



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

High School for Health Careers and Sciences

**549 AUDUBON AVENUE
MANHATTAN
NY 10040**

Principal: Javier Trejo

Dates of review: April 29 - 30, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Sheila S.- Gorski

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Health Careers and Sciences is a high school with 612 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 18% Black, 78% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 27% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012-2013 was 84.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal thoughtfully organizes school resources and time efficiently to build teacher capacity and support instructional goals with the purpose of successfully meeting students' needs. (1.3)
 - The school has tactically emphasized a school goal regarding courses of study in health careers and the sciences driven by the school's theme and name by the principal budgeting for well-aligned courses to afford students four years of science courses. These include electives, such as hydroponics, the cultivation of plants in a nutrient liquid with another supporting source. In partnership with Cornell University, a professor works with the teacher and students to support this initiative. Students taking the course have already harvested Japanese lettuce and sweet basil. Other science courses include introduction to health careers, anatomy and physiology, marine biology, and ecology. Operation Success (Operación Exito), an incentive-based program that the principal has implemented, motivates students to meet the CCLS standards via a series of web-based modules adapted to student needs that also provides Regents exam preparation and opportunities for students to earn prize donations through a point system. Faculty and students formed a liaison committee that has obtained numerous rewards from the community, which has built relationships with community business owners. Thus, the principal and staff sustaining school goals and long-term action plans is increasingly evident in meaningful student work products as noted in the hydroponics class that cared for the plants, providing lamps for light and feeding them minerals and nutrients while monitoring the acidity levels to ensure pH balance, resulting in harvested first crops.
 - Teacher teams are scheduled to meet three to five times per week with one of the days dedicated to professional development in planning, questioning and discussion, analyzing curricula, developing lessons, and assessments to align to CCLS, and the instructional shifts. In addition, the other days are used to strengthen instructional practices via intervisitations, inquiry teamwork, data-analysis, and professional discourse. The principal schedules credit accumulation and recovery programs from Tuesdays through Thursday's afterschool and Saturday mornings for three hours each. Using, *Achieve Now*, a program to support instruction in literacy, math and the content areas, students are able accumulate credits toward graduation. Also *Aventa*, a State accredited online program, affords students deficient in subjects the coursework needed to obtain needed credits. Further, the teacher team that supports this program meets once per month on Fridays to engage in discussions regarding student support, strategies, and student and instructional successes, resulting in improved instruction as reflected in student work exhibited on classroom and corridor displays.
- The leadership and faculty consistently work to ensure a safe and inclusive culture that supports adult learning and enhances students' academic and personal growth.(1.4)
 - Throughout the school day, each transition between periods begins and ends with multi-cultural, hip-hop, and/or classical music in a diversity of genres, promoting a swiftness of passing as students appreciate the music that celebrates the school's diversity of cultures. In addition, the principal has collaborated with the custodial

