

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Cypress Hills Collegiate Preparatory School

High school 659

**999 JAMAICA AVENUE
BROOKLYN
NY, 11208**

Principal: Amy Yager

Dates of review: May 30 31, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Teresa Caccavale

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Cypress Hills Collegiate Preparatory School is a high school with 437 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 17% Black, 73% Hispanic, 1% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 76.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's organizational decisions result in supporting the school's instructional goals that promote students' academic outcomes. (1.3)
 - Critical revisions to the students' schedule according to data regarding credit accumulation and Regents' requirements have allowed students to have additional support for Regents exams based on individual needs. Additionally, elective classes requested by students that include American Sign Language and Musical Theater are offered so students who have met the credit and Regents requirements have options. Datacation, an organized data system to track students' performance, APEX a web-based credit recovery program gives students greater opportunity for progress in credit recovery, and Rosetta Stone another web-based program for English language learners to develop English language skills during the school day and at home, all help to support the school's instructional goals and is evidenced in meaningful student work products. Furthermore, all teachers have access to Smart boards and laptop carts to foster collaborative learning through demonstration and access to the internet for content, to process specific information, as well as engage in group research projects.
 - Teams meet weekly and work towards improving instruction and engaging students in challenging academic tasks. Content and grade teams use weekly meetings to develop units, lessons, and look at student work. They also organize Kid Talks a format where parents and students can meet with all of a student's teachers simultaneously to discuss his/her progress and to plan for success. English and social studies teachers plan lessons collaboratively and use supporting materials to help students make connections to big ideas. Additionally, cooperating teachers on interdisciplinary teams identify resources for students to use to complete CCLS tasks and teachers use tools including Google Drive and Edmodo to organize and collect student work. Small learning community (SLC) meetings occur two days a week for grade and content areas giving teachers the opportunity to work on data analysis, implement strategies, develop Common Core foci and tasks, and review student work, such as exploring the use of annotation to help them concentrate and enhance their understanding of texts. As a result students are formulating thoughtful and critical responses to texts.
- The school provides adequate guidance and academic supports that foster an orderly learning environment and respectful culture so that youth development and students' academic success increases. (1.4)
 - Guidance counselors support teachers' work by sponsoring workshops focused on student achievement for parents. Through the Mayor's Initiative, counselor interns from Partnership with Children made home visits to students who have attendance issues and they offered supports when students return to school. For example, students with chronic absences check-in on a daily basis with their guidance counselor as an accountability measure to keep them on track in school. Additionally, assistant principals support pupil personnel services by ensuring that faculty utilize a proactive referral system, which includes interventions involving immediate contact with parents to address concerns and issues. Parent meetings are key components that contribute to improving attendance and providing social emotional support, resulting in positive development of students' social and emotional skills. Additionally student government activities encourage student voice and leadership and the student government executive board meets with the principal on a monthly basis to discuss ideas to build community and improve the school. As a result, students report that their ideas are valued and that they

contribute in a productive and highly visible manner towards creating a positive welcoming school culture.

