



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Research and Service High School

**16K669
1700 Fulton Street
Brooklyn, NY 11213**

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The School Context

Research and Service High School is a transfer school with 212 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 84% Black, 15% Hispanic, 1% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 56%.

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	Celebration	Proficient
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	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		
<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	Additional Findings	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:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and teachers ensure curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and instructional shifts, and academic tasks are consistently planned and revised to address the needs of diverse learners.

Impact

Instructional materials, for engaging all learners, in curriculum maps and lesson plans are consistent across the school, resulting in differentiated tasks to support students with diverse needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses curricula aligned to the CCLS and instructional shifts. Coherency across subjects and grades is evidenced by shared goals, essential questions, academic vocabulary, assessment and student self-reflections. Curricula and tasks are designed to engage English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. For example, a unit of English language arts has levels of “Novice, Proficient, and Distinguished,” with examples of instructional tools and strategies to support various learners abilities.
- Teachers across grades and subjects create Marking Period Action Plans to ensure learning needs of students are met. Each plan has a section dedicated to “students of major concern.” Teachers plan to advance students through content by assessing why students are not learning standards, content and/or skills. For instance, the action plan for one geometry class had 5 students of concern noted. Student challenges involved note taking, retaining information and focusing. The teacher’s modifications included incorporating technology programs to strengthen their skills, increasing one-to-one time, and providing guided notes and a class partner.
- Diagnostic assessment data for class of 2015 uncovered 95% of students’ underperformed on writing tasks. Teachers across grades and subjects revised curriculum units to include the Judith Hochman, “Teaching Basic Writing Skills.”
- Across classrooms, lesson plans are written to provide access to curricula and tasks to diverse learners. Lesson plans reviewed had notations delineating considerations for providing ELLs and students with disabilities opportunities to engage in instructional activities. In the United States history class, the teacher penned the following: “The following students with IEPs will receive the modified version of this document, and have the option to work individually or in pairs.” Said teacher continued by stating, “ELL students will receive a modified version of the primary source documents accompanied by definitions on the bottom of the page, and each desk will have dictionaries and thesauruses.” Academic tasks are planned and refined to meet the performance levels of learners. In the geometry class observed, for the task of, “finding the measure of angles outside a circle formed by lines on or through a circle,” students in the lowest third of the class were required to “use the promethean table to strengthen skills” as a method for accessing the content.

Area of Focus

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

Teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations that are beginning to be connected to school goals and reflect the inquiry approach. In addition, distributive leadership structures are beginning to support capacity building.

Impact

Inquiry and collaborative teacher meeting do not yet consistently utilize a systematic process which includes agendas, facilitators, protocols, purpose of collaboration, specific focus questions for inquiry, and focused student work for examination, resulting in missed opportunities to strengthen instruction and teacher practice.

Supporting Evidence

- While teachers are scheduled to engage in professional collaborations to address the instruction foci of reading, writing, academic vocabulary and formative assessment, teacher teams' articulation of structured professional protocols for collaborative inquiry practice was limited. Discussion was not always on topic. The relevance of the discussion in the teacher team meeting was unclear and no student work was available for review. No agenda could be provided to bring context for the discussion. Teachers explained that school leaders generated agendas, though they did not have one for the meeting observed.
- Structures for strengthening teacher capacity are developing. One of the team members in a session presented an issue pertaining to an assignment. While teachers offered brief suggestions for supporting this teacher's practice, the reason for soliciting the comments was not stated. Teachers did not mention if the comments were shared to inform professional practice, determine student understandings, or other. The meeting's facilitator could not be distinguished and a system for honoring all voices was missing.
- Although the teachers' discussion was loosely connected to one instructional goal of writing, the collaborative purpose was unclear. Tasks, student work products, assessments, videos, or any other materials for inquiry and feedback, for the purpose of examining quality of work, teaching practice, students' understanding, or students' growth, were not included in the collaborative team meeting observed.
- Distributive leadership structures are emerging to support capacity-building across disciplines. A lead teacher has emerged in the social studies department. Teachers are using the common planning time structure to develop formative assessments to evaluate students' understanding of content.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are beginning to reflect a set of belief about how students learn best. Discussions and student work products are beginning to demonstrate consistent levels of participation and cognitive engagement.