staff to brighten the school, showering the hallways in light blue and yellow colors to create an aesthetically appealing physical environment complemented by exhibitions of student work and a mounted television wall display continuously broadcasting student and community engagement. Student achievement, perfect attendance, and the principal's honor roll are posted throughout the school in celebration of student success. In addition, although the principal has been in his role for a short time, he has created a safe, inclusive, and orderly environment that began with clear expectations and positive incentives prompting "Respect for All" lessons in every classroom. Further, the program's liaison, who is also the dean, supports the staff with professional development throughout the year on *iSafe* lessons, an internet safety education program. Some topics of interest are: "*Online Freedoms*" and "*Cultures of the Internet Community*", "*Real-Time Photo Chatting*", "*Cyber Bullying*", "*Online Networking*", "*Twitter Safety Strategies*", and "*Cyber Community Survey*". The school is also a recipient of a 21st Century grant, used to create clubs and extra-curricular activities. For example, students are now involved in after school and Saturday programs, such as college readiness, the world culture cooking club, the Globetrotters club, the Pi club, the music club and the swimming club. Likewise, in partnership with the National Honor Society, the school now has a National Honor Society Service club meeting every Friday afternoon with a school advisor, encouraging student participation in making anti-bullying posters and school event advertisements. Their most recent contribution entails designing a peer-tutoring schedule based on student mastery in certain subject areas to assist their peers in meeting scholastic requirements. Moreover, to increase student leadership, the student government includes grade-level representatives, and regular meetings with the principal on school policies. They also take a lead in organizing activities such as school dances and school bake sales to raise funds for student activities for the junior class. Likewise, student-created agendas inform monthly town hall meetings where students discuss their work and future events. During a student meeting, they spoke of a suggestion box created to motivate students to share their ideas on what they would like to do or see more of in the school. The senior president closed stating, "I hope that with all we have done this year, it would inspire the juniors to do more!" Thus, the school culture welcomes student's efforts in school progress, resulting in a productive learning environment. Tailored attendance plans are developed and monitored by a Student Success Summit Team composed of the leadership, two guidance counselors, the parent coordinator, a family worker, attendance teachers, consultants, the Dean, staff from external partnerships, and parents. Each member assumes a responsibility, such as the role of a mentor, to frequently communicate with families, linking them to services and emphasizing positive messages regarding the importance of attendance and student achievement. Attendance analysis informs individual plans that include, academic intervention, consultation, sharing data results with an attendance teacher and parent conferences, daily telephone messages, and calls entered into the school's logbook and outreach ilogged into the school's system. The team and all teachers receive weekly reports indicating their student's status. Students who are identified with chronic absence as having 20 to 37 days from the previous year, or those with who have personal challenges, have a mentor assigned to communicate with families and begin the attendance process. In addition, students visit their school-college office for advisement supports which include, extra learning opportunities to accumulate credits needed, attend college fairs, or have visits from college representatives, gain information regarding financial assistance programs and scholarships, Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Tests (PSAT), and Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT), resulting in supports that have positive effects on student academic and personal behaviors.

- School leaders and faculty have a clear set of instructional goals aligned with the learning needs of students and staff to accelerate student learning and foster social-emotional growth. (3.1)
 - The principal clearly focuses on increasing student achievement to raise the graduation rate and on strengthening pedagogical practice to improve instruction as depicted in the school's goals. Action plans are created to align budget allocations, structures, and protocols to meet student and staff needs. The principal ensures that all teachers receive ongoing professional development in particular content areas relative to discipline-specific curricular practices including analyzing content knowledge skills, lesson effectiveness aligned to curriculum and the CCLS, the Danielson rubric, and instructional expectations. Additionally, student progress and alignment to student goals are tracked by looking at performance-based tasks aligned to Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) tool. Further, students are required to use a variety of representations, such as videos, illustrations, a summary, and a poetic response to demonstrate their understanding of the lesson, thus improving the learning and nurturing social-emotional growth. Moreover, a comprehensive needs assessment includes action steps, a timeline, stakeholders, and a communication plan. The most recent needs assessment indicated school successes in smaller teacher-to-student classroom ratio, and the hiring of another guidance counselor to increase student support services. The needs assessment also informed professional development opportunities, such as embedding the DOK rubric to strengthen performance tasks. To provide immediate accessibility to resources and at-a-glance student data-results, the school affords teachers the use of a drop box and google docs. to share best practices, instructional findings and adjustments, resulting in improved teacher practice across classrooms.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand the planning of academic tasks and lessons to encourage rigorous habits, high levels of thinking and cognitively engage all students.(1.1)
 - The principal has made it a priority to ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and embed the instructional expectations in units of study across the subject areas. NY Engage modules that are the school's model for alignment and rigor are coupled with Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK), helping teacher teams who are in the midst of defining a shared understanding of rigor. School efforts are developing around coherent structures via support from the school's network, and two Generation Ready coaches, one who works with English language arts teachers supporting language and literacy across the content areas, and one who assists math and science teachers aligning and prioritizing math standards. Moreover, all units include enduring understandings, essential questions, content specific goals, focus skills and standards, vocabulary, formative and summative assessments, and cooperative learning activities. However, a review of unit binders and lesson plans indicate uneven designs of embedded rigor and questions. For example, in some units and plans, questions, graphic organizers, and open-ended questions require students to use the skill of compare and contrast to make evaluations, while in other units low-level slotting of words, or cloze activities entail filling in blanks. Questions planned were mostly at recall and knowledge-based levels, thus inhibiting some students, including relevant subgroups, from gaining access to higher-order concepts. Similarly, numerous task revisions designed using Webb's DOK tool