- The principal uses the Danielson Framework to provide feedback to teachers, design, and implement targeted professional development to improve teacher practice. (4.1)
 - The administration uses informal and formal observations along with providing support during weekly SLC meetings to identify and address teacher's areas of strength and need for improvement in the classroom. This year's focus on improving questioning and discussion techniques in the classroom provides a lens for supervisors and teachers to refine instructional practice through the implementation of quality strategies to deepen student understanding as outlined in the Danielson Framework. Teachers are also participating in a book study using the text *Critical Thinking and Formative Assessments Increasing Rigor* in the classroom to improve their questioning techniques. Teacher lessons, units, and student work, are reviewed as part of a monthly critical friends group, and allows for the analysis of teachers' work in creating Common Core State Standards tasks as well as student work. A core group of teachers attending a Network professional development on the Danielson framework deepened their understanding, and after a round of teacher observations revealed the need for additional planning, they specially designed PD on preparation and planning that was implemented for the staff.
 - Teacher leaders meet on a weekly basis to focus on school goals that inform their own goals aligned to the Citywide Instructional Expectations. Furthermore, each teacher uses the Danielson Framework to focus on and pursue professional goals and based on feedback from the administration reflect and are shifting daily practice to plan and implement Common Core aligned units. Assistant principals and lead teachers on each grade level guide staff in small learning communities during teacher team meetings and engage in inquiry around analyzing student work to adjust planning Common Core aligned units that incorporate the instructional shifts as well as deepen teachers' understanding of the Danielson Framework, Furthermore, all teachers have the opportunity to attend offsite professional development provided by the Department of Education. Teachers who attend this PD sessions turnkey the material learned to colleagues during faculty SLC meetings. As a result teachers are increasing at least one level of proficiency in one area of professional practice as defined in the Danielson Framework, specifically within the area of Component 1E: Designing Coherent Instruction, thus all students are benefiting from a more rigorous pedagogy related to the curriculum.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine the development of curricula in Common Core (CCLS) aligned units to increase rigor in academic tasks so that all lessons promote high levels of cognitive engagement to prepare students for college and career level work. (1.1)
 - The school's prioritized standards are aligned to the Citywide Instructional Expectations. Standards are posted in classrooms and teachers' syllabi include standards across the grade levels, for students to which to refer. Teacher created curriculum maps outline topics, essential questions, alignment to Common Core standard, content related skills, assessments, and resources. Tasks are reviewed by teachers in the critical friends group and SLC for feedback. English teachers have also incorporated into a Theater Development Corporation company to include plays into their curriculum. The English and social studies departments work collaboratively to provide interdisciplinary opportunities for students. Additionally teachers are also provided planning time to align lessons to the Common Core during faculty meetings and teachers are required to demonstrate the alignment of lessons to the Common Core standards during post observation conferences. However, the school's development of curriculum maps aligned to

CCLS has not yet fully matured. Therefore inconsistency in implementing the instructional shifts across grades and subjects impedes student growth aimed at closing the achievement gap. Currently classroom lessons do not always allow students to use higher order thinking processes and do not reflect extensions and/or enrichments to address the needs of students with disabilities, English language learners, and high performing students. In some classrooms students quickly complete tasks requiring minimal effort and academic tasks for students to probe deeply were limited. In addition, in classrooms where students were working in small groups learning activities did not consistently reflect the use of data to cognitively engage all students in high-level tasks to promote thinking skills, which hinders meaningful student engagement.

- Strengthen the alignment of pedagogy to a coherent set of beliefs of how students learn best so that student work products and discussions reflect higher order thinking and participation leading to improvements in students' academic success. (1.2)
 - Clear expectations for teaching as outlined in the Danielson Framework support the school's beliefs that students learn best when they participate in a student centered learning environment. Lesson plans include essential questions and activities for special education students and English language learners. Teachers circulate the classroom and talk to individual and small groups about their work, however many teachers do not take notes and lesson adjustments are not visible. For example in a few classrooms observed students were arranged in groups but instead of working collaboratively on the task they had divided the work and were not fully engaged with the entire task at hand. Additionally feedback given to students is often verbal and limited to responses such as "good job" or "You are on the right track". Questions of varied complexity, graphic organizers, and purposeful scaffolds to activate thinking and provide multiple entry points to lessons were inconsistent across classrooms. Strategic supports for high-level learners, English language learners, and former Ells, including lesson extensions and peer conversations are not available across classrooms to encourage high levels of participation. For example, there were no action plans for adjusting student grouping and offering students targeted interventions. Teachers frequently asked lower order thinking questions and there were few opportunities for student-generated questions or student-to-student discussion. Students interviewed stated that they only get to work in groups or projects one or two days a week and they would like more of these opportunities as well as strategies and protocols for working collaboratively. As a result, some students are not always motivated to fully participate in discussions and activities that foster deep thinking and maximize learning, hindering student working to their full potential
- Further develop assessment practices to include ongoing checks for understanding and students' self and peer-assessments so that timely and effective adjustments can be made to meet students' diverse learning needs. (2.2)
 - Each department has a grading policy and generates department grading contracts so that students and parents understand the evaluation process. Teachers use common performance-based assessments and rubrics aligned to the curricula to track student progress and provide feedback regarding students' strengths and areas of need. However rubrics lack content specific skills and sub-skills and do not provide teachers with common data points to analyze various student sub-groups, although there is some evidence that teachers use the results of these assessments to revise and adjust their curriculum and instruction and to determine progress towards students' goals. Students interviewed were unable to articulate what they need to do in order to increase their performance. As a result, these feedback practices limit students' understanding of their next learning steps, revealing missed opportunities to promote students' ownership of their learning process.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Cypress Hills Collegiate Preparatory 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