

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Professional Performing Arts High School

Secondary School 02M408

**328 WEST 48 STREET
MANHATTAN
NY, 10036**

Principal: KEITH RYAN

**Dates of review: Dec 17 - 18, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Marisol Bradbury**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Professional Performing Arts High School is a secondary school with 531 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 24% Black, 21% Hispanic, 47% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 0.8% English language learners and 4.1% special education students. Boys account for 25% of the students enrolled and girls account for 75%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 93.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Teachers create and refine academic tasks that consistently emphasize rigorous habits, as well as academic and artistic skills across grades so that all learners are cognitively engaged. (1.1)
 - Teachers assign complex projects that provide choice and consistently challenge and motivate students. In humanities, students are asked to perform pieces that demonstrate mastery of content while using voice appropriate to the audience and purpose of the text. Students analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources by producing; persuasive essays, campaigns supporting different types of governments, and dialogue scenes on foreign influences, Christianity, and trading companies. In the younger grades, students are given choice of task. They often design posters, cartoons, and magazines to explain the various components of the assignment and apply their understandings to other contexts. In English language arts, students are given choice of role, audience, format, and topic, such as designing a play to represent the characters, plot, and analysis and synthesis of various sources of information. In science, students are asked to engage in a scientific inquiry approach and apply their learning to real world scenarios. Students research scientific phenomena, different perspectives, human activity, climate concerns, and political influences. By providing choice, complex tasks, and opportunity to engage in the arts to show content mastery, all students, including special education students and English language learners are consistently exposed to tasks that meet the needs of Special Education students while promoting higher order thinking skills and artistic talent development.
 - In department teams, teachers engage in a tuning protocol, as they share student work and identify strategies to refine their lessons. For example, teachers in the Mathematics department discussed samples of work from a few students. While the task consisted of representing the answer in three different ways; graphing the function, finding the rule for the equation, and explaining the relationship between the domain, function rule, and the graph, teachers learned that students were successful at graphing, but struggled with connections. After analyzing student work and discussing possible strategies, the teacher was able to select strategies to implement in future lessons, including the reinforcement of concepts such as dimension, the incorporation of a word wall, and strategic checks for understanding before proceeding with the lesson. By analyzing student work, teachers across the school refine lessons so that all students are cognitively engaged and have access to curricula and challenging tasks.
- Teaching practices and strategies including scaffolds, groupings, and routines consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula to support student work products and discussion that reflect high levels of student thinking. (1.2)
 - Teachers across grades and subjects consistently use various strategies to engage students. Whether students work independently or in groups, they are always provided with choice. For example, in an English language arts class, the teacher used a strategy which encouraged students to select their Role, Audience, Format, and Topic (RAFT). In a Mathematics class, the teacher provided opportunities for students to represent the work and learning in various ways, including graphing, problem solving, and application. In two science classes, the teachers used a scientific inquiry approach asking students to develop and present proposals including hypotheses to test explanations. In their groups, students assumed specific

roles, conducted research, and collected data samples as they conducted the experiments. Additionally, teachers provided ample opportunities for students to be creative when presenting their work, reinforcing and using their passion for the arts to produce complex work that reflected their artistic abilities as well as content and academic skills. Such practices allow all students, including special education students and English language learners, to use their talents as levers to further their learning and demonstrate higher order thinking skills.

- Students work products from grades 6 through 12 reflect high-level thinking. For example, a sixth grade student researched various species and selected the Homo Habilis species to explain its geographical, physical adaptation, and physiological aspects. He then created a poster that synthesized the physical traits, demographics, and, geographic knowledge of the Homo Habilis species to explain the controversy regarding its placement in the genus Homo rather than the genus Australopithecus. The student was able to articulate the differences between geographical, physical adaptation, and physiological aspects of this specie dated back to 2.3 million years. A ninth grader designed a play that represented the learning from the book “Lord of the Flies”. The student used symbolism to describe the characters of her play that reflected the traits of characters from the book. A twelve grader selected "solar energy" as the renewable energy resource she wanted to research and present to her peers. Through extensive scientific, technological, biological, and political research the student was able to list the science, positive and negative perspective of solar energy, accessibility, human activity, climate concerns, global warming, and political influences on renewable energy resources. By having students engage in complex tasks using the arts as the means to demonstrate their talent and content mastery, all students, including special education students and English language learners are consistently exposed to challenging tasks that reflect higher order thinking and participation.
- The principal’s strategic use of resources such as; teacher time, scheduling, and partnerships, support the school’s instructional goals and performing arts program to meet students’ academic, social, and emotional needs. (1.3)
 - The school has established strong partnerships with nationally renowned organizations and professional arts groups including: Rosie’s Broadway Kids, the Alvin Ailey Dance company, Juilliard dance school, and the national Theatre at Lincoln Center. The professional studios of dance, performing arts, and music within the Broadway district provide facilities, equipment, and instructors so that students have access to professional performers, rigorous curricula, the NYC theatre art experience, and flexible opportunities to obtain credits in the arts, dance, and physical education. In an effort to support students academically, the principal has established a partnership with New York University (NYU), providing tutors who work directly with students inside and outside classrooms. Additionally, interns from Fordham University provide college transition, guidance, and advisement to senior students. As a result of these partnerships the school has created rigorous and creative curricula, to serve students who are motivated and eager to attend school, participate in the performing arts program, resulting in rigorous artistic portfolios which earn them college scholarships across the country.
 - The school offers a highly structured student schedule in order to support the academic and performing arts program. Middle school students are enrolled in a three-year sequential program that offers exposure to musical theatre, drama, singing, and dance. High school students experience a four-year sequence of professional studies in musical theatre, dance, singing and acting, which prepares them to attend and be successful in the