were at recall and the reproduction Level 1 category. For instance, plans ask students to paraphrase from a book, or make a timeline, and write a list or to retell in their own words. While other tasks require students to use a Venn diagram to show similarities and differences, or writing tasks with a strong emphasis on persuasion. These inconsistencies in the units and lesson plans hinder some students from having opportunities to have access to high-level academic tasks that develop higher-order thinking skills and meaningful engagement.

- Encourage consistency in the use of instructional strategies to afford multiple points of entry into the curricula so that lessons prompt students into higher-order thinking and improve student learning. (1.2)
 - The school believes that students learn best when learning is socialized, collaborative, and relevant to their lives. Lessons are guided by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and include, engaging students in questioning and discussion in small groups. In spite of these efforts classroom visits revealed varying levels of questions and tasks engaging only some students in appropriate challenges and higher-order thinking skills. In one class, students were asked to read text to contrast differences between two characters with a focus on the setting, but class discourse was mainly on the mood of the text, which was not the focus for class discussion and students were never redirected. In another class, the aim of a lesson required students to describe themselves and others. The questions asked include, “What is shoulder length hair?’ and ‘What are pigtails?’” In contrast, another class required students to view a video, select two claims from the video and link to the text to explain what was revealed about the character, which led students to thinking deeper. Also small groups discussed the concept of what having a childhood may mean to the character in the text from another era in comparison to what it may mean to individuals today. This was followed by the question, “How and why has the character been imbued into artistic and psychological venues?” Question scaffolds and videos were used to represent deep concepts and elevate the levels of thinking. Students were required to use evidence from the text and content from the visuals provided to respond to questions and kindle discussions. A culminating product required students to write an extended analytic piece about the topic of the allusions made to the character in various venues. Comparable use of entry points was seen in some classes, but sporadic in the majority of classes, thus limiting a diversity of students, including relevant subgroups, from participating in learning experiences that challenged and probed critical thinking to produce standard-based work products.
- Develop the use of common assessments and practices so that information from learning outcomes results in effective instructional adjustments that include appropriate checks for understanding and student self-assessment that accelerate student learning (2.2)
 - The school is developing the use of assessments to examine the progress of specific groups, such as the use of results from ACHIEVE 3000 to measure the growth in reading levels of English language learners and bilingual students. Supervisors periodically meet with teachers to discuss scholarship results, and set student goals. Within departments, teachers also use Castle Learning, an integrated software program used for task development. Further, teachers, parents, and students also use Skedula, a grading system that includes Pupil Path for students and parents to view and monitor their data. The principal is also carefully monitoring multiple student cohorts at numerous levels to ensure that students are meeting the State exam requirements toward graduation.

Nevertheless, the school does not yet use common assessments to examine student-learning gaps, measure the trajectory of the school, or implement assessment practices that reflect daily checks to monitor student comprehension. During classroom visits, some teachers used exit slips to check for understanding while in other classrooms teachers stated they would be assessing the next day or using past Regents questions to assess understanding. In some classrooms, teachers circulated the classrooms as a form of assessment. Moreover, in a few classrooms, students used a checklist to self-assess comprehension, but this was not evident in the majority of classrooms. Consequently, the school, thus far does not use common assessments to provide a clear path of student progress, and inconsistent practices around uneven use of checks for understanding and student self-assessment hinder instructional adjustments that meet the needs of all students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: High School for Health Careers and Sciences	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