Quality Review Report

2012-2013

Teachers Preparatory School

High School K697

226 Bristol Street
Brooklyn
NY 11212

Principal: Carmen Simon

Dates of review: February 12-13, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Ronald Feinstein

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Teachers Preparatory High School is a high school with 566 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 85% Black, 13% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 34% of the students enrolled and girls account for 66%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 87.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal makes effective and targeted organizational decisions and teacher assignments, which support the school's instructional goals and serve to diminish the achievement gap for students. (1.3)

    - The principal has skillfully used budget allocations to create several Integrated Co-Teaching classes across the school, which provides students' access to two teachers. Funds have been allocated to purchase resources such as Achieve 3000 to provide additional support for literacy development. These strategic decisions result in immediate benefit to students with disabilities (SWD)and English language learners (ELLs) and has earned the school extra credit in both its middle and high school Progress Reports for these and other sub-groups. A dedicated team of instructional leaders respond to the latest summative data that indicates that students struggle with combinations of texts, especially informational and real-world mathematical applications, by including more opportunities for text based writing across the curriculum, thus preparing students for the demands of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and college readiness as outlined in the school's instructional goals. The strategic placement of a middle school science teacher prepares student sub groups for the Earth Science Regents in the eighth grade, creating scheduling opportunities for additional science and mathematics coursework in high school for ELLs and students with disabilities, as well as the general student population , which is closing the achievement gap.

- School leaders support all teachers with effective feedback and next-steps, using a research-based common teaching framework to promote best practices and increased student outcomes. (4.1)

    - The school establishes the varying needs of teachers beginning in the fall with a self-evaluation plan that includes each teacher's strength, annual goals and strategies for improvement. The principal identifies supports for growth with teachers and at least two competencies from the Danielson Framework are included. For example, in a sequence of observations starting in December and continuing through March, the principal's ongoing feedback focused on questioning and discussion techniques that led to growth in teachers' use of specific comments on student work, in order to provide students' opportunities to have content-focused conversations without teacher intervention.

    - The principal frames feedback to teachers in the school's chosen research-based common teaching framework and low-inference data harvested from classroom observation visits, which is aligned to specific elements in the Danielson rubric. For example, after observing a science lesson focused on questioning and discussion techniques, the principal captured specific questions asked by the teacher and students and then suggested next steps in writing to the teacher to move students toward their next steps. In response to a sequence of rapid-fire questions, the principal encouraged the teacher to "incorporate at least 3 seconds of

wait time", thereby enabling more students to participate. In another classroom focused on the same element, administrative feedback to the teacher offered strategies to encourage students to "evaluate or expand upon other students' responses", in order to further promote teachers' professional growth and best practices for increased student outcomes.

- A majority of teachers engage in inquiry-based collaborations where they asses data and analyze student work to make adjustments in practice that result in student progress. (4.2)

    - Teachers are engaged in inquiry-based collaborations that include an analysis of the CCLS that, in some instances, have led to innovations in instructional practices. For example, teachers administered CCLS tasks as benchmarks and collaboratively analyzed the results to determine areas of student strengths and areas of need. Consequently, rubrics for the tasks were revised to align with identified needs, such as providing text based evidence in writing samples. In addition, teams consistently analyze and score student work to surface trends and patterns that direct teachers to improving classroom practices; as a result, teachers design and ask more open ended questions to push students' critical thinking and their ability to make inferences. Inquiry work has also helped to identify instructional leaders who share effective improvements in instructional practice and lead groups of students, which are shared by these teachers, towards mastery of identified student goals. Such discoveries strengthen instructional practices school-wide and contribute to developing more instructional coherence and ultimately academic growth for all learners.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop curricula and rigorous academic tasks aligned to key State standards that will consistently emphasize higher-order thinking skills across grades and subjects for all students. (1.1)

    - School leaders and staff are involved in the process of identifying key State standards that drive school improvement and are beginning to implement changes in curriculum and pedagogy as indicated by the most recent data trends from the State item skills analysis. While school leadership articulates a rationale for where and when the CCLS units of study are to be implemented and some attention is given to the Citywide Instructional Expectations shifts in math and literacy, there is not yet enough clarity and deep understanding by both inquiry leaders and staff about how this work serves to close the achievement gap and promote college and career readiness for all students. The school's definition of rigor is incorporated into curriculum maps; however there is inconsistent evidence of a focus on higher-order critical thinking skills and insufficient rigor as defined by Depth of Knowledge (DOK) or the Cognitive Rigor Matrix in the day to day lesson plans and tasks presented to students. For example, in a limited number of classrooms students were responding in a "turn-and-talk" format to a series of thoughtful and provocative questions posed by the teacher, while most other lessons consisted primarily of teacher dominated talk. This absence of rigor in

lessons leads to limited opportunities for students to demonstrate higher order thinking in preparation for post secondary work.

- Promote teaching practices that more consistently provide appropriately challenging tasks to enable all students to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills and high levels of participation and discussion in their work. (1.2)

    - The school leadership arranges considerable professional development efforts to ensure teachers include modeling and higher-level questioning in all lessons, and planning documents and curriculum maps provide evidence of these efforts. However, tiered and scaffolded questions to engage students at their instructional levels are not routinely evident in actual lesson implementation. Likewise, professional development opportunities to build awareness of the school's definition of rigor in both planning and implementation have been scheduled. However, the inconsistency in the implementation of agreed-upon strategies for extending higher order thinking into the majority of classrooms results in diminished opportunities for all students to engage in challenging tasks that extend their thinking. In addition, across classrooms student participation in lessons was primarily an exchange of one to two sentences in response to teacher generated questions, between the teacher and student. Consequently, students are not provided with high levels of participation in class discussions to consistently push their thinking, in order to develop critical thinking to support college and career readiness skills.

- Provide more actionable feedback to students and enable teachers to use data from common assessments in order to make more effective instructional adjustments to meet all students' learning needs. (2.2)

    - The school's worthwhile focus on literacy across content areas does not yet include effective analysis of data to uncover the literacy-related strengths and needs of individual students and specific sub-groups. Most teachers are committed to their practice and meet with colleagues during common planning time to review student assessments. However, a lack of consistent guidance from mid-level supervision on evaluating the data from student assessments, severely limits effective and coherent practice across the grades, including meetings with the instructional leads to inform adjustments to the curriculum aligned to chosen standards and the development of uniform grading policies. This results in uneven implementation of strategies to provide effective feedback to students regarding their learning or to teachers regarding necessary adjustments to their practice.

    - School-wide common assessments provide information about each student's level of performance in terms of meeting individual and school goals. However, teachers are not provided sufficient guidance on how best to make adjustments made explicit by data analyses and thus, identify the critical skills that need to be immediately re-taught or built into the next unit of study. This delay in using real-time data severely restricts the school in making timely actions to adjust curriculum and instruction which thwarts opportunities for academic success for all learners.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Teachers Preparatory High School	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score		X		

Instructional Core

To what extent does the school regularly…	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

To what extent does the school …	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

To what extent does the school …	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**