



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

**Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning**

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2014-2015**

**Abraham Lincoln**

**High School K410**

**2800 Ocean Parkway  
Brooklyn  
NY 11235**

**Principal: Ari Hoogenboom**

**Date of review: April 1, 2015  
Reviewer: Michael Prayor**

## The School Context

Abraham Lincoln is a high school with 2,341 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 40% Black, 23% Hispanic, 19% White, and 16% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 61% of the students enrolled and girls account for 39%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 84.9%.

## School Quality Criteria

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

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide staff training connected to the elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The school communicates high expectations consistently which are connected to a path of college and career readiness to students and families.

### Impact

Staff training has led to a system of accountability for high expectations around professionalism, instruction, and communication. Ongoing feedback helps families and students understand their progress toward meeting school-wide expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- Conversations with students and parents indicated that the school uses PupilPath to provide them with clear and detailed information regarding their child's progress. They also receive progress reports with standards and grades for assessments in family-friendly language. For example, parents of ninth grade students stated that they receive ongoing feedback and information regarding academic interventions through parent teacher conferences, phone calls, and one-on-one meetings with guidance counselors.
- A school wide professional development plan designed by teacher leaders consists of a workshop menu, aligned to Danielson Framework for Teaching elements, and centered around the school's instructional focus on developing students' understanding through engagement in meaningful, rigorous activities. For example, the menu includes a teacher-designed and facilitated workshop titled, *Go Beyond Transaction Tickets with Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies* and states that it covers the elements of Danielson Framework for Teaching 2a on creating an environment of respect and rapport, and 2d on managing student behavior. Another teacher-led and facilitated workshop offered was, *Voices Matter: Getting Students to Talk about the Work*, which states that it covers the elements of 3b on using questioning and discussion techniques, and 3c on engaging students in learning.
- School leaders provide teacher support through frequent cycles of observation and feedback that support the school's focus on argumentative writing and evidence-based discussion. A review of observation reports demonstrates evidence of feedback and next steps such as developing discussion protocols, use of the question formulation technique, forming text-dependent questions, and use of the collaborative text annotation strategy.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

Across classrooms teacher practices include questioning and scaffolds, but entry points, levels of student discussion and work products, are uneven.

### Impact

Student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation, including the degree of engagement for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SwDs).

### Supporting Evidence

- Teaching strategies utilized such as visuals, leveled texts, and graphic organizers, serve as scaffolds and supports for students, but these practices are not evident consistently across classrooms. In a ninth grade algebra class, students worked independently to solve a system of equations based on a real world problem regarding the cost of renting a tennis court. Most students struggled with the definition of key words such as variable, and virtually all students failed to identify a formula, solve the problem, or explain their reasoning as required on the worksheet provided.
- In a ninth grade science class, students were asked to read a text about rare genetic diseases and the search for their cures. Although the teacher directed students to respond to questions in writing that required them to cite evidence to support the analysis and draw inferences from the text, most students were only able to identify the main idea and gather some information about the text. Written responses included, "The article informs us about genetic diseases", "The article says the disease comes from Europe," and "The article states that people are born with the disease."
- In a tenth grade social studies class, students were asked to conduct a gallery walk to explore, "How did Apartheid affect South Africa?" Students examined primary and secondary sources at each station and documented "three or more things they saw or read." Subsequently, the teacher asked a few students to share out with the class and then closed the lesson by explaining the homework assignment for the next day.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Curricula and academic tasks are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, integrate the instructional shifts, and consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

### Impact

Purposeful decisions lead to building coherence, and promote college and career readiness for all students including ELLs and SwDs, across grades and subject areas.

### Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricular documents demonstrated evidence of coherence in planning across grades and subject areas such as the school wide implementation of the “Question Formulation Technique (QFT).” The administration reported that this technique provides opportunities for students to formulate their own open-ended questions based on a text. For example, in a tenth grade unit on Romeo and Juliet, the tasks require students to read multi-level texts of various complexities and contain prompts to formulate questions that will support their discussion such as, “Are humans naturally violent?” The procedure follows up with a group question analysis in which students would determine the academic value of questions and choose which ones would promote the best discussion.
- A cross-curricular program, Read 20 Initiative, requires students to read for twenty minutes and answer text-based questions that lead them to make inferences, evaluate evidence, and synthesize ideas. In a ninth grade living environment lesson plan, the focus of the Read 20 is an article on the hereditary patterns for disease in past Amish and Mennonite communities. After 20 minutes of reading, the task requires students to make connections and inferences about the positive impact of doctors’ work on the communities and to explain the point and purpose of the author’s message. Students’ responses are written in a Read 20 graphic organizer and require them to provide appropriate evidence and cite three or more terms from the article.
- In a tenth grade global studies lesson plan on imperialism, Depth of Knowledge (DoK) 3 or 4 tasks provide students at different levels with choices between two activities. Higher-level students write a fictitious newspaper article in which they cite primary sources and demonstrate the effects of imperialism on slavery in Africa. Students who struggle academically can analyze a primary source document, create a T-chart outlining the positive and negative effects of imperialism, and then formulate text-based questions to discuss with a partner.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### **Findings**

