



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

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

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**High School of Language and Innovation**

**High School 509**

**925 Astor Avenue**

**Bronx**

**NY 10469**

**Principal: Julie Nariman**

**Dates of review: March 11 – 12, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Arisleyda A. Ureña**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

High School of Language and Innovation is a high school with 255 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 11% Black, 60% Hispanic, 9% White, and 17% Asian students. The student body includes 78% English language learners and 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 92.9%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The administration makes organizational decisions to create supports aligned to the school's instructional goals to improve staff and student performance. (1.3)
  - To address the school's priority and overarching goals of increasing the school's safety and academic performance, the administration allocated funds to provide additional professional development to teachers on classroom management and how to conference with students regarding social-emotional and academic matters. Additional resources support the behavioral intervention program, such as JumpRope, an online standard-based grading system that is used to help students, parents, and teachers monitor student progress on specific work habits and content standards. Per-session funds enable teachers to meet with students after school, and consultants from the Learning Cultures program provide professional development to teachers to further support the school's goals and students' performance. Furthermore, aside from having teacher leaders as coaches and teacher mentors, the school administration made the decision to develop an additional position to include the director of the behavior intervention team to support the school's goal for safety. The administration purchased document cameras for the classrooms, and recently received a grant to develop classroom videos, and a partnership with College Now enables the school to offer students college classes outside the school, thus supporting students in becoming college and career ready.
  - School leadership design the school's program based on observable grade level needs, and schedule multiple types of meetings. The cabinet, for example, meets weekly to monitor students' progress, meets as necessary, and develops additional intervention plans to address school needs. The school's schedule also affords teachers opportunities to meet on a daily basis with options for planning time, record and share, looking at student work and data, for updating classroom environments, and for whole staff professional development. For example, during the classroom environment updates, teachers can either choose to focus the meeting on using the learning cultures classroom environment rubric to make one positive change to a classroom, replenish missing materials, or reorganize/re-labeled classroom libraries and resources, thus ensuring that teachers engage in professional work that support the school's instructional goals to improve instruction at the classroom level thereby increasing student engagement of challenging academic tasks.
- A collaborative school culture promotes the adoption of self-regulating academic and personal behaviors for students and adults. (1.4)
  - A school wide initiative to address students' social-emotional growth by developing systems to track and professionally develop teachers on how to support students' with behavioral issues has been initiated by the principal. For example, the behavior intervention team conferences with students regarding behavior issues, thus allowing opportunities for students to reflect and make a plan to improve their behavior. This team, headed by a lead teacher, meets one period per week to discuss students' social-emotional progress and next steps. Teachers are also provided with professional

development to learn how to guide conversations related to behavior issues. In addition, the Ladder of Consequences, a tool that was developed by the behavior intervention team, includes feedback from students and teachers to set clear expectations for academic and personal behavior. This initiative has contributed to improved attendance for some students in the target population, and a decreased of infractions. Students, in the meeting, shared how the Ladder of Consequences gives them clear guidance of “how teachers and the principal expect them to behave.” Alike, in the teacher meeting, teachers shared how everyone collaborates and respects each other’s work, thus creating a supportive school culture and tone.

- The school community continues to find ways to align professional development with family outreach. The parent coordinator is the main contact between the school and families, and organizes different opportunities for parents to learn about the school. For example, parents were surveyed about the best time during the year for them to participate in workshops. Parents responded in writing or by phone sharing that they commit to attending an intensive workshop twice a year. The first workshop conducted during the Fall focused on the school’s instructional model and curricula, and another workshop offered to parents and students pertained to the college application process. Furthermore, teachers also engaged in various professional development opportunities for developing effective classroom management skills, and received written communication from the school leaders about “Securing the norms we want for behavior: Mindsets and habits getting in our way.” As a result, parents stated that their children are becoming more committed to learning, thus promoting effective academic and personal behaviors. As a result, tenth graders’ credit accumulation had a slight increase in the first semester.
- School leadership is a developing a system of accountability that communicates high expectations among staff, parents, and students, to ensure progress toward those expectations. (3.4)
  - The school leadership supports teachers in developing strategies for improving student learning by scheduling ongoing professional development around the Danielson Framework for Teaching and classroom management techniques for conducting effective conferences with students. For example, every summer since the school’s inception, the administration, with support from teachers, organizes professional development to communicate the school’s goals, expectations for teaching and learning aligned to the Danielson Framework, and the Learning Cultures curricula framework. In the teacher team meetings, a first year teacher and new to the profession, shared that he was thrilled to have had a head start in understanding the school’s expectations for teaching and “not wait until for September to prepare for his students.” Furthermore, the staff is held accountable through observation cycles, scheduled meetings, and ongoing discussions about meeting the school’s instructional goals. In addition, the school makes certain that teachers and families are aware of high expectations via various methods. Parents are able to monitor and track their children’s grades and behavior via JumpRope, thus increasing a shared understanding of expectations towards student learning and achievement. Consequently, school leadership coordinates various workshops for families and students about the college application process, the school’s curricula, and for teachers’ ongoing professional development is aligned to the school’s instructional goals, thereby providing continuous communication regarding school expectations.

