



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Coalition School for Social Change

High School 409

**2351 First Avenue
Manhattan
NY 10035**

Principal: John Sullivan

Dates of review: May 14 - 15, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Arisleyda Ureña

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Coalition School for Social Change is a high school with 311 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 43% Black, 52% Hispanic, 1% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 27% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 74.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and teachers ensure curricula alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to emphasize rigorous habits for all students. (1.1)
 - The school opted to use a combination of teacher created curricula and other materials such as IMP for algebra and geometry, TCI for Global History, EngageNY for English language arts, and online courses approved by the New York State Department of Education, to ensure alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and instructional shifts. A review of curricula artifacts demonstrated coherence in using essential questions to connect the rigor of the CCLS to interdisciplinary content and concepts, integrate the instructional shifts, deepen the level of questioning, and encourage students to use text evidence to support arguments. Examples of essential questions include “What are the building blocks of geometry? How does technology drive science and vice versa? How do different leaders across time image solutions to reach racial equality?” Furthermore, a grade 12 writing analysis assignment had students research Kafka’s life and character, and an earth science assignment required students to track of the moon phases and measure the distance of two foci. Thus engaging students in writing and research activities across grades and content, and supporting increased numbers of students passing the January Regents exams.
 - Rigorous habits, embedded across curricula in all grades and subjects, provide students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, with opportunities to develop their writing abilities to meet the standards of the CCLS and content standards. Furthermore, unit tasks, writing assignments, and research projects across grades require students to think and write critically about the content, theme/topic, and real world connections. For example, in an English language arts curriculum map, a unit based upon speeches relative to arguments and methods required students to write an essay explaining which speaker made the most compelling arguments for racial equality. Students read speeches such as “I Have a Dream” and “Remarks to the NAACP” to deepen their thinking and knowledge about the topic, and gather information from multiple perspectives to develop an argument and form their own decision about racial equality. Moreover, the school also holds English language learners and students with disabilities to the standards and ensures that they are able to demonstrate their thinking and mastery for the content in culminating performance tasks. As a result, students across grades and subjects have increased their mastery in completing extended writing assignments that require them to form and support their opinions as evidenced in student work and increased average scores on the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT).
- Leadership makes strategic organizational decisions and aligns supports to the school’s instructional goals to improve staff and student performance. (1.3)

- To address the school's priority and overarching goal of preparing students to be successful in college and career, the administration allocated funds to purchase additional resources for after-school academic programs, licenses for online courses and academic support, Regents tutoring, per-session for teachers to collaborate in lesson planning, and it maintained a commitment to Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) to support students' academic needs. Leadership, with the support of the special education team, created an internship program for students with disabilities to engage in rigorous work-based learning internships in preparation for college and career. Moreover, Partnership with Children supports the school with additional social workers, attendance interventions, and parental involvement. In addition, a 21st Century grant allows the school to offer various opportunities to parents such as English as a second language (ESL) classes and computer classes, supporting the school's goals for increasing parental involvement. Similarly, leadership reached out to five other high school principals to organize a partnership called The Harlem Pride, which has allowed the principals to share resources for summer school, increase extra-curricular activities, and increase the number of sports in the Public School Athletic League (PSAL). As a result, the school community as described by parents and teachers is a "family that cares about the academic success of each individual student," which is evidenced by students' increase of scholarship for the first term.
- To support the school's instructional goals, school leadership designed the school's program based on observable teachers' strengths, students' needs, grade level needs, and also formally scheduled multiple types of meetings in order to provide staff opportunities to discuss next steps and interventions. The cabinet meets several times during the week to monitor students' progress and, as necessary, to develop additional interventions to address students' needs. The school's schedule also affords teachers common preparation and lunch hours for additional meeting time. Furthermore, school leadership purchased academic resources such as BrainPOP and ProQuest to provide teachers with supplemental resources to ensure academic interventions and student access to the content. Similarly, courses such as college readiness preparation classes and art history are included in students' programs to further support writing, thus ensuring suitable academics to increase students' performance and progress. As a result, teachers and the administration shared that they "are responsible for every individual student's progress and academic success," as evidenced by students' writing work displayed on bulletin boards and an increase in passing rate on the January 2014 Regent exams.
- The school administration strategically fosters a culture of learning that supports academic and social-emotional growth of students and adults. (1.4)
 - The Partnership with Children provides social-emotional and academic supports to students and families via home visits and various school-based programs that ensure improved students' attendance and engagement with school's activities. This partnership provides the school with social workers who provide ongoing social-emotional interventions,