Impact

Inconsistent implementation of effective instructional practices aligned by a belief about how students learn best with an emphasis on engaging and challenging students, results in limited occasions for students to demonstrate high levels of cognitive engagement and discourse.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices reflected a belief that questioning was important to students learning. Questions however were teacher-directed. Queries posed to students often lead to performances at a level of recollecting information. In a number of classrooms, teachers were heard asking students recall questions such as, “What is a coefficient? Did they conquer the world? What is carbon?” and “What are they marching for?” providing limited opportunities for students to expand their understanding or take ownership of the discussion.
- While lesson plans had sections for “Use CCLS and Depth of Knowledge to plan a variety of appropriately challenging activities,” the tasks students were seen completing, often required them to remember writing formats, recognize matter, and respond to a series of recall questions. Moments for student engagement in cognitively challenging discussions and utilization of the academic vocabulary were uneven across classrooms.
- Although in a capstone course students were engaged in completing a research paper, across classrooms most tasks observed required students to complete worksheets. In discussion with students, most explained that the purpose of classroom tasks was to prepare them to be ready for the Regents examinations. Students interviewed in classrooms and the scheduled meeting had difficulty explaining the big conceptual ideas for learning, the scholastic skills they were developing, and the academic vocabulary connected to lessons observed.
- In algebra students were observed engaged in some peer-to-peer dialogue on how to multiply radical expressions. In English, students were witnessed supporting each other with the completion of a writing assignment for developing a controlling idea in a paragraph. Across classrooms however, tasks unevenly required students to be creative, innovative, or problem solve.

Findings

The school is developing plans to ensure assessment informs instruction that is embedded in professional practice. Student self-assessment of interim evaluations, on a school-wide level, inconsistently reflects students' awareness of next learning steps.

Impact

Quantitative data highlighting students' progress toward specific instructional goals and occasions to identify students' learning gaps are limited.

Supporting Evidence

- Across content areas, teachers garnered students' performance information from Interim Assessment Reviews. Students' progress is monitored in the following areas: Right Content, Right Format, College-Ready Expectations, Topic Covered, Type of Question and Comments. Teachers' analysis of students' performance inconsistently referenced specific instructional strategies adjusted to meet the learning needs of students. For example, the chemistry teacher noted, "I did not add questions from the entire unit, I only focused on the atom." In response to next actions steps to strengthen instruction, this teacher affixed to the review, "I will make sure to include questions covering the entire unit."
- The principal has created a system for teachers to complete Marking Period Action Plans following the review of assessments. Adjustment to lessons must be made in standards, content and skills. An analysis of why students did not learn the material is also expected. For geometry, one Marking Period Action Plan outlined the content mastered and the content not mastered according to the interim assessment. The adjustment teacher planned was, "I will re-teach the lesson by spiraling these questions in the Do Now." Teacher missed an opportunity to cite how adjustment would explicitly impact student academic growth.
- The school has established a process for including Student Assessment Reflections of unit tests to check for understanding. Students provide input on a reflection sheet with questions such as "What skill was being tested? What did you get right or wrong?" and "Did you guess?" One student's response to "name three skills you need for extra help," was "listening, working hard and pay attention." A system for involving students with articulating and implementing next learning steps is evolving.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school has clearly defined standards for classroom practices and professional development that incorporate elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching to ensure high expectations. Staff members consistently engage families to deepen their understanding of college and career readiness expectations.

Impact

Comprehensive lesson plans, student-friendly classrooms, and college and career readiness expectations are an established part of the school’s culture for learning. As a result of the positive culture and embedded expectations, staff and families effectively support students as they work towards college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal has designed a professional development plan with an expectation for professional practices to reflect growth in identified Danielson competencies. Across classrooms, teachers had lesson plans requiring them to note and prepare materials, technology, CCLS, content standards, learning objectives, engagement, exploration, explanation and evaluation. Implementation of Danielson’s 1a, Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy, was evident. The ADVANCE Measures of Teacher Practice data reviewed highlights six of eight teachers’ informal observations with a professional performance level of effective in 1a. Training has led to specific performance expectations.
- Across the school, the organization of physical space allowed for classroom libraries and a system for the management of teacher materials and student folders. Students’ desks had laminated copies of the Depth of Knowledge wheel and sets of dictionaries and thesauruses for supporting vocabulary acquisition. Inside and outside bulletin boards exhibited student work products, and teachers’ interactions with students reflected respect and genuine care. Teachers were accountable for the implementation of Danielson’s 2a, Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport. Professional development led to six of eight teachers with performance data of effective, and one teacher with highly effective in creating an environment of respect and rapport.
- The staff has established a strong academic, social and emotional expectation for all students, and consistently communicates college and career pathways using online progress reports, student handbook, parent and teacher conferences and newsletters. Each term parents are invited to collaborate with teachers, counselors and school leaders in conferences pertaining to academic progress reviews, the college application process, the accessing and completing of financial aid and scholarship forms and workforce requirements. Parents participate in monthly workshops which include the topics such as Common Core, Transcript Reviews, and Road Map to College. Scheduled events provide multiple occasions for staff to communicate expectations for college and career readiness.