

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**Marie Currie School for Medicine, Nursing, and Health
Professions**

10X237

**120 West 231st Street
BRONX
NY, 10463**

Principal: Rodney Fisher

Dates of review: April 23 – 24, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Elaine Lindsey

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Marie Currie School for Medicine, Nursing and Health Professions is a 9 - 12 school with 540 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 36% Black, 57% Hispanic, 3% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 17% of the students enrolled and girls account for 83%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 84.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school provides engaging and rigorous curricula that integrate Common Core aligned units and refined tasks, in order to challenge and engage all learners and promote college and career readiness skills. (1.1)
 - School leaders and staff have adopted the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and have concentrated on ensuring that students are able to formulate arguments, develop claims and engage in viable research. Curriculum maps and units of study emphasize key standards for making claims and citing evidence and integrate Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) as well as the CCLS. Across grades, all students are required to complete research projects on a health topic, which includes citing of specific textual evidence to support claims. Scaffolded research assignments begin freshman year requiring students in each grade to complete a research paper. In the ninth grade, students are required to submit a three page, typed research paper with cites from primary and secondary resources and a bibliography. By the twelfth grade students' research projects require a 5 to 7 page typed research paper on a health topic and a visual and oral presentation. In addition, seniors must plan and complete a community service project directly related to their topic, resulting in students being engaged in rigorous tasks and curricula that prepare them with college and readiness skills.
 - Teachers assess and discuss student work, while focusing on strategies and tasks to maximize learning for all students including English language learners (ELLs) and Students with Disabilities (SWDs). Talk Tuesdays allow departments to meet weekly to discuss and plan best strategies to cognitively engage all learners. Learning outcomes are related to formative and summative assessment results and lessons are adjusted accordingly. A baseline assessment revealed that the bottom third struggled with reading comprehension which resulted in implementing Achieve 3000 two times per week and teachers providing modified tasks to further cognitive engagement. Advanced students are provided with work appropriate to their learning level. As a result, students experience curriculum that leads to increased engagement.
- The principal makes strategic organizational decisions to utilize scheduling, and hiring practices to support the school's instructional goals to promote student learning. (1.3)
 - Strategic and purposeful scheduling ensures every core content teacher participates in daily team work. Teacher teams use this time to deepen Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and inquiry work in addition to turn-keying their own professional learning. Every Tuesday one department rotates to participate in all day planning. Content area teachers are relieved of all teaching assignments for the day, and use this time to analyze student work and further develop curriculum. Students' work is analyzed using the protocol; "so what", "now what" to revise and refine curriculum and instruction. As a result, all learners are engaged in academically challenging tasks, as evidenced in student work samples.

- The school's collaborative approach to hiring promotes accountability among faculty. A hiring team, consisting of the content area teacher and administration, serve as the nucleus for making all hiring decisions. Prospective teachers conduct demo lessons before a mock class of students. Students provide feedback and the team collaboratively makes the final hiring decision. This year a dual licensed social studies teacher was hired based on student feedback and team consensus. Upon hiring, teachers on the hiring team are responsible for supporting new hires through peer observations, feedback and planning. As a result, teachers are working collaboratively resulting in higher Regents pass rates for students.
- School leaders have established a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff and students and have developed systems to support and ensure all learners achieve. (3.4)
 - The principal has created an environment where high expectations are communicated across grades and disciplines. Teachers align curriculum maps and unit plans to the CCLS. Teacher teams meet regularly for common planning and unit plans are submitted for review and approval by the administration. In addition, the school's participation in the Teacher Effectiveness Pilot (TEP) enables administrators to monitor instruction through frequent observations by utilizing the ARIS online tracking tool to identify continued areas of struggle in order to inform professional development workshops and provide actionable feedback, using the Danielson Framework to promote accountability. Teachers also participate in peer observations and professional development using the Danielson rubric, resulting in improved teacher practice.
 - School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path for college and careers. Starting in the 9th grade, students and parents participate in a college orientation. Parents participate in college readiness workshops, so that they are aware of the expectations for their children. All students meet with a counselor to go over the college process. Each freshman completes a college package that includes a college preparation checklist, timeline, career and search tips sheet, student self assessment, activity tracking sheet, college interest survey and statement, college counseling check-list and counselor assessment. The college process continues throughout the student's high school experience. All seniors are assigned a Flock Teacher who helps them set goals while meeting regularly with students to monitor their progress towards reaching their goals. Students can take AP courses and are expected to participate in ongoing college tours. As a result, parents and students have a better understanding about the college process and students' progress towards those expectations.
- School leaders use observations to provide feedback and support using a research-based framework that articulates clear expectations and supports in order to promote professional growth. (4.1)
 - In addition to the school's participation in the TEP and use of the Danielson Framework, the administration has supported teacher development through frequent cycles of observations, which are

