

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**Robert H. Goddard High School of Communication Arts
and Technology**

High school 27Q308

**138-30 LAFAYETTE STREET
QUEENS
NY, 11417**

Principal: Dr. Joseph J. Birgeles

Dates of review: Jan 7 - 8, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Charles Simic

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Robert H. Goddard High School of Communication Arts and Technology is a high school with 598 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 7% Black, 43% Hispanic, 18% White, and 29% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 91.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's rigorous curricula is aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and made accessible to a range of diverse learners in order to build college and careers readiness for all students. (1.1)
 - School leaders and faculty have thoughtfully adopted core curriculum materials from Engage NY and aligned teacher created units of study with the instructional shifts. Partnerships with Lincoln Center Education (LCE) and the National Training Network (NTN) assist teachers as they refine curricula such that students are provided rich and rigorous materials. Across grade levels, English language arts planning is focused on increasing student ability to construct meaning from challenging texts, notice deeply, make connections and identify patterns. Math planning documents show that learning is concentrated on a narrow scope of topics where students are expected to understand the material deeply and can operate easily within a math concept before moving on to the next unit of study. A balance of informational and literary texts is provided to students. Teacher teams regularly use protocols to refine units and adjust lesson strategies to increase access for all students to engage in rigorous tasks. As a result, students are provided access to learning experiences that prepare them for college and careers.
 - Units and lesson plans are designed such that all students are expected to demonstrate rigorous habits and higher order thinking. An emphasis is placed on students being able to show what they know. Teachers design tasks to ensure that all students are provided opportunities to practice college level skills and habits such as taking and defending an intellectually complex position and use of academic vocabulary. To support all learners, English language learners and special education students teachers consistently provided planned supports such as the "FIT" a method to use Facts to Interpret and determine Theme when students write about and analyze complex texts. As a result of these curricula refinements teachers are planning lessons such that all students, including English language learners and special education students have access to rigorous curricula and tasks.
- The principal makes strategic organizational decisions aligned to the school's instructional goals using resources that support the learning needs of staff and students. (1.3)
 - The school has partnered with the National Training Network (NTN), a professional development company that specializes in training, ongoing coaching and support for schools as they implement the CCLS. Math teachers work weekly with a NTN coach and the assistant principal of math to review curricula, lesson plans, assessments, and various forms of student data such as test results, portfolios, and classwork. Time is provided to teachers to meet as a department weekly and during common planning times daily in lieu of administrative responsibilities. Teachers indicate that this additional time to plan and meet with the NTN coach, peers and assistant principal have dramatically changed the way that they collaborate around improving instruction and student achievement. Where the team once worked sporadically on similar items, they now plan together to teach the same concepts at the same time sharing strategies that work and finding solutions to common problems. During a visit to one of the weekly meetings, teachers refined a pacing calendar to allow for additional time to develop skills students were struggling with. Teachers analyzed the end-of-unit assessment looking for which Common Core Standards were being assessed and shared additional supports for concepts that students would most likely find challenging. The result of allocating professional collaborative time in this manner is improved instruction and increased student engagement in more challenging academic tasks.

- The school has hired additional guidance counselors to increase the school's capacity to meet the academic and social needs of its students. One guidance counselor works primarily with 9th and 10th grade students to provide support for the transitioning from middle school to high school. Another guidance counselor meets with students in the upper grades to provide supports for meeting more rigorous course work and college readiness. A third guidance counselor ensures that students are afforded supports for post-graduation plans including college and career counseling. Students are individually programmed, receiving courses to match specific needs while being provided the most challenging opportunities. A wide range of courses are available to students including AP courses, chemistry, drama, art and technology. English language learners receive additional support from classes with additional teachers. The school has invested in Empower 3000, a differentiated reading program, to support English language learners, special education students and struggling readers resulting in 75% of all students increasing at least one reading grade level. The school's thoughtful hiring practices, individualized student programming and use of technology work together to effectively support student access to opportunities that lead to college and career readiness.
- The school uses frequently administered common assessments to develop a clear understanding of how students are progressing toward goals and to adjust curricula and instruction. (2.2)
 - All teachers across all subject areas create assessments that are informed by CCLS and that provide feedback to staff and students around progress toward mastery of college level skills. Assessments are planned using a focused list of skills and habits that emphasize increasing student reasoning, writing and critical thinking. All core subject teachers create three performance tasks a year that are aligned to the CCLS and quarterly assessments that support and track student progress toward Regents exams. Assessments are created from a variety of sources including Castle Learning, EngageNY, and the New York City Department of Education assessment library. Assessment data is then analyzed to find class trends and identify steps that teachers and students can take toward improvement. For example, during a department meeting, teachers used a school designed assessment reflection protocol to analyze a social studies exam and found that students struggled with using academic language precisely. Teachers made changes to future lessons adding pre-writing graphic organizers to further develop student use of academic vocabulary. The school's practice of analyzing assessments for trends creates a clear view of student progress as well as steps to improve.
 - Teacher created common assessments are used to generate a clear picture of student progress toward goals as well as inform instructional adjustments needed to increase mastery for all students including English language learners and special education students. For example, English language arts teachers used common assessments to measure how students apply skills such as: noticing deeply, citing with evidence, identifying claim and counter claim in order to analyze text. They realized that the majority of their students had difficulty analyzing a passage using one literary device. As a result, teachers planned future lessons to teach specific literary devices that can be applied to all critical lens essays. Students engage in a self-reflection activity using a school-designed protocol to analyze patterns in their thinking. Using results provided from these assessment students and teachers develop meaningful next steps that increase student achievement.
- Faculty benefit from varied opportunities to share and develop strengths as individuals and members of the teaching community to promote leadership opportunities and improve student achievement. (4.2)
 - All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based structured collaborations with peers and administration that meet weekly to develop rigorous instruction. Using agendas and protocols such as "Looking at Student Work", "Lesson Study" and "Surfacing Gaps"

