



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

**Quality Review  
Office of School Quality  
Division of Academics, Performance, and Support  
2013-2014**

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**Manhattan Comprehensive Day and Night**

**High School 575**

**240 Second Avenue  
New York,  
NY 10003**

**Principal: Michael Toise**

**Dates of review: December 10 - 11, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Heidi Pierovich**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Manhattan Comprehensive Day and Night is a high school with 788 students from grade 10 through grade 12. The school population comprises 38% Black, 36% Hispanic, 5% White, and 22% Asian students. The student body includes 53% English language learners and 3% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 78.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school provides a safe, nurturing, and positive learning environment, which supports and impacts students' academic and personal behaviors. (1.4)
  - Overage students from multiple countries with varying levels of credit accumulation and English language acquisition attend this unique transfer school that has a flexible schedule, being open from 8 AM to 10 PM, Sunday through Thursday. Although this school community may be from many backgrounds, it is of the singular purpose to prepare overage, under-credited students to pass Regents and graduate high school as college and career ready. For some students, attending school in America is a culture shift in itself. One student shared, "I am from a country where we cannot ask the teacher a question or show a different way to solve a problem. But here, I can speak to a teacher and even shake hands with the principal!" The school community is culturally aware, creating a safe environment that is inclusive of multicultural and multilingual students. For example, in a meeting English as a second language teachers shared two methods for developing a safe learning environment for students to acquire English. Additionally, students have a voice on the School Leadership Team (SLT) and student government, by creating activities for canned food drive, recycling, after-school clubs, and school improvement. As a result, all students enjoy a safe learning environment that is supportive and inclusive of many cultures, languages, and levels of English language acquisition, resulting in an 8.9 for the Environment metric on the Progress Report.
  - The school leadership creates systems for knowing students and their individual goals. Each teacher meets biweekly, alternating between their subject teams and their Small Group Instruction (SGI), which is within grade level, plus, some agree to meet daily. Subject teams meet for curriculum development, inquiry, and looking at student work. In SGI meetings, teachers share information, goals, concerns, and action plans about common students. Also present in all three SGI meetings, is a member of the Community Based Organization (CBO) Comprehensive Development Incorporated (CDI) and the school's counselors, who provide insight into helping students with social-emotional issues, attendance, college and career readiness, and academic support. During a meeting with parents, several shared that they gain access to their children's records daily to support their achievement. Students said, "There is no place to hide. Everyone knows you." As a result, all students are known well by at least one adult, plus everyone in the student's circle knows the student's progress toward individual goals.
- School leaders effectively involve members of the school community in developing data-driven goals and action plans that improve teacher practice and close the achievement gap. (3.1)
  - School leaders and teachers use an internal data tool to sort and analyze student data, to develop long-term plans for the

Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP), and the professional development (PD) plan which is based on the needs of students and teachers' personal professional goals. Additionally, school leaders and teachers use internal data tools to create individual action plans for students by subject, which small group instruction teams discuss, monitor, and update biweekly in teacher meetings. This work, and as teachers find new areas of professional development need, together with the school leaders collaboratively update the PD plan to improve teacher practice. Thus, these practices empower the school to close the achievement gap. In the past two years, the school not only achieved an A on the Progress Report, but also closed the achievement gap, scoring 12.1 out of 16.

- The school leaders truly create a community school as its name states. There is transparency in communication and the decision-making process. Parents and students, as active members of the School Leadership Team (SLT) collaborate on school improvement plans. One parent enthusiastically states, "As the SLT president, I know how well the school makes decisions. We are active collaborators and planners about school improvement. We also learn about the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the updates to the curriculum and Regents." Students are active members in student government, where they contribute to the school culture. This results in a school community that actively involves parents, students, and teachers in the decision-making process.
- The leadership and faculty embed, across the school community, a unified set of high expectations and supports for student achievement and college and career-readiness. (3.4)
  - With about two years to accelerate overage and under-credited students to be college and career ready, the school has several strong systems in place. CDI provides college and career readiness opportunities for all students through college trips, career training and summer instructional internship programs. One student said, "Yes CDI helps us prepare for college with the guidance counselors. They help us with college applications, resumes, essays, and they recommend and guide you to looking into the future." Some teachers stated that they individually go [to CDI] to review whole class rosters for the best schools for students to apply for college. Another system involves communication with parents, who are quick to compliment the school leaders and staff's effective communication of high expectations and clear paths for college and career readiness. Additionally, counselors and teachers call parents regarding student attendance, achievement, issues, and commendations. A parent stated, "Not only is her son progressing through conversation[al] English, but is also being [exposed] to colleges and career choices, including job-training for pharmacy technology that is free!" During a meeting, parents shared that through a web-based program they access their children's records to keep abreast of progress toward credit accumulation, Regent passing, interim assessment progress, attendance, homework, and scholarship information. One student says, "I am very proud to say that I have attended period one, on time for one week straight, showing my commitment and being on track. I can do it and they push me." Students own their learning. To ensure that the high expectations embed in student achievement, teacher teams meet to log interventions, create individual student action

plans, and determine a staff member to follow-up at benchmarks. Further, teachers demonstrate mutual accountability in SGI meetings, where together with the guidance counselor, and CDI, collaborate on viewing student work products, offering suggestions for accommodations, modifications, and lesson adjustments to best meet the needs of all students, especially students with disabilities, high absenteeism, ELLs and former-ELLs. These high expectations and collaborations result in teachers sharing best practices, resulting in the substantial increase in the percentage of students enrolled in college-preparatory classes, including geometry (450%), trigonometry (150%), and chemistry (55%), as well as advance placement courses in calculus, chemistry, US History, and Literature and Language. Over the past three years on the Progress Report, the school scores above the Citywide average achieving a 9.3 out of 10 for College and Career Readiness. As a result, this culture for learning is pervasive through communicating high expectations for all while providing the supports to achieve them.

