



**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

Benjamin N. Cardozo High School

High School 415

**57- 00 223rd Street
Queens
NY 11364**

Principal: Gerald Martori

Dates of review: December 17-19, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Michael L. Schurek

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Benjamin N. Cardozo is a high school with 3,628 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 19% Black, 19% Hispanic, 16% White, 45% Asian and 1% other students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 91.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has aligned the curricula, including the arts, to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to ensure that students make progress in their learning. (1.1)
 - School leaders and faculty design a broad Regents-based curriculum that offers a large number of advanced placement and college courses to engage students in rigorous college level academics. In addition, teachers intentionally combine the CCLS with content standards in their lessons and units of study across grades and subject areas to support college and career readiness. For instance, an elective criminal justice class requires students to work in groups utilizing primary source documents to describe the connection between the Miranda Warnings and the Bill of Rights, explain the different interpretations and controversies that surround the Miranda versus Arizona Supreme Court decision, and express their opinions in writing using evidence from the documents to defend their thinking. The school consistently incorporates the instructional shifts by emphasizing writing in all subject areas and grades, ultimately requiring students to write college-level thesis papers to build communication skills, and CCLS mastery. As a result, the school's rating in the student progress category has increased from a "C" to a "B" on the most recent Progress Report.
 - Academic tasks demonstrate a level of rigor emphasized across grades and content areas requiring students to support their ideas by citing text-based evidence and respond to higher order questioning. The school holds English language learners (ELL) and special education students to the same rigorous tasks, and uses Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to refine the curricula by including vocabulary supports, graphic organizers, and strategic groupings, to ensure that all students are able to demonstrate their thinking both verbally and in writing. For example, an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) global studies lesson plan about the effects of imperialism on colonized nations contains numerous pivotal questions in addition to the "do now" and "exit" questions, and had students complete "T" charts and comparison charts to support the negative and positive effects of imperialism. In addition, students use these "understandings" to defend claims and counterclaims regarding imperialism. As a result, academic tasks regularly engage all students in high levels of thinking.
- Across classrooms, pedagogical practices consistently reflect a set of beliefs of how students learn best and consistently provide challenging tasks to engage students in high level thinking. (1.2)
 - The school's instructional focus this year is to make pedagogical practices less teacher-directed and more student-centered through the use of improved questioning techniques and flexible grouping to ensure high levels of student engagement. Teachers routinely scaffold learning by reviewing pertinent vocabulary and provide multiple entry points primarily through heterogeneous and homogeneous groupings, thus ensuring that the needs of all learners are met. For example, a class of mixed

proficiency levels of English language learners is grouped heterogeneously to produce individual brochures advertising a country of their choice using information from current event articles, encyclopedias, government websites, and other internet resources in tandem with an exemplar brochure, outline and brochure templates, bibliography instructions and samples, and a rubric. As a result, the classrooms visited consistently demonstrated students who are used to working collaboratively as they problem solve together and defend their ideas both verbally and in writing.

- The school believes that "all students can learn" and has utilized the Danielson Framework for Teaching over the last three years to improve teaching practices. For example, school leaders and staff have established norms for classroom instruction that include daily aims, do-now activities, homework assignments, pivotal or essential questions, group work, and learning tasks that are aligned to the CCLS. These practices have enabled the school to maintain an "A" rating in college and career readiness on New York City Progress Reports.
- School leaders make organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support the school's instructional goals (1.3)
 - Resources are allocated with a priority towards meeting the school's overarching goal of preparing all students, including subgroup students, to engage in meaningful academic work. Therefore, 95% of the school's funding is used for instructional staff, with a reduction of administrative positions, to ensure that students are exposed to a large variety of courses, clubs and sport teams through the school's law program, math program, dance program, the Grow program, and the ability to target students in smaller learning communities. The school's partnership with St. John's University and Queensborough Community Colleges enable students to earn college credit while in high school. The school allocates additional resources for summer school, Saturday programs, and after-school instructional programs. In addition, school leaders fund a college-level library to provide an extensive array of print and multi-media materials for student research, five additional computer rooms, numerous classroom with SMART boards, laptops, I-pads, and a resource tutoring center for students in all subjects to meet their needs. As a result, students compose detailed position papers and submit a college-level senior thesis paper that they must defend using both literary and non-fiction sources as a requirement of graduation, thus engaging students in meaningful student work products.
 - As part of the school's Special Education reorganization, the school administration search for teaching candidates that are dually certified in special education and respective content areas to ensure that all students are effectively supported through rigorous learning tasks provided by content area specialists across all subjects. This special education reorganization includes an increase in the number of integrated co-teaching classes to increase the graduation rate for special education students. In addition, funds are allocated to provide further support to English language learners by offering after-school and Saturday targeted tutoring and extra courses during the summer. As a result, the school is no longer a School In Need of Improvement (SINI) regarding special

