

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**High School for Arts, Imagination and Inquiry**

**High School 299**

**122 Amsterdam Avenue  
Manhattan  
NY 10023**

**Principal: Stephen Noonan**

**Dates of review: January 7 - 8, 2014  
Lead Reviewer: Anthony R. Lodico**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

High School for Arts, Imagination and Inquiry is a high school with 435 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 40% Black, 57% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 83.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Curricula and unit plans align to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to foster higher order thinking so that diverse learners can be cognitively engaged. (1.1)
  - The school has used curriculum resources since 2009 to support teachers and school leaders in analyzing decisions more meaningfully to inform the impact on students' progress, learning, and academic success. Similarly, for this school year, teachers, administrators, and coaches are continue to engage in ongoing curriculum revision and mapping to ensure alignment to the CCLS and content standards. This year, teacher goal setting, which was an outgrowth of the individual planning conferences, included the expectation that the goals be linked to both Danielson Framework and the CCLS in literacy. These units of study are also developed using Understanding by Design (UBD) and essential questions as a guide, thus ensuring that the school's curricula embed the rigor of the CCLS. For example, essential questions such as "What are the effects of injustice on individuals, families, communities and society? What can be done to prevent injustice in our society?" are used to further engage students in learning tasks that require critical thinking, reflection and application to real life situations. With the support of the school's network team, curriculum maps, units, and tasks are developed collaboratively using team time and the Atlas Rubicon curriculum mapping tool to ensure coherence. Furthermore, all curriculum map templates include the capacities for imaginative learning, essential questions, content, skills, academic vocabulary, assessment, resources, learning activities, and differentiated instruction strategies to meet the needs of a variety of learners. For example, scaffold/tiered and adapted handouts, visual prompts and modified reading materials are incorporated into lessons where appropriate. Lessons are also created across disciplines within each unit to build on student skills, vocabulary, and content knowledge progressively to promote mastery at the end of units. As a result, the integration and expectations of the CCLS into the design of daily lessons and academic tasks have resulted in learning that promotes cognitive engagement and higher order thinking for all students.
- Systems, supports, and partnerships are in place to ensure a respectful, safe, and nurturing learning environment that fosters academic and social-emotional growth. (1.4)
  - The school has opportunities for students to be active participants in the maintenance and facilitation of their learning environment. In partnership with administrators, teachers, support staff, and partners students are active participants in the restorative justice philosophy that the school employs. In addition to all staff members being trained in restorative practices, there are students in grades 11 and 12 who are also trained as Peer Circle Facilitators. As needed, these students assist in classroom circles, as needed and serve as leaders of the restorative detention program to further support the school's approach to culture building. Students shared that it is through this program that many problems are deescalated and resolved quickly. Students also discussed recent anti-bullying campaigns and the Fall Festival as examples of student initiated and led events. Counseling, grade advisement, and college and career counseling are available to all students. In addition to counselors

assigned to specific grades, there is also college readiness education for students through school partnerships with The DOME Project and the City University of New York (CUNY). This college readiness class is offered starting in grade 9, and the curriculum is designed to prepare students for college and career readiness throughout their four years of high school. Urban Arts and Lincoln Center Education (LCE) are other key partners that support the school's goals in ensuring that students' receive appropriate guidance/advisement according to their needs and career interests. For example, through LCE students have the opportunity to learn from teaching artists whom collaborate with their classroom teachers to further support student learning. Moreover, Lincoln Center Education works closely with administrators and offers professional development to teachers focusing on aesthetic learning models, thus further supporting teachers' practice in meeting the needs of students. Similarly, Urban Arts, in addition to working with students and teachers, also offers programs for parents and guardians to develop effective academic and personal behaviors in support of students' preparation for college and career. Through various collaborations, the school administration, with input from students, is able to develop and maintain a strong youth development approach focused on student independence and improved student learning.

- The school's assessment practices and data analysis across grades and subjects guide curriculum and instructional adjustments to improve student achievement. (2.2)
  - The analysis and review of baseline assessments, regents, mock regents, and student work are part of the teacher team protocols and procedures. Based on the findings, teachers will work to adjust instructional approaches, rubrics, and curriculum as needed. During a ninth grade team meeting, a science teacher presented a rubric used to promote students' ability to self-assess their own work and presentations. Teachers use team meeting findings and outcomes to adjust the creation of tasks and add the necessary scaffolds to support struggling students. For example, through item analysis of social studies regents, it was determined that additional supports were needed for students in preparing for Document Based Questions (DBQ) essays and reading directions. Additionally, Castle Learning software to gives further instructional support to individual teachers and teams through online review, assessment, and data reporting to further adjust curriculum and instruction. A chemistry teacher, for example, used Castle Learning and exit slips to differentiate homework assignments for her students. Another outgrowth of assessment review and analysis is the Fresh Prep Regents preparation classes which were created for English language arts, global history, and United States history in partnership with Urban Arts. The curriculum for these review classes use item analysis of regents and results on practice tests in conjunction with arts infused lessons to prepare students to retake the Regent exams. Furthermore, CCLS aligned rubrics have been developed and are used across classrooms and grades. This allows students to effectively use the feedback given to improve their work and to understand the next steps for improvement and mastery of the CCLS. Students shared that teacher feedback and use of rubrics help them to make improvements and adjustments to their work. These thoughtful decisions and practices have resulted in targeted supports to meet the needs of students and improve student academic outcomes.
- School leaders support the development of teachers and professional growth through observation, feedback, and professional development. (4.1)

