

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Jeffrey M. Rapport School For Career Development

**High School 754
470 Jackson Avenue
Bronx
NY 10455**

Principal: Daniel Hoehn

Dates of review: April 29 - May 1, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Nina Pitton

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Jeffrey M. Rapport School for Career Development is a high School with 600 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 37% Black, 59% Hispanic, 3% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 35% English language learners and 65% special education students. Boys account for 68% of the students enrolled and girls account for 32%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 63.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has thoughtfully designed a comprehensive curriculum that is well aligned to key Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in order to cognitively engage a diverse group of learners. (1.1)
 - Curriculum maps and syllabi supplement the school's standards-aligned curriculum, incorporate developmental appropriate practices (DAP) and use strategies as defined in the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to suggest learning progressions, providing an accurate roadmap of key expectations for teachers, students, and families. Additionally, key standards in writing, speaking and listening, and the instructional shifts including balancing informational and literary texts, text-based answers, academic vocabulary in literacy, and applications in math, all identified by the school based on assessment data, provide coherence across grades and subjects. Diagnostic assessments at the beginning of each unit inform teachers about what the students 'know' and 'understand' relative to the unit and teachers then customize an effective teaching plan for the unit. Additional assessment programs such as SANDI and Scantron as well as unit embedded performance tasks drive the refinement of the curriculum to ensure that tasks are rigorous and adequately align with students' developmental levels. For example, in a unit on college and career readiness, the task required that students compile, publish, and present an electronic portfolio for an audience of invited guests and school staff. Students had to share their rationale for selected artifacts, including a letter of recommendation from a staff member, work samples (projects, final performance tasks, research paper, and or document-based essay,); prove their community service with pictures/videos to illustrate their performance volunteering around the community; and address questions about their future plans and goals. As a result students were able to demonstrate high order thinking skills as evidenced by an increase in scholarship report scores of 27% compared to 9% last year, and 20 students moving into inclusion classes.
 - Teachers emphasize rigor and high-order thinking in instructional planning and the development and refinement of performance tasks through continuous use of the Webb's Depth of Knowledge criteria. Structured and frequent analysis of baseline assessment data collected through the Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI) is used to inform Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and to monitor student progress and continually refine units, lessons, and student performance tasks, to determine student groupings according to student skill levels in math. The curriculum is also designed to support career readiness through opportunities for students to participate in on-site job experiences at partnership sites including Fordham University, leading to students who are career ready and able to obtain competitive employment.
- School leaders make strategic organizational decisions aligned to the school's instructional goals resulting in improved teaching practice and learning outcomes for students. (1.3)
 - Per-session funds allocated to curriculum mapping enables teachers to spend afternoons and Saturdays refining the curriculum based on assessment results and to carefully analyze student work so that there are clear and explicit next steps in the teaching and learning process. As part of the school's educational

mission to integrate technology into the daily teaching and learning process, the school purchased 60 laptops to address individual student needs at all of the school's 11 sites. The school also invested in Smart board technology, which is yielding higher student engagement and performance. Key positions were created to further support teacher development and address student needs. For example, a librarian with strong instructional background participates in teacher teams meetings as an instructional leader, bringing into the mix her rich experience with literacy strategies and skills. The school strategically designed some self-contained classrooms to minimize existing behavior issues. Common planning is structured based on academy, allowing team members to benefit from an interdisciplinary approach to lesson planning and curriculum building. The school works exceptionally well to prepare students for placement in worksites by forming partnerships with organizations such as Fordham University, Kings Harbor, Bronx VA Hospital, and the Daughters of Jacob. This has enabled students to gain permanent employment in meaningful jobs, fulfilling the school's mission to expand transition opportunities for all students.

- Teacher teams that meet two to three hours a week have a clear and, coherent purpose and they articulated their work and its impact on classroom practice and student outcomes. Teams regularly engage in inquiry to analyze student work to adjust teaching practice and instructional planning, plan common-core aligned units to gain familiarity with key instructional practices, plan for shifts in instruction, and deepen their understanding of Danielson. Furthermore, teams have established purposeful protocols to examine student work and curriculum. A clear and shared definition of rigor is used to vet and refine tasks and assignments before they are used in classrooms, and adjustments and curricular decisions are purposeful in supporting relevant subgroups of students such as English language learners (ELLs), thus all students show evidence of high quality performance tasks culminating work products.
- The school community is dedicated to supporting its students and its cohesive efforts result in a safe and productive learning environment that supports students' social/emotional and academic growth. (1.4)
 - The school's approach to culture building is typified by a common belief in the importance of learning by all students. This is evident in the well-structured Positive Behavior System (PBIS) and the collaboration of the building response team and crisis team trained in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI). This structure supports the school's goal to prevent crises, de-escalate potential crises, and reduce potential injury to students and staff to maximize opportunities for students to fully engage in learning. The PBIS team and a student representative meet monthly to review the safety plan and make adjustments based on current data. Mid-year and end-of-year conversations are scheduled to further review and modify the plan with administrators, resulting in sustainability of a good standing status and steady improvement in student attitude toward adults and peers. Students are an integral part of this culture building. They actively participate in the decision-making process via a student government structure, membership on the school leadership team (SLT), student council, Food Committee, and via surveys and proposals. For example, the I-CARE program was proposed by the students as part of the school's PBIS system. They created a rubric to facilitate implementation of the program, resulting in the availability of a wide variety of activities for students and a decrease in student incidents and suspensions as reflected in the school's Online Occurrence Report data.