best college performing arts programs nationwide. The school offers a highly structured academic program from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm releasing students to the various performing arts schools and studios from 2 pm to 5 pm, allowing teachers to meet daily for two hours to plan and collaborate. The middle school offers a block program, blending English language arts with Global Studies and US History. These classes are 90 minutes in length and are taught by the same teacher. Ninth grade students are scheduled for The Freshman Forum, a course to support their academic, social, and emotional needs. Additionally, the school offers a credit recovery program that supports students with remediation and enrichment. As a result of these programming decisions, interventions, and supports, students, including English language learners and special education students have equal access to experiences and learning opportunities that lead to college and career readiness as evidenced by the four year graduation rate of 96%.

- Across classrooms, teachers use common assessments aligned to the curricula to provide feedback to students, determine student progress toward goals, and adjust instruction to meet the needs of all learners. (2.2)
 - The school uses a three tiered level of assessment. Through the analysis of student work, teachers are able to refine lessons by implementing activities that include the arts, choice, and ownership. For example, The Student Intervention Team (SIT) created an assessment tool for teachers to evaluate the performance of special education students who have not met their academic targets. During their planning time, the members of the SIT examine assessments against the student's individual educational plan (IEP) and goals, resulting in instructional strategies to be implemented by the teacher. The SIT has identified teaching strategies such as the use of a checklist and providing continuous feedback for a student who has memory issues. Through the item analysis of formative assessments, teachers identify topics, themes, and concepts to be re-taught and embedded in units of study and curricula. For example, the Math department analyzes formative assessments in order to assess students' procedural and conceptual understanding. Through the analysis of summative and high stake assessments, teachers and advisors identify trends, such as the performance of students in the lowest third and the credit accumulation among special education students, resulting in academic interventions and updated programming. Through these practices of assessment and tracking of student performance, teachers are able to strengthen their practice that result in improved student performance such as an increased in credit accumulation for students in the lowest third across grades.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the teacher observation process to include student work in feedback to teachers, and use teacher observation data to effectively design professional development and make informed decisions about staffing. (4.1)
 - The principal and assistant principals use the Danielson Framework for Teaching. They assign observations in a rotating manner so that all three administrators observe every teacher and offer feedback. Together, administrators debrief the observations and use their collective evidence to prioritize support for teachers. However, they have not used the analysis of student work to provide guidance to teachers and show the connection between teacher practice, strategies, curriculum, and student learning. While debriefing and norming the observation process is a great opportunity for adult learning, school leaders have not developed a formal process to provide feedback aligned to the academic needs of students to meet the

CCLS, thus preventing the professional growth of teachers and improvement of pedagogical skills.

- The principal and assistant principals established a professional development plan for the year that began with a teachers self-assessment aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. During their monthly staff meetings, teachers engage in workshops that include strategies for formative assessments, student engagement, looking at student work, and establishing a culture for learning. During the subject area team meetings, teachers engage in school-wide math and literacy work. However, these practices have not generated an effective professional development plan based on the needs of students and teachers. In addition, the principal and assistant principals are still developing a system to analyze the data gathered from the first cycle of observations so that they can make informed decisions about professional development opportunities, workshops, and teacher assignments. The school's current inability to use student performance as well as teacher observation data to inform professional development opportunities is hindering pedagogical growth among the teaching staff.
- Strengthen the process to regularly evaluate and refine instructional and professional development design practices so that teachers enhance their instruction to support all students (5.1)
 - While teachers provide ample opportunities for students to produce complex works of art that reflect their artistic abilities as well as content and academic skills, there is still a need to evaluate the effectiveness of how the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) are embedded in the curricula in a manner that impacts the practices across the school so that all students have access to high quality instruction aligned to the CCLS.
 - Teacher teams use a tuning protocol to look at student work and identify strategies to support instructional adjustments. Administrators attend these meetings but do not have an active role in the process, thus limiting opportunities to help teachers reflect, assess their work, and provide valuable feedback in order to maximize the time and effort of teams. Additionally, teachers engage in various forms of professional collaboration including subject and inquiry teams; however these venues have not captured the professional development necessary to strengthen teacher practice in supporting student mastery aligned to CCLS. The lack of administrative impact on teacher team meetings, as well as a cohesive professional development plan, has resulted in teachers being ill-equipped to effectively support students in mastering CCLS.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School Name: Professional Performing Arts High School	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 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	
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 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	
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 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		
Quality Review Scoring Key				
UD Underdeveloped	D Developing	P Proficient	WD Well Developed	