



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

**Quality Review  
Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning  
2013-2014**

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**THE HIGH SCHOOL FOR LANGUAGE AND  
DIPLOMACY**

**High school 02M399**

**40 IRVING PLACE  
MANHATTAN  
NY,10003**

**Principal: Amber Najmi Shadid**

**Dates of review: Apr 30, 2014  
Lead Reviewer: Kristine Mustillo**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The high school for language and diplomacy is a high school with 358 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 19% Black, 41% Hispanic, 4% White, and 35% Asian students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 46.6% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53.4%. 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

- The school has strategically partnered with stakeholders to personalize support structures resulting in the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors by students. (1.4)
  - The school believes that students need to be actively involved in their own learning and in the importance of relationships. The school meaningfully involves student voice through the student council and co-council. Students run a school website and publish regular newsletters. Students participate in the School Leadership Team and have been active in working with the Coordinator of Student Services (COSA) to plan social and charitable events as well as recognition ceremonies and incentive events for students who reach academic and personal goals which are linked to school goals. Students are able to form after-school clubs if they can secure ten students and a teacher leader. Students have secured an Anime club, model United Nations, singing, and a school newspaper among other clubs. These clubs have also impacted school course offerings and led to more student choice in the selection and presentation of tasks. The school newspaper has directly impacted student communications. Students and Staff attended the Inclusion Summit and adopt the HARPP motto, representing; Honesty, Acceptance, Respect, Patience, Positivity. These collaborative structures for students and staff are leading shifts in school culture and increased student accountability in their learning.
  - A support team that includes administration, social worker and counselors carefully monitor students' attendance, credit accumulation and overall profile. There is specific time set aside at teacher team meetings for student talk along with ongoing dialogue among staff and students. The team has attended six professional development sessions in a partnership with Riverside for College and Career Readiness and Social Emotional Support. The school has partnerships with the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and Columbia University with which students are working in internships. Such partnerships have increased student opportunities to take college courses on-line, through Advanced Placement courses and College Now. In addition, tracking and one-to-one student support has led to a 2% overall attendance increase with targeted students improving their attendance from 3-13%. Credit accumulation for all students has also improved. Students earning ten or more credits per year, has increased by an average of 12%. Counseling, advisory and partnership opportunities have positively impacted students' academic and personal behaviors as evident in improved attendance and credit accumulation rates, along with noted cultural shifts.
- School leaders and faculty have developed and refined Common Core aligned curricula and tasks across content emphasizing rigorous habits and higher order thinking for all learners. (1.1)
  - School leaders work with network and teacher teams using central resources to ensure alignment of curricula and tasks to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Team meetings by grade and discipline support coherence and the embedding of English Language Arts standards within content units of study. Teacher teams review CCLS along with their units of study to ensure appropriate scaffolding. In English

Language Arts, teachers begin with a selection of complex text and select a range of strategies including annotation and graphic support to ensure all students can engage with content. The unit began with a character analysis, followed by a thematic analysis, and resulting in a persuasive essay including thematic elements and supporting regent exam requirements. Across content areas unit and lesson plans followed similar structures. Rigorous tasks were crafted along with key support strategies. Lesson plans include higher order thinking questions, language objectives performance based grouping, and thoughtful selection of support materials, that include technology, leveled text, visuals and math tools. Lesson plans stated and students were engaged in; analyzing the relationships between banking and government along with the societal impact of such structures, making connections across texts using the story of Prometheus and Mary Shelly's Frankenstein, understanding bivariate data and its representations and assessing the effects of human population growth on an environment. Developing rigorous CCLS aligned units of study, along with strategic supports leads to instructional coherence and access to higher order skills for all students.

