

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Maspeth High School

24Q585

**54-40 74th Street
Maspeth, NY**

Principal: Khurshid Abdul-Mutakabbir

Dates of review: February 6, – February 7, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Q525, Maspeth High School is a school with 750 students from ninth through eleventh grade. The school population comprises 4% Black, 45% Hispanic, 32% White, 18% Asian students, and one% unspecified. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 11.4% 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 93%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school and teacher leaders constantly convey high expectations that support learning so that students achieve success in career readiness and college preparation. (3.4)
 - The school sets very high expectations for students and conveys these clearly to all parties. Parents and students are regularly informed of student achievement and progress and goals are set with students for their next learning steps. Working with all of the schools stakeholders, the principal, and all teachers visited and interviewed, have developed these precise expectations through committees, both advisory and teacher leadership, action plans infused into lesson plans reinforce high expectations school-wide. Students are given rubrics on speaking, arguing from evidence, preparation of annotation that includes connection, comment and/or questions and on leadership to enhance and effectively move educational conversation forward to include social mastery as well. Teachers focus on increasing opportunities for students to accumulate credits and meet their Regents requirements to stay on track to graduate, and to align curricula, units and lessons with the Common Core Learning Standards. Teachers are given the time and resources to meet with students and families to further ensure success. As a result of these collaborations, there is a high expectation by all stakeholders in school improvement and student academic success and career readiness. Very good self-assessment rubrics that include learning behaviors and course content analysis are regularly used by students to monitor their own progress and set their own goals. This ensures that students take responsibility for their own learning as a preparation for life. The school's aspiration for all students to achieve in a college or career is strongly conveyed.
- School Leader and faculty ensure Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) aligned curricula and instructional shifts to build coherence and promote critical thinking. (1.1)
 - The school uses common core aligned units in all core subjects to promote coherence and attention to the instructional shifts across grades. Teacher teams engage in unit and lessons planning that use data analysis to identify areas in need of further adjustments to meet student needs. Academic tasks and curricula are planned and refined using student work and data to create rigorous lessons so that a diversity of learners are cognitively engaged. As part of planning, the English Language Arts team creates writing activities connected to standards, such as “How do students relate to The Lottery by Shirley Jackson?” These personal engagement methods are incorporated into units of study, requiring students to write opinion pieces on topics supporting a point of view with reasons and information. Socratic Seminars are planned in the curricula materials and used for discussions to foster rich, coherent conversations that promote college and career readiness skills for all learners including English Language learners and Special Education students as evidenced by an entire class participating in a discussion on The Odyssey and the relevance of ancient Greek culture to

our current morals. Each student participated by calling on one another to present their views. Teacher prompts were given to facilitate multiple entry points. The curriculum stresses the key experience and competencies of solving real-world problems, learning through collaborative processes, differentiation of learning experiences and the use of observations and notations as a learning and problem solving tool.

- The school community works collaboratively to ensure a safe, inclusive culture and caring environment that promotes teacher learning and enhances students' academic and personal growth. (1.4)
 - The school fosters a safe school environment that encourages student voices and participation in many extra-curricula activities that include theater, sports, chess, advanced study classes, and offers 'extra help' meetings with teachers, as well as college workshops and readiness classes. Students strongly appreciate the opportunities teachers afford them before and after school hours, student advisory period, office hours and lunch to receive group and individualized instruction to bolster their academic performance and support their social and emotional needs. The school encourages open conversations between the principal and the students via ongoing accessibility to leadership through an 'open door' system. Students stated "that they can turn to the principal, teacher leaders, guidance counselor and various teachers throughout the school to provide them with the emotional and academic support that they need to succeed in school". The school has provided professional development meetings for teachers on the CCLS and Danielson's Framework. These programs and services offered by the school help to meet student learning needs and ensure students are an integral voice in the school community, as well as support the development of academic behaviors that align with college and career readiness. Students expressed appreciation for their regular consultative meetings with the principal, and tout his visibility and responsiveness as a key component to the schools demeanor. Students spoke about the school show and sports. Similarly, parents specifically referenced the commitment to college and career readiness, safety and security and a positive school tone as key attributes of the school community
- The school organizes staff time so that teams of teachers engage in thoughtful responsibilities aligned to instructional goals leading to improved student progress. (1.3)
 - Teacher teams meet weekly and are immersed in the work of creating academic tasks that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. For example, during a team meeting teachers were reviewing students' work that comprised of products of tasks and assignments recently created that included the citywide instructional shifts. Teachers shared this student work and focused on strengthening curricula coherence. Other teacher teams implemented 'Looking at Student Work' and other protocols designed to help teachers measure the effectiveness of the performance task and to prompt discussions about how to improve instruction based on a review of the rubric, the quality of the work and the level of rigor embedded in the task. The effect of this work is evident in some classroom visits. This practice boosts student engagement and levels of rigor in classrooms and tasks. As a result, teachers engage in collaborative teams to improve instruction and the quality of student work

and progress. The school leader strategically aligns resources to achieve school goals such as building the capacity of teacher teams to align units of study to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). The school has increased common planning time that allows departments and teams to meet in order to design CCLS-aligned units. Teacher Leaders facilitate professional development, lead inquiry work and coordinate support for students in their respective subjects. The school leader purchased Smartboards for every classroom to foster the use of technology in the classroom. Additionally, school/teacher leaders decided to implement Socratic Seminars in order to engage all students in work that promotes high levels of thinking for all students. This aligns to the school's goal to improve its academic environment and inspire students to perform at higher levels. The school also creates time during teacher team meetings to look at the resulting student work. One example in social studies and English class is a task that asked students to analyze a variety of texts to address the question, "What would you do to achieve the American dream?" This assignment required students to use evidence to create an argumentative essay. It also was addressed in the English class studying Shakespeare's Macbeth. Groups of students had varying leveled texts of Macbeth. The school's ability to align the use of resources to instructional goals has resulted in all students across the school being engaged in meaningful work. The level of mutual support between staff results in every one working together effectively to implement plans that are sharply focused on developing each student, groups of students in all grades and each academic subject including the foreign language and arts departments.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine the use of teaching strategies that systemically embed multiple access points in all classrooms to support and strengthen student work products.(1.2)
 - Teachers align curricula and instructional expectations with the Common Core Learning Standards. As examples, in many classes, students engage in text-based discussions, solve multi-step math problems, and share explanations using reasons and evidence. The school believes in accentuating the importance of speaking skills and developing student ability to understand through multiple perspectives, as shown in classes using debates and Socratic seminars. Teachers share, critique and improve each other's work through an inquiry protocol to improve instruction. In spite of the shared vision using interim assessments to assess curricula and adjust pedagogical practices, teaching strategies did not always provide all students the opportunity to demonstrate their thinking. Some teachers provide differentiated supports for all learners and vary approaches for student's different levels. Coherence of instructional practices using scaffolding and multiple entry points were not used throughout the school, so that all students have meaningful academic engagement and improved work products. However, aside from English and Social Studies classes, questions did not probe students to deeper levels of thinking. Multiple entry points were not observed and there was an uneven demonstration of higher order thinking skills. While some students were asked to explain their answers orally or in writing, other students were allowed to provide only one-word answers. As a result, some students are not always fully motivated to

participate in discussions that foster high levels of thinking and promote ownership of their learning and produced uneven student work products.

- Deepen the use of data analysis across grades to determine student progress that informs instructional adjustments resulting in student achievement and in-depth understanding of their next learning steps. (2.2)
 - Teachers consistently collect, analyze and share feedback with students and other teachers as they adjust lesson and unit planning based on their analysis of students data. Teachers use common assessments and rubrics aligned to the school's curriculum to measure student progress and gain information about student learning outcomes. However, although feedback is actionable, it does not always provide detailed reasons why students were successful or offer helpful next steps for improvement in their learning. Some of the feedback provided to students is very general and does not provide specific next steps for learning. It was not evident that student self-assessment is a school-wide practice, thus limiting the opportunities for students to understand their present level of performance and take ownership of their learning. Teachers gather information about students' progress during lessons and from interim assessments. However, the information gathered is not always used to make targeted adjustments to meet the specific learning deficits of subgroups. This limits teachers' ability to make strategic and purposeful modifications to lessons to meet the immediate learning needs of all students and accelerate their learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Maspeth 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