- School leaders use data from classroom observations to provide teachers clear, actionable feedback, and support, resulting in elevated pedagogical practice. (4.1)
  - The school uses protocols aligned to the Danielson framework for observations and specific actionable feedback. The main areas of emphasis for teacher practice are in the development of questioning and discussion techniques including randomizing questioning, eliminating classroom 'dead zones' to engage all students, the instructional shifts on text complexity and academic language, and strategies for teaching and learning content-specific vocabulary, in order to provide opportunities for students to use language in group activities to foster language acquisition. Therefore, administrative feedback captures strengths, challenges, and next steps while articulating clear expectations for teacher practice. Furthermore, the use of strategic cycles of informal and formal observations allows for a productive collaboration between administrators and teachers providing a transparent structure for teachers to share best practices and grow professionally. Teachers also meet during SGI teams where after sharing lessons they offer each other effective feedback and suggest planning next steps based on the research-based common teaching framework. One teacher shared that "The SGI meetings are the best professional development (PD) we have ever had. I even learned how to teach an argumentative essay in a science class." Additionally, the school provides new teachers with experienced mentoring and they are further supported through bi-weekly subject and SGI teams, and a PD plan, resulting in teachers expressing that they are well supported in professional growth by both administration and colleagues.

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

- Deepen further instructional coherence and alignment of curricula, lessons, and tasks, to State and Common Core Learning Standards so students are able to demonstrate their thinking across all content areas. (1.1)
  - Currently, teachers work in their teams, grade level or subject, to align and create curricula relative to the CCLS and content standards, while integrating the instructional shifts. As the school implements CCLS and

the Citywide Instructional Expectations, it also balances instruction with the need to prepare students to pass Regents. While teachers note differentiation opportunities in units, performance tasks, and lesson plans, most do not in curriculum maps, which while aligned to State standards/CCLS, only list essential questions and materials. Thus there is a lack of strategic coherence by not regularly noting differentiation opportunities across subjects, consequently creating missed opportunities for student achievement.

- A review of the performance tasks and lessons across grades and subjects, shows differentiated planning. There is a focus in all grades and subjects with units that have students read and cite evidence from texts to support arguments, annotate work, paraphrase, write a script, make logical inferences, and develop writing skills. For example, in a Global History class, in a unit on the Holocaust, students used three articles to cite textual evidence making an argument for their most valued human right. Though lessons and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills, these are not embedded in a coherent way so that all English language learners and students with disabilities (SWDs) must demonstrate their thinking.
- Refine pedagogical practices across classrooms to include supports and extensions for diverse students in order to ensure that all students are consistently engaged in meaningful higher-level discussions. (1.2)
  - There is a school wide teacher practice of consistent use of grouping students and providing scaffolds. A few classes provide students with opportunities to work in data-determined groups with specific supports designed for each level, yet other classes remain in the beginning stages of providing multiple levels of tasks. For example, in one ESL5 class the teacher designed a lesson for data-determined student groups to work at different levels of the Depth of Knowledge (DOK). Students created questions and answers for their assigned levels, then rated their teammates on their individual performance, giving themselves point values. During classroom visits, a majority of teachers used questions that range from low-level recall questions to higher-level questioning requiring students to analyze, synthesize their understanding, and explain their thinking. Across classes, questioning techniques consistently provide multiple entry points for all learners including ELLs and SWDs, supporting the SWDs who are mainstreamed. However currently there is not a vast majority of classes across grades and subjects that strategically provide multiple entry points, high-quality supports, and extensions into the curricula so that all learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products. As a result this limits students' ability to build deeper reasoning and exhibit thinking at high levels, and teacher capacity around ensuring ongoing student-to-student questioning and discussion is not yet evident, therefore impacting the deepening of student thinking.
  - The principal describes a school goal as “[promoting] meta-cognition among students, working to integrate the practice of student-led questioning, and encouraging student-to-student discourse using academic language.” Even though students participate in group work, discussions do not yet reflect higher levels of thinking. In some classes, students self-assess and offer peer feedback in groups. For

example, in a geometry class, students complete drawing rectangles on graph white boards and explain their reasoning to a partner, followed with students choosing how to create rectangular prisms, using manipulatives and explaining their reasoning to partners. In another math class, students worked in pairs, however when sharing with the whole class, the teacher directs the discussion without student-to-student discourse. While this and other lessons have structures to challenge all students in small group work and discussions, in some classes there is an over-reliance on the teacher to facilitate the discussion and push students' thinking. In most classes, teacher questions are thoughtfully open-ended, which then facilitates responses. Yet there is little expectation for students to deepen their thinking by questioning each other or building on comments others make. Thus, this is limiting increased levels of student thinking, ownership, and participation for some students.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Manhattan Comprehensive Day and Night	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>							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed