



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Jill Chaifetz

Transfer High School 07X379

**778 Forest Avenue
Bronx
NY 10456**

Principal: Anne Fennelly

Dates of review: February 11-12, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Elaine Lindsey

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Jill Chaifetz is a transfer high school with 184 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 31% Black, 64% Hispanic, 3% White, and .50% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 34% of the students enrolled and girls account for 66%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 66.30%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Students benefit from a standards based curriculum which is aligned to the Common Core and instructional shifts which promotes college and career readiness. (1.1)
 - Administrators ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and integrate the instructional shifts to build coherence. Key standards have been identified and supported by performance tasks, anchor lessons and formative assessments to provide multiple entry points for all learners including Students with Disabilities (SWDs) and English Language Learners (ELLs). Generation Ready and network coaches work with teachers on curricula development to ensure maps, pacing guides, formative assessments and anchor lessons are Common Core aligned and reference State standards. Teachers use materials from the Common Core Lab in addition to the school-wide planning template to develop curricula and ensure Common Core alignment. Consequently, all students are exposed to curriculum that promotes college and career readiness skills.
 - To ensure student engagement and academic rigor, curricula are submitted and reviewed by administrators and the Generation Ready coach using the instructional materials review template. Teachers receive feedback and are asked to make revisions. Feedback on an ecology unit included suggestions for the teacher to revise the task to ensure alignment with argumentative writing and language standards that support student writing claims, evidence reasoning and tone. An earth science unit received feedback that suggested revisions to include an essential question that addresses the complexity of students taking a stance and developing an argument that requires use of scientific content and text to critique ideas. As a small school, all discipline teachers meet as one inquiry team during structured team meetings to plan and make adjustments to units of study as well as academic tasks. In addition, during a team meeting an analysis of student work revealed that students were struggling with argumentative writing. As a result, units across disciplines were refined to include anchor lessons that require writing claims and citing text based evidence, resulting in a diversity of learners having access to curricula and tasks that cognitively engage all learners, including ELLs and SWDs.
- The school uses assessments aligned to the curricula and common measurements to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas, providing a clear portrait of students' academic needs. (2.2)
 - Assessments aligned to curricula are used across grades and disciplines in order to measure student progress toward goals. Additionally, teachers use rubrics that are aligned with the school's key standards to analyze student work. Students are provided rubrics before starting an assignment. For example, in addition to written feedback on an argumentative essay in a social studies class on "The Age of Exploration"

teachers' comments include advise to be more specific when explaining the importance by going more in depth and expanding on their explanation to include more details such as, "the information is critical because..." or "this concept of information is significant because...." Teacher pointers provided through the rubric offers a clear portrait of mastery resulting in the schools ability to provide meaningful feedback to students regarding their achievement.

- Progress reports are generated every three weeks to monitor student achievement. Grades from progress reports enable teachers to make timely adjustments to lessons and curriculum as indicated in discipline anchor lessons. English teachers use common argumentative writing assessments and all humanities courses, including science; utilize anchor lessons for similar assessments. Common midterms, finals and Regents results are utilized to determine student progress and make adjustments to curricula. Additionally, the school has implemented a school-wide repository for student work so teachers have access to review work products across course levels and disciplines enabling them to review student struggles and make suggestions for adjustments in curricula and instruction to advance students' understanding.
- Staff and students appreciate the principal's focused efforts to create a safe, respectful, inclusive and orderly environment that supports their needs and promotes academic success. (1.4)
 - The school's theory of action for building social-emotional supports involves addressing the whole student by preparing them to be productive and responsible citizens. All students are required to take a Teen Leadership class covering eleven areas of leadership to prepare them to be leaders who make a difference in the school and community. During a meeting with students they all referenced this class, and stated that it not only helps them deal with school life, but it's also preparing them to be successful in the real world by showing them how to deal with conflict, greet people, shake hands, focus on posture, write well, speak publicly, be empathetic and practice self-control. In addition to the leadership class, students are encouraged to participate in the school's "*Student Leadership Team*" (SLT) consisting of students who are in good academic standing, have a minimum 80% attendance, have submitted recommendations from teachers and were selected by the current team members. All potential members participate in an interviewing process with current SLT members answering a series of team created interview questions to measure leadership ability and commitment. The SLT consists of three sub-committees: The Outreach Committee, responsible for awareness events such as cancer walks and coat drives; The Social Events Committee, responsible for all school-wide activities such as spooky hall and school dances and The Social-Emotional Committee, which is responsible for conducting town hall meetings and dealing with student issues such as bullying and student conflict. Students are meaningfully involved in decision making, as the school's suggestion box provides ongoing opportunities for students to anonymously petition the SLT. Additionally the SLT meets regularly with the principal to discuss student concerns and improvement efforts. These committees allow students to a have voice and participate in food and coat drives during the holidays, organize social events such as school dances and holiday

events and plan and facilitate all town hall meetings and agendas. As a result, bullying incidents dropped by 50% and the school maintains a suspension rate that is well below the city's average. Thus, students, staff and parents state that they feel safe in the school.