- School leaders provide regular feedback to teachers through informal and formal observations guided by the Danielson Framework rubric. The feedback is aligned to teachers' professional goals and is further used to support teachers' professional growth. The teacher feedback is enhanced by conferences which are held for all formal and informal observations, and are linked to the professional goals set by the teacher. For example, in the observation reports reviewed, feedback from supervisors include examples of Depth of Knowledge (DOK) level 3 and 4 questions, articles, and materials from professional development sessions regarding strategies on increasing active student engagement. Also, during a teacher meeting, teachers stated that professional development opportunities are available to all new and experienced teachers both in and out of the school. Teachers also shared that the school offered SMARTboard training, Castle Learning professional development, and Atlas Rubicon to further support their instructional practice. Furthermore, after analyzing the data from observations in TeachBoost, the administration determined that domains 3b and 3d were target areas for individual and school wide professional development and support. In addition to the observation process, the practice of inter-visitation and teacher led professional development opportunities have led to a deeper understanding of the Danielson Framework and next steps for improved teacher practice. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to take advantage of outside professional development opportunities to support their growth. As a result, professional development combined with the observation and the feedback process has resulted in improved pedagogy.

## What the school needs to improve

- Deepen instructional practices to ensure that multiple entry points are strategically planned and that all learners are consistently engaged in higher order thinking and challenging tasks. (1.2)
  - Teachers and administrators share a belief that students learn best when they are immersed in an inclusive environment where writing, reading to think, and learning are celebrated. Thus, as expressed by school leaders and teachers, it is expected that lessons will be engaging, extend student thinking, and expand higher order thinking opportunities. In a history class, for example, students were purposefully grouped and expected to engage in Document Based Questions (DBQ) document stations and respond to a variety of documents related to the Golden Age of China to further engage student in higher order thinking. Appropriate scaffolds were incorporated into the lesson and tasks to support English language learners and special education students. For example, the English as a second language (ESL) teacher discussed documents with students in their native language, asked questions to extend their thinking, and motivate them to respond to the documents. The lesson plan also ensured that all students had appropriate entry points into the lesson regardless of attendance, skill level, or language proficiency. Student groups at each station were engaged in Accountable Talk, and both teachers circulated and monitored students' progress and productivity in the learning activity. In another classroom, Virtual Enterprise, a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, were students engaged in self-assessing their business plan by also analyzing the feedback received from the local business plan competition. Students were self-motivated and self-directed as they worked in their respective groups (departments). Furthermore, in an earth science lab, students were engaged in a Particle Deposition Lab, and in the group practice portion of the lesson students made inferences and were expected to explain their findings of how size, shape, and density affect a particle's setting time. However, in other classrooms,

opportunities for student to student interaction, active engagement, and deeper thinking were hindered by teacher directed approaches to tasks and the absence of scaffolds or supports for the variety of learners in the classroom. For example, in some classrooms all discussion and questioning was teacher to student and back to the teacher. Students were expected to complete problems and or answer questions but had little opportunity to extend their thinking. The lack of strategic planning for rigorous learning tasks, providing targeted supports with multiple entry points, and meaningful extensions hinder opportunities for students' to engage in deeper levels of participation and discussions.

- Expand upon the school's structures for professional collaborations and inquiry to further enhance teachers' capacity and leadership. (4.2)
  - Teacher teams have developed protocols and systems for aligning instructional tasks to the CCLS and for looking at student work to strengthen instructional practices and student learning. Teachers are looking at student work products, sharing of best practices, engaging in "kid talk," and analyzing assessment data to further identify and support the academic needs of student subgroups. Teachers have scheduled time for common planning, grade team meetings, department meetings, and other opportunities to engage in co-teaching collaboration that further support their instructional practice and growth. Furthermore, administrators meet with grade team leaders to coordinate presentations regarding specific teams and initiatives to the entire staff, thus supporting teacher development and student learning across the school. In addition, the work of teams focuses on inquiry and strategizing for developing additional supports for students who are in need of targeted academic interventions. For example, outcomes from grade team meetings in collaboration with the guidance counselor included a grade 9 awards assembly and an English language arts baseline assessment to further support and identify students' needs. Also, as an outgrowth of team meetings, there has been an increase in the use of Castle Learning, Skedula, and Atlas Rubicon to further support student learning. Teachers also shared that as a result of team meetings there are many opportunities for teachers to be involved with professional development opportunities both in and out of the school. However, although there are increased opportunities for teachers to improve pedagogy and foster teacher leadership, there is no school wide structure to consistently ensure that teacher leadership and team decisions are resulting in increased learning for all students across classrooms and grades, thus ensuring improved academic achievement across the school.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: High School for Arts, Imagination and Inquiry	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score			X	
<b>Instructional Core</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?			X	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the 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	
<b>School Culture</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports 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 those expectations?			X	
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>				
<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 student 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 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?			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	
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>				
<b>UD</b>   Underdeveloped	<b>D</b>   Developing	<b>P</b>   Proficient	<b>WD</b>   Well Developed	