track students' growth, and identify next steps for student and family intervention. In addition, the school's Spark counselor and guidance counselor work collaboratively to provide students opportunities to engage in leadership groups, Aids awareness week, anti-bullying awareness, and several events honoring the memory of a student who passed and families that were affected by the Harlem gas explosion. Furthering these efforts, the school also works with the Department of Education's Office of Youth Development and liaisons from the support network to provide a variety of social services to ensure that family and student's needs are met. Parents shared that the school has different methods for communicating information about their children's academic progress and guidance support, and also cited various workshops they attended as helping them to understand the school's grading policy, the CCLS, and bullying. The school has after-school programs that offer students and their families a variety of support services including access to resources/technology, clubs, test prep programs, sports, and opportunities to work with a teacher on a particular interest such as jewelry making, movie, and/or architect design. Furthermore, in the student meeting, students shared work products and clearly explained how the support they received from their teachers helped them to improve their work and learning. As a result, students' stated that they "feel safe, everyone cares about us in the school, and we are getting ready for college," thus resulting in an increased in the school's attendance.

- School administrators use the observation process and analysis of student data to support teacher development and practice. (4.1)
 - As an outgrowth of observations, teachers stated that administrators provide immediate targeted feedback through individual conversations followed with next steps. In a teacher meeting, a Spanish teacher said that the school administration and teachers provide targeted support and additional mentoring, and professional development to hone his instructional practice. Also, a science teacher shared how after a classroom observation, a supervisor noted a need in developing his questioning techniques, and immediately coordinated an inter-visitation to observe best practice in support of his growth. Additionally, feedback focused on identifying instructional strategies and planning to increase students' critical thinking through Higher Order Thinking questions (HOT) and participation. Thus, this support allowed him to help his students become more actively engaged in rigorous learning. In addition, written observation reports give teachers specific feedback on areas of strength, and areas in need of improvement that are aligned to a competency of the Danielson Framework, along with recommendations for next steps. Recommendations include meeting with administration to discuss specific teaching strategies, scheduling of a one-on-one meeting with coaches from the support network (CFN), professional development, Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) strategies, and/or meeting with educational consultants to receive further support with the curricula. To quote some teachers, they described their learning experiences as "dedicated and sensitive to the needs of others," "inclusive and collaborative," "resourceful and supportive," and "caring."

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen instructional practices so that they consistently provide multiple-entry points and engagement to increase student's thinking and participation. (1.2)
 - The school's instructional focus this year is to improve questioning techniques, engagement, and discussion techniques, to increase students' participation and critical thinking skills. With this goal in mind, the administration with the support of lead teachers established norms for classroom instruction that include daily aims, do-now activities, and learning tasks aligned to the CCLS. For example, in an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) English language arts class, the teachers provided each group with Regents quotes that were tiered based on students' reading abilities, students had to identify the theme or topic from the quote, and generate a list of questions surfaced from the quote. Similarly in a math class, the teacher asked student to "create a circular garden to explore the effect of chords, central angles, inscribed angles, and arcs in a circle." However, in some classrooms, teachers asked rapid-fire questions with individual students answering in one-word responses. Thus a consistent level of engagement and learning, and lack of scaffolded teaching with multiple entry points, was not evident across all classrooms visited, impeding efforts to engage all students in high levels of thinking and discussions and to ensure that all students are able to access the content or extend their learning.,.
- Refine school practices so that teachers consistently use common assessment data results to adjust instruction, thus supporting the learning needs of all learners. (2.2)
 - Departmental assessments are common across subject areas and are administered during every marking period to inform academic interventions to further prepare students for Regents' exams and track progress towards mastery of the CCLS. Moreover, teachers use Skedula, an online system, which allows students and parent to track their grades and completion of course expectations regarding homework, projects, and test grades. While this structure does enable students to track their academic progress, it does not inform a student of his/her specific academic needs within subjects, thereby hindering efforts to create a clear picture of student progress and important next learning steps. In addition, although teachers use rubrics and exit slips to assess students' learning, in-the-moment checks for understanding are inconsistent across classrooms. Some classrooms show evidence of intermediate checks in the form of questions posed to specific students to check content understanding, while other classrooms only involved surface level questions that hinder teachers' ability to make immediate or timely adjustments to the lessons, therefore missing out on immediate attention to students' learning needs.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Coalition School for Social Change	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