conducted a minimum of six times for the school year. These snapshots provide feedback focusing on implementation of the CIE and the effective use of classroom assessments during instruction to support student learning. For example, a review of observation feedback given in a foreign language and math class was targeted and provided actionable feedback with suggestions for next steps. The feedback for one teacher indicated that although he did checks for understanding, indications of student uncertainty did not inform changes in instruction to assist and engage all learners. As a result, the teacher implemented the suggestions resulting in improved instruction and student engagement.

- Administrators use teacher observation data to effectively design and facilitate professional development. As participants in the Teacher Effectiveness Pilot, teacher development is tracked using the Danielson rubric through the Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS). A series of informal observations revealed the need for professional development around using assessment in instruction, resulting in workshops to improve teacher competency in this area. As a result, administrators observed improvements in the percentage of teachers moving from developing to effective, resulting in improved pedagogy.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen pedagogy to ensure that teaching strategies, including questioning scaffolds and routines, consistently provide multiple entry points and high quality supports to engage all learners.(1.2)
 - Across classrooms students respond to teacher questions, however teaching strategies such as questioning, is typically lower level, rapid fire type questions that do not provide multiple entry points to engage all learners and challenge students to think critically. For example in an economic class students were asked, “Pessimism is when you what?” and “Give a long and short term effect of the stock market”. In a math class the teacher asks, “What happens when you have a negative?”, “What’s the root?” In addition, students do not form their own higher order questions and lessons do not typically generate student query. Although grouping is evident, groups are often given identical tasks, thus hindering opportunities for all teachers to consistently challenge all learners in meaningful activities in order to produce higher order work products.
 - Although teacher questioning generated some student discussion, lessons across classrooms were often teacher centered resulting in limited opportunities for student interaction. Discussions were typically teacher-to- student and student-to-teacher, thus limiting student opportunities for exploration and engagement in higher order dialogue. In a global history class the teacher asks the class “Does anyone see a positive in child labor laws?” “Should you still have choice?” Students respond to the teacher; however there was no further inquiry. In a physics class, students respond to the teacher after being asked, "What do you have to do before making your drills?" As a result, not all students are engaged in discussions that reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

- Improve teacher assessment practices so that clear next learning steps are identified in order to inform effective instructional adjustments to meet the needs of all learners. (2.2)
 - The school has implemented a school-wide grading policy of 60% formative and a 40% summative assessment that has been shared with students, however teachers have flexibility in what those assessments look like, resulting in varied versions aligned to key standards. In an algebra class formative assessments consist of homework, notebook, class work and projects while an algebra/trigonometry class's formative assessments consist of quizzes, exit tickets and group activity. This inconsistency hinders the school's ability to provide a clear depiction of student mastery across classes for meaningful feedback to students regarding next steps for improvements.
 - Teachers' assessment practices across some classrooms reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding as evidenced in a math class where students use the red, yellow, green and blue check-in method. Flashing the yellow or red card informs the teacher of the students' level of struggle in order to make adjustments for understanding. Remaining classes use thumbs up/down, raise your hands and exit tickets. However, strategies to check for understanding are not sufficiently varied to note students' specific lack of understanding, so that teachers use them to make appropriate adjustments to consistently meet the learning needs of all students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

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|---|-----------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| School name: The Marie Curie School For Medicine, Nursing and Health Professions | 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 |