



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Frederick Douglass Academy IV

High School K393

**1014 Lafayette Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11221**

Principal: Elvin Crespo

**Date of review: April 30, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Karen Watts**

The School Context

Frederick Douglass Academy IV is a high school with 92 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 83% Black, 14% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 35% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 81.2 %.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
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	Additional Findings	Developing
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	Additional Findings	Proficient
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	Additional Findings	Developing
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Celebration	Proficient
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Focus	Developing

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and staff consistently communicate high expectations for teaching and learning. This culture of learning is connected to a path of college and career readiness and offers ongoing feedback to help families understand student progress toward those expectations.

Impact

Students and families are well apprised of paths to college and career readiness due to consistent communication of high expectations and provision of guidance for post-secondary plans.

Supporting Evidence

- Students expressed that the teachers push them to be college ready through reinforcement of annotation and note-taking skills. Students noted that the principal is supportive of them by always providing a great deal of encouragement regarding their potential. The students enjoyed the small setting for ninth graders and feel safe in the building. They also noted that their teachers were supportive of their efforts, providing help when they need it and they feel that the teachers have their best interest at heart. One student said, "I am a better writer now. I am challenged all the time and I like a challenge. It's different every day." Students said they can go to their teachers at any time to ask about their progress and can go to tutoring after school.
- Parents and students spoke equally about their satisfaction with college and career readiness at the school. One parent noted, "I feel like this is a community school," and all parents agreed. Another parent said, "This school has one mission and that is college." Again, all parents agreed.
- Students meet every day for an advisory class that supports them in academic and personal behaviors that prepare them for college and career through the use of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* and the College Board curricula.
- The students and parents were highly satisfied with the Integrated Co - Teaching (ICT) teacher who also functions in a dean's capacity, as he was supportive of the students' academic needs and effective in communicating expectations to them.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Teacher teams analyze assessment data and student work for students they share, or on whom they are focused, but this work does not typically result in improved teacher practice or progress toward goals for groups of students. Distributed leadership structures are developing to support leadership capacity building and to include teachers in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Impact

The school is developing in its attempt to align its professional learning with its goals and intended outcomes for teachers and students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers formally meet on Mondays afterschool for professional development (PD) sessions and after school on Tuesdays for inquiry and teacher teams. Although all teachers are off during 5th period, there is no structured planning time currently in place.
- The Professional Development plan that was shared shows an attention to teacher team activities, however, there was lack of evidence to support the effective implementation of the planned activities and desired outcomes.
- On Mondays, teachers meet for weekly professional learning sessions where the professional development is created by the principal and coaches. Although the principal does conduct frequent cycles of observation, and provides feedback, there was minimal evidence that the professional development plan was aligned to and informed by teacher observation data.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. Teachers use instructional strategies to provide consistent opportunities for all students to engage in challenging tasks.

Impact

Across classrooms, teachers employ strategies that engage students in appropriately challenging tasks. Such tasks are scaffolded and provide multiple points of entry, which allows students to demonstrate higher order thinking skills in their work products.

Supporting Evidence

- A Claim-Evidence-Reasoning template is in use school-wide in support of the Common Core Standard of developing argumentative writing, which is outlined in the curricula, and is a school-wide strategy. This was evidenced on hall bulletin boards, on the student work products where this template was displayed in as part of the writing process.
- In the English class, the teacher was delivering an AVID based lesson, where students were using a Cornell note-taker to record information from a video clip, "The Story of the American Public System." They also had to write a summary using their notes. This class promoted several important skills for accessing and processing information.
- In the ICT math class, the teacher was working with two students at the board on solving linear equations and inequalities in one variable, but the rest of the class was minimally engaged during this time. Students broke off into pairs to work on a problem together. The teacher circulated and looked at their assessment card to ensure their understanding.
- In the chemistry class, students were required to travel to stations every four minutes to answer questions about the problem presented at the station about solubility curves, or putting questions, they had about it on a post-it and leaving them at another station. The teacher circulated to assist students during their work at the stations and ensure that they were answering each other's questions, but also had to answer questions that they posed for each other. This promoted autonomous learning, where students had to take ownership of their learning. The lesson plan format promoted student centered learning, with a "student does column" and a "teacher does" column.

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

School leaders and faculty are in the process of aligning curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), and/or content standards and integrating the instructional shifts to address inconsistency in task rigor and use of higher order skills.

Impact

Developing curricula provides inconsistent engagement in rigorous learning opportunities across grades and subgroups.

Supporting Evidence

- The school procured a School Improvement Fund grant, and this funding was used to create a partnership with Teachers College. The staff works closely with a coach from Teachers College, who works weekly with them to create and adjust maps. The school is in the process of refining their English language arts scope and sequence and adjusting for horizontal and vertical alignment across grades and subjects. Engage NY units are modified for the English Language Arts map. The coach works with the staff to align their maps to the Common Core Language Standards while also addressing modifications for students with special needs. The staff engages in curriculum writing during professional time on Mondays and has worked on selected Saturdays as well to engage in this work. Teachers are also sent out of the building for professional development on building curriculum. The staff is working towards unified expectations for how students learn best to include in the maps. For example, the use of Engage NY graphic organizers in the English Language Arts curriculum helps students to access text through specific close reading strategies.
- The school uses Association of Mathematics Assistant Principals (AMAPS) for the math curriculum. The principal went to Texas to help write curriculum, and then developed and revised the geometry curriculum. Carnegie math is utilized as well.
- Students with Disabilities are held to a high standard, and maps are created to ensure that they are following a rigorous and challenging curriculum. Teachers are trained for Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) and transition. The special education teachers co-plan with the general education teachers to address the needs of the level 1 students, who make up 50% of the ninth grade cohort.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The school is developing the use of common assessments and checks for understanding to monitor student progress toward goals varies across grades and subject areas and in using the results of common assessments to adjust curricula and instruction. Assessment practices are used inconsistently, which inhibits teacher ability to meet student learning needs.

Impact

Infrequent data inquiry results in inconsistent application across classrooms, and limits instructional and curricular modifications responsive to students' present levels of performance.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet on Tuesdays to examine the data from the MOSL baseline assessments to inform instructional adjustments. Based on this data, the school adopted a claim evidence and reason strategy. Their display and use of this strategy was not visible across all classrooms.
- The school has adopted a formative assessment in-class check for understanding system of red, green and yellow cards. These were highly visible across classrooms, but not always used to make effective adjustments to meet students' needs. Questioning techniques did not strongly elicit student understanding. For example, in the math ICT class, the teacher unevenly engaged students through his questioning strategy. However, in the ELA class, the teacher asked students to review their notes and create questions about the topic to assess their understanding.
- There was student work posted in the halls and some feedback evident on the work, but there was minimal actionable feedback to direct students to a clear path towards mastery. For example, one bulletin board demonstrated a cohesive design, with standards, task, student work and rubrics with actionable feedback and next steps aligned to those rubrics. However, the same practice was not evidenced in all classrooms observed.