- All students are well known by at least one adult who helps to personalize attendance and supports and coordinate social-emotional learning. The community based organization (CBO), Bronx Works, provides eight advisors with a caseload of 35 students who are supported until graduation. Advisors serve as student advocates who provide academic and social emotional support, set academic and emotional goals, are members of the school's attendance team responsible for monitoring and tracking students' attendance, make disciplinary and positive calls to parents, develop social contracts, participate in student teacher mediation, review student progress reports every three weeks to track achievement and develop supports for at-risk students. The school based, *Learning to Work CBO* offers paid internships, provides three social workers and college advisors for students to support them through the college process. Additionally, the school's guidance counselor provides social-emotional and academic supports as well as working with the college advisors to ensure all seniors are supported through the college application process. As a result, 100% of the seniors have applied to college, credit accumulation has increased, student behavior has improved and classroom incidents have declined.
- Teacher teams collaborate in the inquiry process to analyze key elements of teacher and student work and have a voice in shared decisions for improved student outcomes. (4.2)
 - All teachers have been scheduled to meet regularly for common planning and inquiry work as one inquiry team to review student work. Teachers work in heterogeneous groups to ensure representation across disciplines with each group strategically including a humanities teacher. During an inquiry team meeting teachers gathered to discuss an English language arts (ELA) task using the rubric and looking at samples of three students' work ranging from level one to three. Teachers use protocols for looking at student's work to analyze samples of each piece in order to identify strategies to support the teacher in moving forward with refining the task to provide multiple access points for all learners. Consequently, all strategies are shared with the community during the meeting, is recorded and published on Google Docs. Teachers gather at the subsequent meeting to discuss the effectiveness of suggested strategies and make suggestions for further improvements in alignment with the CCLS and instructional shifts.
 - Teachers work collaboratively with the principal and have a voice in making key decisions that impact student learning. For example, teacher leads meet and collaborate weekly with the principal around course offerings, curriculum and professional development. This year, after reviewing student's work, teachers found that students were struggling with argumentative writing, making claims and using supporting evidence in English, math and science. As a result, anchor lessons were incorporated across disciplines to include strategies that will support and

engage all learners in the learning process and accelerate academic achievement.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen pedagogy to ensure that teaching strategies, including questioning scaffolds and routines consistently provide multiple entry points and high quality supports to engage all learners including ELLs and SWDs. (1.2)
 - Across classrooms students respond to teacher questions, however questioning is not consistently scaffolded and are typically lower level recall type and does not push students to think critically. For example, in a science class students are asked, “Anybody know what “A” is?” “Is it showing meiosis?” “What would you see if it was showing meiosis?” In a US history class students are asked, “This is a speech by whom?” “What are we looking for?” “What claim are we supporting?” “Do you think he likes his own plan?” As a result, students are not consistently provided with differentiated opportunities to support their learning. Consequently, students do not form their own higher order questions and lessons do not typically generate student query, as evidenced by in classroom lessons.
 - Although teacher questioning and strategies generate some student participation across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation. Lessons tend to be teacher centered with most dialogue being teacher to student and student to teacher, limiting student to student discussions, student generated questions and accountable-talk. Students do not formulate their own higher order questions that lead to further query resulting in limited challenge for all learners. Evidence of higher order thinking skills in student work and discussions was uneven across classrooms. For example, writing assignments do not consistently require students to conduct research or analyze information, thus not challenging all learners and limiting the school’s ability to prepare students for college and careers.
- Ensure that feedback provided to teachers consistently articulates clear expectations and supports the development of teacher practice and improved academic outcomes for all students. (4.1)
 - Although administrators conduct frequent cycles of observations using the Danielson Framework to support teacher development and have identified student engagement and using discussion and questioning techniques as developing practices across the school, feedback to support teachers in these areas is not consistently actionable or effective, as evidenced in some classroom observation reports that do not provide teachers with suggestions for next steps. Specifically, a review of observation reports reflecting *developing* practice in these areas reveals feedback that merely suggests that teachers provide further evidence in subsequent visits. In the absence of specific feedback from administrators, teachers lack guidance to move toward best practices for professional growth, in order to advance instructional practice.

- Administrators provide feedback to teachers that captures strengths, and challenges; however next steps are not reflected and feedback merely recites Danielson's title for each component. A review of teacher observations revealed comments that stated "Components that were evidenced effectively; creating an environment of respect and rapport and Establishing a culture for learning'. Additionally, a developing rating for student behavior received feedback that suggested the teacher provide further evidence during subsequent visits. As a result, the lack of consistent and clearly defined expectations for teacher development aligned to the Danielson Framework, limits opportunities for effective instructional practices to support professional growth.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Jill Chaifetz Transfer 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