



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**FDNY High School for Fire and Life Safety**

**High School K502**

**400 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11207**

**Principal: James Anderson**

**Date of review: November 25, 2014  
Lead Reviewer: Miatheresa Pate**

## The School Context

FDNY High School for Fire and Life Safety is a high school with 330 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 72 % Black, 24% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 76% of the students enrolled and girls account for 24%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 81.0%.

## 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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</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 to the entire staff. Staff members establish a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations and offer guidance and advisement supports that prepare students for the next level.

### Impact

Structures that support the school's high expectations ensure coherence and accountability amongst staff and students, which prepare students for the next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school leaders communicate high expectations via the staff handbook that outlines among many topics including teacher instructional “look fors” for each element of the Danielson Framework. For instance, in the handbook under student engagement 3c it states that, “teachers must make sure students are engaged... This will be evident when students are...”
- Administration has a schedule to ensure frequent classroom observations are conducted and a one-to-one dialogue serves as the platform for communicating high expectations to each staff member. For instance, through the observation process, school leaders provide verbal/written feedback and teachers are provided a post-observation guiding questions template that highlights expectations for the lesson but also holds teachers accountable for their instructional practices by having them reflect of the observed lesson and answer key questions during the one-to-one discussion.
- Each grade team establishes a culture for learning by having a targeted group of students similar to advisory group that they support in order to prepare students for the next level. For instance, when meeting weekly with their targeted students, teachers tutor, mentor and provide guidance and advisement supports. This practice was surfaced and confirmed during the dialogue with students. Students noted, “Teachers go over the work until you get it.” Another student noted, “Teachers help you develop your resume,” while yet another noted, “Teachers have study groups, ask if you understand, and teach you until you get it.”
- Guidance counselors move up to the next grade with students to ensure that students are and remain on track. This practice ensures that guidance and advisement supports that prepare students for the next level are ongoing.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of rubrics and actionable feedback. The school uses common assessment results to adjust the curricula and instruction.

### Impact

The use of common assessments and rubrics results in teachers providing actionable feedback to students and teachers. However, teachers being able to determine student progress across grades and subject areas using common assessments and rubrics are a work in progress.

### Supporting Evidence

- The review of student work products revealed consistent actionable feedback provided on student work. For instance, student work products in a global history class included feedback that stated, "needs to develop and expound more in the second paragraph to improve", and "needs to reorganize ideas and work on transition...to improve." This level of actionable feedback is continuing to be improved across classrooms. However, feedback back from peers is not evident across classrooms, limiting the advancement of learning.
- Bulletin boards across classrooms displayed rubrics that included actionable feedback. For instance, the bulletin board for English Language Arts (ELA) showed that each student had a rubric attached to his or her specific work. The rubric reflected feedback such as, "Excellent start with vocabulary! You gave full definitions that are clear and accurate with examples - but you provided no summaries for the articles or a reflection of your thoughts." The use of rubrics across classrooms that provide feedback was evident. However, the use of this feedback as a resource for teachers to determine student progress is being implemented but not yet evident across all classrooms.
- Teachers across classrooms use common assessments such as Measures of Student Learning – New York City Periodic Assessment Baselines, mock regents, and the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test as noted on the school-wide assessment calendar and in a memo from the principal to the staff. Adjustments are made to the curricula and instruction via the use of an Item Analysis sheet to review student responses to assessment questions. Teachers are required on the Item Analysis sheet to provide a response to questions including, "What did the question require of the student (content/skill)?" "What trends and students errors have been observed?" and "Was the content taught in the curricula in the previous year and how will it be taught this year in the curricula? However, teachers do not yet agree on learning goals prior to using assessments to measure student mastery of the goals, thereby limiting their potential.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