- The school is structured in three academies with small classes of no more than twelve students with at least one or more adults present, which allows for students to be well known and for adults to be cognizant of individual student's needs, preferences, and challenges. Classroom staff review each student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) to plan a comprehensive structure for lesson delivery and social-emotional management support. Clear attendance procedures are established and personalized to ensure that outreach by school personnel is conducted as needed. The advisory program further guarantees students' social and emotional growth. More programs such as Hip Hop for Life and a Girls Support Group provide additional options to students. Students also have access to counselors, college/career advisors/coaches and other personnel who all work to ensure that students leave the school with a solid plan for postsecondary success.
- Assessment practices are explicitly aligned to key standards resulting in an effective analysis of student progress that leads to instructional adjustments that increase mastery. (2.2)
 - Teachers and administrators articulate coherent reasons for assessment choices that are aligned to key standards in the curriculum. The school uses SANDI and Scantron to inform IEP goals, which are in turn monitored for progress and mastery throughout the school year. These choices deliver a range of data, some daily, some monthly, and some quarterly, to sustain collaborative inquiry and continuously improve instruction. Teams of teachers create common rubrics to monitor the effectiveness of instruction across subject areas, and performance tasks align to CCLS, curriculum, and current student needs. Teachers use the feedback from these assessments to refine the curriculum, syllabi and to adjust their practices. Teachers and administrators also use these tools to track progress towards goals across grades and subject areas and to make school wide instructional decisions, advancing student learning.
 - Teacher monitoring of student understanding during lessons is sophisticated and continuous. The teacher is constantly “taking the pulse” of the class and makes frequent use of the following strategies: stop and jot prompts, parking lot, exit slips, and scaffolded questioning to elicit information about individual student’s understanding and trends. Students constantly self/peer assess against the assessment criteria (rubrics) and monitor their understanding and progress either on their own initiative or as a result of prompts by the teacher, ensuring student awareness of their next learning steps.
- School leaders effectively use various observation and reflection structures coupled with targeted supports for development to promote professional growth and elevate instructional practices. (4.1)
 - The school is in its second year of participation in the Teacher Effectiveness Pilot (TEP) and uses protocols aligned to the Danielson framework for observations and feedback. The use of strategic cycles of informal and formal observations allows for a productive collaboration between administrators and teachers and provides a transparent structure for teachers to share best practices and grow professionally. Teachers set professional goals with administrators' input at the beginning of the school year, and these goals inform the focus of observations, aligned feedback, and targeted professional development to teachers. Mid-year and end-of-year conversations track overall progress and adjustments in the structure. Teachers also conduct frequent inter-visitations where they offer each

other effective feedback and suggest next steps based on the research-based common teaching framework. Additionally, the school partners with Pace University to provide new teachers with experienced mentoring, and these teachers are further supported through inter-visitations, weekly team meetings, and a professional development plan, resulting in teachers feeling well supported by administration and colleagues.

- Teachers' professional development learning plans consistently align with their selected goals and the school's goals and have articulated next steps in place to improve teacher practice. These plans include a self-assessment, goals, developmental action steps, measures of progress, resources, as well as anticipated student outcomes, resulting in a clear path for teacher development and support. The majority of teachers can articulate how their collaboratively developed goals play-out in the classrooms, and they can cite specific student data showing that the goals are moving student outcomes forward. There is a demonstrated growth of teachers over time with ongoing reflection and interim goal setting as evidenced by +9% increase in Effective ratings, showing clear evidence that school leaders have normed feedback around the school's vision to ensure consistency of teacher development.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase teacher capacity so that they strategically include multiple entry points and appropriately challenging tasks for all learners to demonstrate high order thinking. (1.2)
 - The school has embraced structures that promote student discussions. Teachers are reflective about their practice and are clear on identifying what works and does not work with their students. Classrooms reflect clear beliefs that students learn best in a productive learning environment with clear routines and differentiated learning situations to accomplish the goals. A research-based framework informs the implementation and refinement of teaching strategies. Common teaching strategies include turn-and-talk, flexible grouping, guided practice in-group work, rubric reflection and computer-based skill practice. Some classroom discussions still volley between teacher and student, and some conversations do not require students to fully explain the rationale behind their answer. In some classrooms, where efforts are made to involve struggling learners with CCLS-aligned performance tasks, high performing students were not given adequate opportunities to push their thinking with challenging problems. As a result, demonstration of higher-order thinking in student discussion and work products particularly for higher achievers is still uneven across classrooms and not all learners are working at a level optimal to advance them from their current level of performance.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: J. M. Rapport School for Career Development	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