teachers implement CCLS instructional shifts into all subject areas including art and physical education. During a math team meeting teachers were engaged in a close reading of a Common Core Algebra performance task that would be administered during the next few weeks. Teachers then generated additional supports that they anticipated would be required to support struggling students to meet these more challenging demands. The result of this work is that all students experience focused and coherent instruction developing their ability to meet rigorous expectations.

- Teacher leaders play a strategic role in the school's improvement plan. Teacher team meetings are led by peer leaders that have experience and the support of their colleagues. Protocols, agendas, and meeting minutes are adeptly used to build leadership skills such that teachers have ownership of the direction that the school takes as it strives to improve instruction and student achievement. Teachers have input into what is the focus of team meetings, how consultants will be used to support the work and on what technology purchases will be made during the upcoming year. As a result, teacher leadership capacity is developed and wider ranges of stakeholders play a role in school-wide decisions that affect student learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Build on pedagogical practices so that all students have the supports needed to engage in rigorous tasks that result in high levels of thinking and participation. (1.2)
 - In the majority of classrooms, supports for English language learners and special education students were present in the form of question prompts on classroom walls, vocabulary word walls and heterogeneous groupings. However, these strategies were not used consistently by students during instruction. In most classrooms, while all students were polite and compliant they were not always actively engaged in learning activities, often just listening to the teacher without constructing their own meaning and understanding. In a Social Studies class, students were divided into 3 groups of 6-8 students each. Students were asked to identify what made Mussolini a unique leader. In each group, 1-2 students spoke and reported out, and then the teacher provided an analysis of what patterns were presented. All students listened quietly but very few were engaged in speaking, writing or reading activities. In these classrooms there were students, including English language learners and special education students, who did not receive supports required to be fully engaged in learning therefore limiting their progress toward mastery of the curriculum.
 - The school's constructivist approach toward teaching and learning, strives to have each student engaged in rich and meaningful discussions to build knowledge and develop college level skills with a focus on arguing from evidence and deep conversations about text, however this practice is not being implemented in the majority of classrooms. Teachers are frequently the center of instruction, doing most of the talking and asking the majority of questions during the lesson. In an English language arts class, the teacher read information to students using a PowerPoint presentation. Students were expected to transfer the facts into their notebook. While copying, they were instructed by the teacher to think about a character's experience in the book. In a geometry class, during a review of the work, there was no student voice as the teacher explained what the student had done and why they did it. Consequently, with teachers doing the majority of the thinking, not all students benefit from rigorous tasks and discussions resulting in uneven growth in developing higher-order thinking and discussion skills.
- Strengthen professional development practices so that all teachers are provided supports required to elevate instructional practices. (4.1)
 - An important shift required to have students become more college a career ready is the development of teacher skills around the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teachers

were provided some supports at the beginning of the year around the Danielson Framework for Teaching and receive observations reports grounded in the framework but are not provided frequent on-going professional development and supports around development of these skills. As a result teaching practice has yet to meet the more rigorous demands of the framework and students are not always provided activities that increase engagement, discussion and questioning skills. As a result, lessons are still predominantly teacher centered and do not employ methods to have students construct their own meaning.

- School leaders hold teachers accountable for delivering rigorous instruction through frequent observations and provide both written and verbal feedback that are focused on the components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The school has created on-line tools to track the movement of each teacher's progress using the framework to measure effective planning and instruction. Teachers are provided recommendations for improvement using PD360, "Teach Like a Champion" videos and additional supports from ARIS learn to teach next steps for improvement. However, there is little evidence that this work has produced professional development that improves instruction. Though teachers receive frequent observations and feedback, school leaders have yet to develop a range of supports to meet the needs of all staff. Consequently some teachers are demonstrating gains where others are not changing practice to the extent required to meet more rigorous teaching expectations.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: School name: Robert H. Goddard High School of Communication Arts and Technology	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
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