### Impact

Consistently providing multiple entry points into the curricula with challenging tasks support the engagement of all students in high levels of thinking and participation that culminate in meaningful work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers across classrooms use several instructional strategies to engage all students in high levels of thinking and participation. For instance, during classroom observations accountable talk stems are provided to all students through cards on each student's desk. These stems provide cues for student when there is agreement, disagreement, clarification needed, confusion or an opportunity for extension. Teachers also provide ongoing verbal reminders to students as they participate within class discussions.
- Classrooms observed reflect consistent levels of student thinking and participation. During an ELA lesson students were engaged in a debate around two essential questions, including, "How does an individual's environment shape his or her identity?" and "How does society influence our identity and the various choices that we make?" Throughout the debate students were required to cite strong and thorough textual evidence via three provided texts: "Open Letter to Young Warriors in Chicago", "Catch This", and "No justice for Mike Brown." During this same lesson the teacher modeled the use of a three step approach template. This demonstration of teaching strategies, entry points, student thinking and discussion was observed across classrooms.
- Student dialogue indicated willingness to participation; the dialogue also revealed that teachers engage students in interactive activities, visual learning opportunities, and many chances to discuss the topic. As one student stated, "this makes learning fun for students."

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

School leaders and faculty aligned curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and made purposeful decisions to build coherence. The school has planned and refined curricula and academic task across content areas so that a diversity of learners is cognitively engaged and being prepared for the next level.

### **Impact**

Curricula and tasks provide consistent opportunities to engage students in all subgroups in rigorous tasks that emphasize critical thinking.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders have partnered with an external vendor, Curricula21, to ensure the alignment of curricula to the Common Core. For instance, the faculty has engaged in professional development with Dr. Heidi Hays Jacobs specifically around connecting curricula maps and unit plans to the Common Core Learning Standards.
- In reviewing the school-wide professional development calendar for 2014-15, it was observed that school leaders made purposeful decisions to build coherence by scheduling the first three weeks of common planning to update and adjust the school's content curricula. The success of this scheduling was observed via the before and after output of curriculum maps
- During the observation of classroom instruction, teachers ensured that a diversity of learners were cognitively engaged via implementation of tiered academic tasks. For instance, the ELA classroom provided different text and graphic organizers to students with disabilities. In the global history classroom observed, English language learners were grouped and given different academic tasks to complete. This approach was observed school wide.

<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 collaboration and consistently analyze assessment data and student work.

**Impact**

The work of teacher teams has resulted in strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers and progress towards goals for groups of students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams were observed using agendas and a protocol for analyzing student work. For instance, teachers engaged in a three step process. First, they independently completed the “Individual Student Data Analysis Template” via the review of actual student work. Second, teachers participated in a discussion on the findings and analysis. Third, teachers discussed the implications on teaching, re-teaching and for student learning. The outcome of the three-step process observed was teachers hypothesizing what the students need to learn next and the learning progress needed to support that goal.
- The dialogue with administration and during the review of documents revealed that cohort teacher teams have adopted an “Inquiry Team Cycle Protocol” as a means to gather data and analyze gaps in student learning.
- The dialogue with teachers and the review of documents revealed that teachers engage in student scholarship analysis sessions at the end of each marking period. Teachers use the scholarship analysis data to identify trends that can help isolate weaknesses and strengths around student learning and teacher practice.
- During the teacher interview it was revealed that to support students school-wide who struggle with content comprehension, 15 minutes of every lesson has a discovery learning component embedded. Also during the interview, teachers revealed that the teacher team meetings are used to surface student skill deficiencies and to develop action plans for target groups of students. For instance, for a small group of students struggling with the “rate of change” process in math, the teachers strategized a three-step action plan
- The school uses the DataCation system to provide an array of tools that help teachers break down student data to inform and support instruction. For instance, spreadsheets are generated, student performance data is tracked and analyzed using a five-section analysis of student work template that includes expectations for student work and performance, grouping of targeted students, a written description of student performance, a description of learning needs and goals, and individual strategies required for targeted student progress toward goals.