

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Michelangelo

J.H.S. 144

2545 Gunther Avenue

Bronx

NY 10469

Principal: Jeremy Kabinoff

Dates of review: November 8-9, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Ronald Feinstein

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Michelangelo is a middle school with 951 students from six through grade eight. The school population comprises 67% Black, 27% Hispanic, 2% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 89.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Across content areas, curricula are aligned to key standards as well as the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the instructional shifts to ensure higher levels of student achievement. (1.1)
 - The school has continued the work begun last year aligning curriculum to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and uses a gap analysis of ongoing performance to provide a reliable cross-walk into the CCLS from the New York State standards. In addressing the need to improve the key standard of informational writing and to increase students' abilities to support their arguments and cite specific evidence, their units of study now include revised tasks that require high levels of critical thinking. As a result, students' writing products show clear evidence of the identification and inclusion of text-based evidence that supports their presented arguments thus closing the achievement gap.
 - The school's curriculum is implemented consistently across all grades, and holds all students accountable to meeting learning expectations, including students with disabilities and English language learners, providing additional supports as needed. To ensure high levels of thinking all teachers apply the cognitive rigor matrix to instructional practices as well as in task design. In addition, all students are now programmed for journalism and debate course that requires them to engage in practical analysis of synthesizing, justifying and providing and defending their thinking. These ensure that students continuously hone their critical thinking skills, thus preparing them for the rigors, challenges and demands of higher education and future success.
- The analysis of common assessments and grading practices provides information to teachers and administrators and informs curricular adjustments to increase student performance. (2.2)
 - The use of collaboratively developed, school-wide common assessments and a uniform grading policy that is closely aligned to both State standards and curricula provides information about each student's levels of performance towards meeting individual and school goals. The school has created a Mastery Tracking Tool (MTT), an electronic platform that monitors student's increasing performance on the skills being taught in each unit. The MTT provides information by individual student, by class and by grade. Teachers have the information needed to make adjustments to the unit, and identify which critical skills need to be immediately retaught or build into the next unit of study. Real time data allows teachers to provide feedback to students on their performance and progress, and to begin providing immediate supports for struggling students. This multi-layered Mastery Impact Data (MID) assures that the school knows, responds to and makes the adjustments needed so that all students demonstrate increased mastery.

- The school collaborates to establish an effective learning culture and communicates high expectations to students, staff and families making explicit the connections leading to future success. (3.4)
 - School leaders use well its own expanded version of TeachScape collaboratively with teachers to communicate the extent to which they, along with their students are providing evidence of observed strengths and weaknesses as defined through elements of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and ARIS Learn. This electronic school-developed tool affords both administrators and teachers the opportunity to track progress in key elements of teaching pedagogy such as evaluating arguments, questioning and discussion, using open-ended questions, use of wait-time, and other elements. Additionally, continued support is provided in identified areas. This has resulted in the creation of a community of learners who share mutual accountability for the school's high expectations.
 - An enhanced version of TeacherEase, an electronic on-line reporting system, permits students and families real-time progress report data without any gap or lag. Emails inform parents of student progress and when the most current marking period data will be available. This means the data displayed reflects current status of all student work, homework assignments, attendance as well as interim and summative performance results. A phone APP linked to the Triad of Communication ensures that parents remain in an effective communications link with the school. This triad includes the school website, along with the on-line grade book (TeacherEase), and a teacher read-only website that collectively, deliver information based on grades, assignments, events, plans, student conduct and next learning steps, While most families have internet access at home, the Parent Coordinator maintains a fail-safe bank of computers available in her office for any families who may need to log on at school. The school artfully uses all these systems to promote parent nights and high school readiness. In addition, many students are encouraged to take matriculated courses that enable them to take college credits in their junior and senior years of high school thus making even more explicit the connections to high expectations for college and career readiness.
- The principal and assistant principals have an effective system to provide teachers with clear expectations, effective feedback and next steps from a research-based common teaching framework. (4.1)
 - The school has developed an Observation Tracking Tool (OTT) that enables teachers and administrators an extremely flexible platform to provide feedback to all teachers on any selected elements from the *Framework for Teaching* as well as any progress or challenges that remain as staff implement other school initiatives. The OTT captures both quantitative and qualitative evidence of progress for each teacher on a range of school initiatives and includes recommendations for future success. For example, teacher's developing pedagogy in areas as specialized as "How do we effectively express our ideas in a writer's notebook?", and "How do we evaluate and interpret how the events in a story affect the characters in the story?" are evaluated on a rubric and tracked for growth over time. Additionally, school initiatives such as

implementation of Socratic Seminar and the ability to integrate peer assessment into classroom lessons along with specific elements of the research-based common teaching framework are also accurately captured and result in effective feedback on practice and student work. The data harvested from the OTT drives the school's professional development plan. Since all administrators can input observation data at multiple points over time, teacher profiles therefore consider data from these multiple perspectives ensuring that informed decisions regarding professional development, teacher teaming and peer mentoring lead to improved student performance.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the understanding and implementation of teaching strategies, including questioning and discussion, so that consistent engagement with rigorous tasks demands critical thinking skills in student work. (1.2)
 - The school expends considerable efforts in encouraging teacher risk-taking and emphasizing modeling as a non-negotiable for all lessons. Teachers, tapping into student interests and age-appropriate issues such as whether New York City school busses are an appropriate place for marketing junk food, censorship, the death penalty, dating violence, and military recruitment on school campuses, assure that students have a connection and interest in new learning. To ensure that all students are actively engaged, the use of technology including iPads, modeling and student led discussion are routine practices within classrooms. Planning documents for instruction include tiered and scaffolded questioning to assure that all students are met at their level, including students with disabilities and English Language learners. Professional development opportunities build awareness of the importance of high levels of rigor in both planning and implementation of tasks. However, there is inconsistency in the implementation of agreed-upon strategies for extending higher-order thinking in a number of classrooms. This results in diminished opportunities for all students to engage in challenging tasks that offer opportunities to extend their thinking.
- Ensure that teacher teams' analyses of student work and assessment data strengthen and systematize their instructional capacity and result in progress towards goals for students. (4.2)
 - All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based collaborations that include the integration of common core learning standards several times a week. In some instances collaborative work has led to innovations in instructional practice for team members. For example, teaching features of non-fiction texts precipitated the adoption of several strategies including the "Big Box Strategy," a graphic representation to assist students in citing and gathering textual evidence. However, these discoveries do not yet strengthen instructional practices school-wide and therefore prevent instructional coherence and academic growth for all learners.
 - Teacher teams engage in the consistent analysis of student work and use a wide range of assessment data to assist students in reaching their goals. For example, teacher teams collaboratively score student work to

surface trends and patterns that lead to improvements in teaching practices. In some cases inquiry work has resulted in moving the most successful teachers into more challenging positions. However, these efforts are not yet systematic so that they yield shared improvements in all teacher practice and mastery of goals for groups of students shared by these teams.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Michelangelo J.H.S. 144	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