education students' Regents pass rates in math and English language arts (ELA), and is currently recognized as a school in Good Standing.

- School leaders create a safe learning environment that promotes collaboration, professionalism, and respect to ensure academic and personal growth of students and adults. (1.4)
 - The school conducts Respect for All assemblies in which students wear wrist bands and pledge to be kind and polite and sponsors service clubs. For example, the Key Club enables students to volunteer in old age homes and conduct fundraising activities and blood drives. Student voice is encouraged and active through the school's student government, requiring candidates to make public speeches before being elected to office and through full engagement with the school's leadership team. An internship with State Farm Insurance enables students to promote school safety by organizing school-wide safety campaigns. In addition, a student leadership class is made up of students nominated by teachers to assist in the classrooms and get more students involved in the school through special events such as talent shows and auctions. Finally, an elective journalism class designs all aspects of the school's yearbook with only one teacher as facilitator to celebrate school accomplishments. As a result, students are meaningfully involved in decision-making and feel valued as contributing members of the community as evidenced by a student stating, "Our Bumble Bee Club helps elementary students close to our school to learn Spanish through lessons, power points and posters that we design."
 - Students feel well known and supported by numerous staff members who personalize supports to positively impact their needs. For instance, teachers, administrators, guidance counselors and deans are viewed by students as people they can go to ask for help with problems of both an academic and personal nature. The school has two guidance counselors on each grade and one additional counselor for the college office enable students to receive child/youth and guidance supports as per need despite the school's large size. In addition, teachers provide tutoring and supervise student tutors through the school's ARISTA program to support individual student learning needs. Parents praise the school's college office advisors as they guide students and their families through the application process, including financial aid and essay writing assistance. As a result, graduation rates have increased another 2% in the latest New York City Progress Report.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance assessment practices to ensure that instructional adjustments are made to curricula across grades and subjects to meet all students' learning needs. (2.2)
 - The school uses Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) assessments to assess student progress in English language arts. The other content areas rely solely on individual teacher assessments, projects, and term papers to monitor progress thereby passing up opportunities to use

common assessment data across all subject areas to adjust instructional plans and goals.

- While teachers routinely move around the room questioning students to check for understanding, most teachers do not record which students are mastering concepts and vice-versa, providing missed opportunities to track student progress and make daily instructional adjustments. For instance, in most classrooms visited, teachers did not use on-the-spot assessment data to separate students into different ability groups based on demonstrated capacity. Additionally, while rubrics are used across the school, students seldom use them to self-assess their work and subsequently are unable to articulate their next learning steps.
- Extend professional collaborations across grades and subjects to promote school-wide instructional coherence and build structures for teachers' leadership to strategically increase achievement for all learners. (4.2)
 - A school inquiry team focused their work on special education and English language learners who are in jeopardy of not passing English Regents, which is a requirement for high school graduation, thus supporting the school's goals of increasing graduation rates for both sub-groups. These targeted students are assessed in their respective Regents deficit areas through data and reviews of their work to identify specific areas for improvement. Accordingly, team members proceeded to suggest strategies that include the use of strategic grouping, graphic organizers, visuals, scaffolding and the Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol (SIOP) to accelerate student achievement. In addition, twenty-four integrated collaborative teacher teams meet during the week to co-plan to meet the varying needs of their students, and department teams meet formally once per month and informally as per need, limiting the ability of these teams to look at student work together. While this arrangement does engage the majority of teachers in inquiry-based collaborations that support the achievement of school goals, the informal meeting structure utilized by the school's department teams makes it difficult for these teams to meet regularly with all members present. Consequently, department teams do not consistently analyze student work utilizing established protocols, hampering efforts to improve teacher practice and student achievement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

| School name: Benjamin N. Cardozo 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 |