- The principal has made strategic use of financial, personnel and time resources aligned to support school goals leading to improved instruction and meaningful student work products. (1.3)
  - The school goals are to increase credit accumulation, attendance and student progress through the strengthening of teacher practice. The principal has made strategic use of budget and personnel, accessing and aligning internal and external resources to support these goals. A first step for the new principal was to hire an outside consultant to reprogram the school. Reprogramming gave students access to necessary courses and increased the credit accumulation rate of students. Reprogramming also allowed teacher time to be structured to support students in small group tutoring and advisory programs. Time was built in for teachers work collaboratively with grade and discipline peers, several times each week. These collaborative session times focus on improving instruction by engaging in professional conversations around teacher practice using the Danielson Framework for Teaching as well as strengthening units of study assuring integration of instructional shifts and Common Core Learning Standards alignment. Key to these practices is the integration of student talk time where teachers review student work, academic performance, behavior and attendance to ensure students are on track for graduation. Students who are not on track have access to small group tutoring and one-on-one adult support. Additionally, the principal spent a significant amount of money to purchase a range of materials to support teachers and students in instruction. This included text books, Spark Notes, No Fear Shakespeare, along with iPads and laptops. Protocols used during the common planning, schedule modifications, along with increasing curriculum resources has strengthened instruction. Strengthened instruction is resulting in students being engaged in high level discussions and tasks and the production of meaningful work products, including literary analyses and scientific research projects.
- School leaders effectively support teacher development through an observation feedback model that informs professional development resulting in improved teacher practice. (4.1)
  - School leaders began the year with numerous activities to support the teacher evaluation process and teacher development. Teachers participated in full day professional development that included norming

activities and artifact review, led by administration and talent coaches. Teachers participate in regular professional development that supports this work along with the observation feedback cycles. Administration initially conducted co-observations to ensure calibration and norm feedback. Administration now conducts observations independently but meets weekly to discuss teacher practice and the professional supports connected to it. All post observation conferences include a review of student work and assessment data, linking student outcomes to professional practice. Feedback to teachers includes actionable next steps and includes internal and external professional development opportunities. For example, a teacher who received a developing rating in student engagement was supported with professional development from the International Network and central special education offices in order to build in effective supports to engage all learners. Administration conducted follow up observations and noted the implementation of learned practices and a shift to effectiveness in student engagement. Across the school teachers and staff attend outside professional development and lead in-school professional development in order to build teacher capacity and strengthen understandings connected to the Framework. This has resulted in an increased number of teachers moving towards effective and highly effective practice. In Domain 3, which has been a focus for the school, over twenty-percent of staff increased ratings across components following professional development opportunities. Consequently, in Domain 1, over 70% of teachers were effective in the spring as compared to less than 50% in the fall.

## **What the school needs to improve**

- Strengthen strategic decisions around instructional scaffolds and extensions in order to increase student participation and ownership in higher order activities. (1.2)
  - The school believes that students learn best when they are engaged and supported in productive struggles with content. Across classrooms, students are engaged in exploring complex text and teachers use high level questioning to promote student thinking. Additionally, teachers' use of leveled text, annotation, and technology supports all students in their comprehension of complex content, as well as support in demonstrating their thinking. Students preparing for Socratic seminar had tools to support the collection and organization of information as well as supports in the development of questioning and accountable talk stems. Teachers provided guided support to students and student groups in class and regularly provide small group tutoring throughout the school day for students who struggle. Students had the opportunity in some places to select how they would present their final products at the end of a unit study. However, it was not evident that support and extensions were strategically being provided for students based on student performance thereby limiting student ownership and in some classes, the opportunity for students to demonstrate higher order thinking skills. Extension opportunities were also limited leading to higher performing students sometimes waiting or helping others as opposed to being strategically supported in furthering their explorations.
- Strengthen classroom assessment practices to include checks for understanding in order to more effectively respond to students' diverse learning needs and consistently provide actionable feedback to students. (2.2)

- Across classrooms there was evidence of the use of rubrics, assessments and grading policies aligned to curricula leading to actionable feedback for students. Teacher teams and administration monitor multiple data sources on student performance at regular intervals to make curricula adjustments and plan for instructional next steps. For example, teachers noted from assessments in an economy class that students were overwhelmed by the amount of content. Teachers adjusted pacing, sectioned the materials using a jigsaw protocol to share information and broke down the task into smaller parts. This resulted in a greater number for students achieving proficiency on the culminating task. Throughout the school, discipline teams conduct item analyses of regent exams to revise unit plans, pace content and provide tutoring. Teachers use exit slips consistently in consideration when adjusting the next days' lesson. During lessons however, teacher inconsistently used checks for understanding, relying mostly on questioning, checking in and thumbs up\thumbs down without any tracking. This limited the opportunity for teachers to be flexible and responsive to student learning needs during the lesson.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

<b>School name: THE HIGH SCHOOL FOR LANGUAGE AND DIPLOMACY</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	

### Instructional Core

<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	

### School Culture

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				<b>X</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations?			<b>X</b>	

### Systems for Improvement

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	

### Quality Review Scoring Key

<b>UD</b>   Underdeveloped	<b>D</b>   Developing	<b>P</b>   Proficient	<b>WD</b>   Well Developed
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