Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

William E. Grady Career Technical Education High School

High School K620

25 Brighton 4th Road
Brooklyn
NY 11235

Principal: Tarah Montalbano

Date of review: March 6, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Michael Prayor

The School Context

William E. Grady Career Technical Education High School is a high school with 568 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population is comprised of 69% Black, 19% Hispanic, 7% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 77% of the students enrolled and girls account for 23%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 82.3%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
To what extent does the school…	**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	**Focus**	**Developing**
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		
To what extent does the school…	**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	**Additional Findings**	**Developing**
Systems for Improvement		
To what extent does the school…	**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	**Celebration**	**Developing**

Area of Celebration

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

Findings
Teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations on teams that are developing an inquiry approach across the school. Teacher teams analyze targeted student group assessment data and work.

Impact
Teacher teams' analysis of student data and work is beginning to improve teacher practice, capacity and progress toward goals for subgroups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders articulated the focus of teacher teams on looking at student work to identify areas of weakness and implement effective strategies to improve them. During a teacher team meeting, student work samples from an English language learner (ELL), students with disabilities (SWD), Level 1 and Level 4 students were discussed using a protocol for looking at student work. Teachers discussed student written responses to question prompts and possible strategies to motivate students toward high quality work.

- A document review of teacher team agendas, minutes and the school's professional learning plan demonstrates evidence of collaborative discussions based on topics such as unit planning, design of common assessments, and implementation of the common core shifts.

- During an earth science content team meeting, teachers examined student work from each of their classes. They described the level of accuracy and completion of students' work in responding to short answer questions. The teachers used a protocol for looking at student work and asked each other inquiry based questions such as, "What structures can we put in place in the classroom to help these students improve? How do we help the ELL students understand the academic language? What strategies will we use?" However, their discussion culminated in a decision to use heterogeneous and homogeneous groupings and to work on skill development. This decision did not result in a plan for improved teacher practice.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing

Findings
Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula for all learners, including students with disabilities as well as reflect uneven levels of participation and thinking in student work products and discussions.

Impact
Across classrooms, missed opportunities to engage students in challenging tasks and higher order thinking resulted in uneven levels of student participation and high-quality student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders articulated that data-based groupings and student-centered discussions were areas of focus this year. These practices were not consistently observed across classrooms visited. For example in one history class, students were engaged in paired discussions and asked to formulate a thesis about the dangers of imperialism and determine whether the primary source supported or refuted their thesis. However, in another history class, the teacher prompted students to list some economic, social, and political issues that divide Americans in our society. However, the teacher mediated all questions and answers during the share out using a recitation style approach with only a few students participating in the discussion.

- In the majority of classrooms visited, teaching strategies to meet the needs of all learners to produce meaningful work products were inconsistent. Some teachers used graphic organizers, activated prior knowledge, and frontloaded vocabulary. In other classrooms, neither these nor other appropriate scaffolds were provided but did not lead students' responses to reflect high levels of thinking. For example, in one math class, students were asked to work together to complete a Venn diagram on parallel and perpendicular lines. The teacher did not provide a model or a structure for the discussion. Higher-level students who worked independently and quickly finished the diagram were involved in off-task conversations or were sitting quietly. Lower-level students were unable to complete the work or copied answers from the work of other students.

- There was limited evidence of teachers engaging students with appropriately challenging tasks across classrooms. In one Earth Science class students were asked to draw and color an illustration of the earth's layers and write a summary of the Strata Principles and Law on a poster paper. Students working either individually, in pairs or triads were given one piece of poster paper. One student copied the diagram from their text while one-two other students in the group watched or colored. Five minutes before the period ended none of the students had completed the diagram or started writing the summary.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing

Findings
Curricula and academic tasks reflect planning to provide students access to the curricula and emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills. This was evidenced inconsistently across subjects and for English language learners and students with disabilities.

Impact
Limited access to the curricula and academic tasks for English language learners and students with disabilities results in lower levels of cognitive engagement and higher-order skills for these groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricular documents provided evidence of coherence in planning across subject areas, however the documents presented inconsistent evidence of planning to provide ELLs and SWDs access to academic tasks. For example, under a column titled *Modifications to Instruction* present in all unit plans, some modifications include: "Students will receive more time, instructions, and scaffolding as per IEPs" and "For ELL students, copies of documents will also be translated in their own language." However, in most unit plans, this column was not completed.

- A review of lesson plans provided some evidence of rigor for diverse learners by asking them to analyze documents in various ways. For example, a lesson plan for US history asked students to interpret information from documents by citing specific textual evidence to support a claim. Students were provided with a graphic organizer with guiding questions, instructions, and sentence starters to help them organize the information. Lesson plans for an English and Career and Technical Education (CTE) class also asked students to cite textual evidence to support the analysis of a text; however, there were no resources or scaffolds provided to support students' engagement with the text.

- School leaders articulated the importance of strategies such as data-driven grouping in order to provide more individualized support to students. A review of the documents provided some evidence of modified tasks for groups of students. For example, in a Global History lesson plan, students working in heterogeneous groups were assigned different texts, scaffolds, maps, and charts to collaboratively form evidence-based arguments. Further examination of lesson plans demonstrated limited evidence of modified tasks for a diversity of learners.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing

Findings
The school is developing in their use of common assessments to measure student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas. Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact
Assessment results and teacher practices are inconsistently used to adjust curricula and instruction leading to the inconsistent use of effective adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders articulated the importance of assessment practices that are accompanied by actionable feedback; however there was limited evidence of rubrics and specific feedback in classrooms. Conversations with students and a review of their work did not yield evidence of actionable verbal or written feedback from their teachers, thus limiting students' opportunities to self-assess and re-focus on their goals.

- Across all classrooms there was some evidence of checks for understanding through the use of trackers that monitor student progress aligned with the objectives of the lesson. For example, in a US history class the teacher used the tracker to assess students' ability to identify an author's claim, identify textual evidence, and evaluate the reliability of a source. However there was no evidence of student self-assessment practices.

- Document review of unit plans demonstrated some evidence of adjustments to instruction in US history, and earth science such as the use of mid-lesson summaries before transitions between tasks. However, these adjustments were not evident in other content area unit plans such as geometry, integrated algebra, and other earth science classes.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Developing

Findings
School leaders and teacher teams are developing systems to communicate high expectations and provide feedback to families regarding student progress as well as developing the level of detail and clarity in the feedback needed to help prepare students for the next level.

Impact
Families and students receive inconsistent feedback and supports from teacher teams and guidance/advisement to help them understand student progress toward a path to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Conversations with parents indicated that the school is inconsistent in its use of Pupil Path to provide them with clear and detailed information regarding their students' progress. Not all parents receive notification regarding assigned and graded tasks. Some parents indicated that although they receive graded work, it does not include specific feedback with next steps on how students can improve their performance. Conversations with 9th and 10th grade students indicated they did not set academic goals, either with teacher support or independently, in order to track their progress.

- Students and school staff provided examples of challenging activities and student work completed in the Advanced Placement classes offered in US history, literature, and biology. However when 9-12th grade students were asked about the level of rigor in other courses, they stated they were not as challenged with the work, reflecting a need to embrace and communicate high expectations by all staff. One 9th grader stated that he performs well in his classes as long as he "pays attention".

- Conversations with teachers demonstrated that school staff provide feedback to students along with report cards and periodic transcript conferences. However, they stated they struggle to motivate students to produce and need more supports, resources and professional learning to provide students with clear next steps. For example, one teacher stated that the school has developed several protocols for advisement but they are not consistently used. Most teachers agreed with this statement and added that they are "doing the best they can."