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments and rubrics loosely aligned with the school's curricula. Teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

### **Impact**

Assessment practices result in limited feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers inconsistently make effective adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms, some teachers use rubrics to provide assessment criteria for student work. For example, in a ninth grade class, students were asked to complete a graphic organizer in response to a text they read. According to a rubric provided, students were expected to use their own words, cite two-three pieces of textual evidence, and respond in a clear and concise manner. However, students were not asked to self or peer-assess nor did the teacher refer to the rubric to provide feedback to students.
- Conversations during student interviews demonstrated evidence of limited feedback to students regarding their achievement. For example, a tenth grade student indicated that his teachers provided him with a journal where every teacher records his progress regarding homework, classwork, and conduct. Examination of the journal revealed checks to indicate when classwork and homework was completed but no comments regarding the quality of the work. In the conduct section, some teachers wrote comments such as "Good job!" and "Keep it up!"
- Across some classrooms, there was evidence of ongoing checks for understanding during group work through teacher questioning and observation. However, in one tenth grade social studies class, the teacher's checks for understanding consisted of questions to groups such as, "What are we doing here?", "Did you write a question for each one?", "Did you highlight the text evidence?" Several groups of students did not write questions or highlight the text evidence after the teacher moved on to a different group. The teacher did not follow up with these groups or bring the class together to reinforce the criteria. Several students did not complete the task by the close of the lesson.
- In a tenth grade social studies class, students were provided with an exit ticket that required them to complete a student reflection at the end of the period. The reflection sheet prompted students with, "What is one question that you heard today that you would like to discuss further during our next class? Why are you interested in this question?" Additionally, the handout prompted students to assess the rigor of the questions they asked during class. However, the handout was not completed, referred to, or collected from students.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations and distributed leadership structures are in place that promote the achievement of school goals.

### Impact

Professional collaborations have strengthened the instructional capacity of teachers as well as provided them with a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- In addition to content, academy and grade teams, teachers also meet in weekly Affinity Groups to work on shared instructional plans or projects. These groups are responsible for incorporating literacy across the curricula, analyzing assessment data, integrating the Common Core Learning Standards, and participating in a lesson study. Some examples of Affinity Groups include Common Core Geometry, English language arts (ELA) Common Core Shifts, School-wide Skills, and Building Positivity through Collaboration.
- Inquiry teams focus on developing areas of student difficulty by utilizing an analysis protocol to examine student work. Teacher teams determine whether standards-based objectives were met and subsequently, group students based on the degree to which each standard was met. Teachers use these findings to determine the identification of instructional strategies to move students forward in each standard. Teacher team conversations from an ELA Inquiry team meeting demonstrate the need for student support in skills such as paraphrasing, argumentative writing, identifying relevant information, and academic vocabulary. Instructional strategies to support these skills include drawing images for new words, implementing protocols for discussion, collaborative annotation, and modeling.
- Following collaborative classroom intervisitations, teachers use a Learner-Centered Initiatives (LCI) tool to discuss classroom evidence connected to the task, student work, and environment. The tool asks them to consider several questions including, “How are students engaged in the shifts? How does the task foster critical thinking skills, reflection, and independence?” This practice connects to the school goal to increase student engagement and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards, including the instructional shifts.
- Conversations with leadership demonstrate evidence of structures to build teachers’ leadership capacity. Teacher leaders serve as Academy Coordinators for the school’s six academies such as the ELL Academy. These leaders oversee the creation of action plans and implementation of interventions for high-need students within their academies. They also coordinate outreach to parents and community organizations, such as Project Respect, Integrity, and Success Through Education (RISE), in order to support students’ learning needs.