed to enhance content instruction and mastery as well as to ensure on-time graduation. All students, whose

year ends in a Regents exam, have an academic intervention services (AIS) class in the subject being tested to deepen skills and content mastery. Those in advanced placement (AP) courses have an AIS class aimed at extending content instruction in those subjects. Furthermore, teacher time is maximized for collaborative teamwork with the goal of improving practice and student achievement. Teachers meet five days per week to discuss the specific needs of struggling students and revise curricula and tasks to challenge students to think and write in rigorous ways. They analyze student work and decide on instructional strategies to address specific gaps in learning. Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) teachers have additional common planning periods to ensure purposeful planning. Also, professional development is dedicated to deepening teacher practice in assessing student learning and critical thinking skills while budget resources are used to focus on writing and revising curricula and tasks as well as enhancing teacher understanding of effective instruction. A consultant was hired to support the science department with aligning curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Both students and teachers have the option of Saturday programs to extend their learning. Students are offered courses such as Regents and Scholastic Aptitude Test prep while workshops on the Danielson Framework and effective instruction are provided to teachers. This year, new hires, with dual licensure in content and special education, were carefully selected to meet learner needs and close the achievement gap. Outcomes to date indicate increased teacher effectiveness as per the Danielson Framework rating scale results since September 2012, and increases in credit accumulation, Regents exam pass rates and scholarship reports show student progress across the school comparing results from January 2012 to January 2013.

- Keenly focused on building relationships to foster social-emotional and academic growth, the school's authentic approach to culture building combines teaching and learning as the vehicles for student and adult growth. (1.4)
 - Collaboration and community building connect the learning of adults and students. Teacher teams collaborate using protocols to hear all voices and build consensus. Family outreach builds partnerships focused on academic and personal behaviors, such as responsible student work habits for the future. Communication with families is focused on students' academic skills, progress and success. One parent stated, "I feel glad my child goes to this school, where teachers care about my child's progress." As partners in the learning process, parents participate in school workshops on topics such as Common Core curricular changes and the college application process. Students similarly engage in collaborative activities in content and career education classes where peers interact with and question one another. Parents emphasized that the school focuses on writing and critical thinking skills that their children will use beyond graduation, and important work-related skills in their career and technical classes. Both parents and students concur that the school staff goes out of its way to build real and meaningful connections and to communicate regularly by email, phone and in person. It is through deep, trusting relationships that students feel safe to take risks in their learning, reflect on their actions, and critique the work of others. Furthermore, specific structures are in place to deepen relationships, reflect on goals and actions, and provide leadership development. These include support from programs such as Counseling in Schools. Students in the lowest third in performance have two guidance counselors to monitor progress, dialogue about challenges and find

solutions that address their needs. Students lacking credits have the option of PM and Saturday school. The school formed the Behavior Intervention Team (BTI) comprised of two deans, a guidance counselor, social worker, and administrative staff. Shifting to a responsive and restorative approach, the BTI works with students whose behavior and actions do not support their school success. Relationship building, restorative circles and student reflection shift habits and promote success. Moreover, BTI provides students, who are making progress, with leadership training to become mentors of other students. One student participating in this program improved, gaining 6.5 credits during the fall of 2012 compared to 1.5 credits in fall of 2011. All staff has an open door policy to provide support to all students. Students shared that they feel safe to ask for help from staff who are available before, during, and after school. The deans shared that students in the intervention program come by their office to check in and share their successes. This shift in approach and supports such as a drop-out prevention program starting with 9th grade have all led to a 62 % drop in suspensions to date compared with that of last year. Additionally, students mentioned the Morningside Center for Social Responsibility program that teaches them leadership skills is an added support this year. Also, their voice is heard at the school. In the fall, the student council president approached school leadership with a proposal and petition with 500 student signatures, to provide lockers to students with an 85 and above average. This student-led proposal was accepted and they now earn the privilege of a locker.

- Consistent goals for teacher effectiveness and student achievement promote a unified and dedicated vision for teaching and learning to close the achievement gap that leads to a path for college and careers. (3.1)
 - Based on a clear theory of action, the school's delineated set of goals connect to specific student performance and instructional sub-goals linked to periodic benchmark indicators of progress. All staff creates goals and action plans aligned intentionally to the school goals forming a unified mission across the school. This highly articulated framework for improvement linking teacher practice with student improvement allows for quarterly benchmark progress assessment of specific elements over the course of the year. All goals have defined action plans and the specified staff responsible, and are aligned to a supervision feedback loop for follow-up and adjustments. As evidenced by meetings and conversations with different school community constituents, the articulated goals and the plans to achieve them are clearly understood. Teacher collaborations connect to these goals and the organization of their work communicates the action plan. In response to surfaced needs, the administration makes adjustments to support goal-setting. For example, the school hired a math coach to deepen the work of this department and brought in a consultant to support the science department in aligning curricula to the CCLS. The professional development program focuses on targeted practices such as questioning and effective feedback to accelerate student learning. Additional support is offered after school and on Saturdays. The school attributes positive shifts in practice, such as consistent use of a planning template and questioning and discussion techniques, to purposeful professional development. Observational data from September 2012 to present confirms that all teachers are using more effective instructional practices as per the Danielson Framework levels of performance. Moreover, teachers cited increases in student performance on interim assessments and performance

tasks since September 2012 as a result of their improved instructional practices.

What the school needs to improve

- Amplify common teaching practices focused on effective questioning and discussion techniques so that all student work products demonstrate rigorous thinking and mastery of key State and industry standards. (1.2)
 - The school prioritizes effective questioning and discussion techniques as a means to foster critical thinking skills in all grades and content. Teacher lesson plans and classes observed demonstrate the use of questioning and discussion to engage students and provide opportunities for student interaction. In some classes, Socratic Seminar is used as a vehicle for student-led discussion of literature and informational text, while in others, small student groups engage in content discussion to solve problems and draw conclusions utilizing evidence from text and problems posed. During both practices, students shared their ideas and evidence while opportunities to go deeper into the why and how were missed in several other classes. Not all students had the opportunity to contribute critically and question the reasoning of their peers. Teacher-led and student-led discussion did not delve deeply into and expand upon stated ideas and evidence provided. Scaffolds and models to support all students in extending a response and probing others' thinking were not evident in all classes. The lack of a strategic approach to deepen and extend thinking during whole class and group discussion structures limits amplified exchanges of students and their ownership and use of critical thinking skills during collaborative conversations as evidenced by student work products that show missed opportunities to move to the next level.
- Strengthen common assessment practices so that feedback and the tracking of progress in skills and mastery of content lead to effective adjustments in planning that ensure student learning and close the achievement gap. (2.2)
 - Teachers are focused on checking for understanding and providing feedback to students. A variety of formative assessment techniques were used in classes observed. Teachers gave entrance tickets, used clipboards to record participation data, asked questions as global checks, circulated and addressed individuals and groups, and assigned exit tickets. Several sources of student learning data are collected. During classroom visits and student meetings, students, who were not sure about the accuracy of the work they were doing, stated that they could ask the teacher. Students said they assess their learning and their peers' work using rubrics and other feedback forms as well as receive written teacher feedback that helps them know their strengths and areas to improve. In some classes, some students who did not understand could not fully complete the task. Other students completed the task and waited for next steps. While there is a clear focus on and adherence to common assessment practices, not all student learning needs are fully addressed during class and through written feedback on work products. Therefore, a clear and precise picture of student progress in learning is not evident in all grades and subjects, thus hindering the school's capacity to support all students in demonstrating mastery in all content and skills.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: George Westinghouse Career and Technical Education HS	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