## What the school needs to improve

- Further refine curricula to consistently emphasize rigorous habits across grades and subjects to cognitively engage a diversity of learners. (1.1)
  - Curricula artifacts demonstrate how unit performance tasks and formative assessments are based on Regents questions. Teachers' curricula maps are given to students as a "curriculum tool," with the expectation that it will be used for students to independently and in groups learn the content and complete class work for each unit. In English language arts, for example, students complete weekly reading assignments of varied texts that must be completed by the end of the week. Similarly, in chemistry, students had a checklist of assignments along with the required artifacts they were responsible for submitting. However, assignments do not consistently engage students in rigorous activities across grades and subjects as evidenced by assignments that do not require inferential thinking or the relevance of information to the real world. In addition, unit performance tasks do not provide accommodations to challenge students' thinking or access for all learners, as evidenced by students' work folders. For example, an eleventh grader had the same reading list for a literature analysis as a ninth grader, thus limiting students' opportunities to deepen their thinking and engage in cognitively challenging learning. The school leadership and lead teachers, shared after analyzing assessments data from the beginning of the school year, that adjustments to the history curricula was made to combine short answer questions with multiple-choice questions, and math and science curricula had adjustments to include more informational texts. However, the school's curricula do not include adjustments for student subgroups, including Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE), students with disabilities, and higher achievers. Consequently, the school's curricula inconsistently demonstrate revisions or adjustments to ensure that all learners have access to cognitively challenging tasks, thereby impeding efforts to engage all students across grades and subjects in higher-order thinking and learning.
- Strengthen pedagogical practices to provide all students access to the curricula and ensure consistent student engagement. (1.2)
  - Across classrooms, teachers use the Learning Cultures "formats" for planning and teaching. In all classrooms visited, students engage in any one of prescribed activities. Students work either in groups for Unison Reading, or are reviewing of a test, preparing for a post-test, individually using a book or a laptop to get information about the content topic, completing a test reflect sheet (Analyzing Regents Multiple Choice Questions) with a partner, or meeting with the teacher for a scheduled conference. When students were asked what they were working on, some were able to respond relative to the specific activity, but others were not able to answer at the moment as he/she was still deciding what to do for the class period. In other classrooms, the class periods end with a 5 minute share by having the student, with whom the teacher had the individual conference, present to the rest of the class her/his challenge in the test, how to answer that particular question, and asked the other students if they had any questions. In some classrooms, some students did ask a few questions, but in the vast majority of the classrooms, most students were quiet, said thank you, and moved on to their next class. Furthermore, as students are scheduled for individual conferences with the teacher only once or twice a month, the teacher's ability to ensure that all students receive adequate instruction to meet

the lesson objective is hampered. As a result, across the school, not all students are given opportunities to engage in suitable activities, thus lessening opportunities for rigorous learning.

- Refine school practices so that teachers consistently implement assessment practices that inform planning, lesson adjustments, and provide students with feedback to support learning and progress. (2.2)
  - Departmental assessments are common across math, literacy, history, and recently for science, are administered before a unit, at checkpoints, post-test, and at the end of the unit to inform additional academic intervention supports in preparing students for the Regents' exams. " In addition, although teachers allocate time for summaries at the end of a class period, checks for understanding are not regularly used to ensure that all students' learning needs are met. Moreover, teachers use JumpRope, an online grading system that enables students to track their grades in specific content standards and specific work habits regarding schoolwork and test grades. However, while this structure allows students to monitor grades, it does not inform students of his/her specific academic needs, but focuses more on behaviors than on specific instructional strategies to improve their work. For example, a JumpRope analysis by course code, used in the inquiry process, teachers' feedback relative to next steps for students specifically noted that students "behave in ways that can disrupt their responsibility teams and the entire class...this misbehavior comes about because they just don't want to do the work." Consequently, many students stated that their "goal is study more, pass the Regents, and get credits." Furthermore, students, also stated, "All we do is take tests, we want more teaching time with the teacher so that we can learn more, I am not learning." Thus, messages that do not sufficiently provide clarity for students around their academic performance and progress are missed opportunities for guidance and support for them to improve their learning and meet yearlong academic goals.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

| School name: High School of Language and Innovation   | 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>   |                       |          |                   |          |                   |           |                       |
| <b>UD</b>   | <b>Underdeveloped</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>Developing</b> | <b>P</b> | <b>Proficient</b> | <b>WD</b> | <b>Well Developed</b> |