



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

**Stephen T. Mather Building Arts & Craftsmanship
High School**

High School 02M139

**439 West 49th Street, 4th Floor
New York, NY
10019**

Principal: Larry Gabbard

**Date of review: December 19, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Marjory Matthieu-Kodjov**

The School Context

Stephen T. Mather Building Arts & Craftsmanship High School (02M139) is a high school with 193 students from grade 9 through grade 10. The school population comprises 24% Black, 62% Hispanic, 9% White and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 34% special education students. Boys account for 74% of the students enrolled and girls account for 26%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 91%.

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	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.	Focus	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	Proficient
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	Well Developed
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.	Additional Findings	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

**3.4 High
Expectations**

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations regarding professionalism, instruction, communication and the Danielson Framework as well as provide training to the faculty to meet those expectations. An established culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students as well as provides clear, focused, and effective feedback through guidance and support.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability for those expectations and the assurance that students, including high-need subgroups, own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level which leads to seventy percent of the school's lowest third students earning ten or more credits in the first year.

Supporting Evidence

- The school holds a three-day summer induction for returning staff, and a week long induction for new staff. They include opportunities for one-on-one curriculum planning, team planning, and time for individual consultations throughout the summer. The school uses a Weebly.com website to publish everything related to school life and culture, including the staff handbook and school expectations.
- Staff is expected to be aware of students' social and emotional needs. Faculty receives professional development on strategies such as *Circles* to utilize in classrooms and advisories to support students.
- Since founding the school, staff has worked with The National Park Service to identify key career skills students should have and incorporate these skills into curricula. Through the advisory program, students engage in career and college readiness starting in 9th Grade. A Career Day is planned for 10th Graders and a focus on applying to colleges in the 11th Grade. They also provide students with college visits and PSAT preparation. This year, the school brought in an additional guidance counselor and social worker to enable them to get a jumpstart on the work-based learning requirements, a requirement of Career and Technical Education. The school's internships include Bridging the Gap at the Bronx Zoo and employment at the Central Park Zoo. Students are paired with college mentors and have seminars once a week to reflect on how they are progressing in their academics and on their path to career readiness.
- To provide feedback to students and parents, the online grading system JumpRope is utilized to identify the skills that teachers are addressing, core values they are grading, and record anecdotal comments. Students and families have access to this information and in student-led conferences, students speak articulate their progress and areas of strength, areas that needs improvement with their parents and teachers.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies including questioning, scaffolds in English and/or native language where appropriate, and routines consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

All learners, including English language learners and Students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work.

Supporting Evidence

- In an English language arts class, students were using a Hochman quick outline (graphic organizer) that provided students with a clearly developmental sequence of goals. Students worked on creating one strong paragraph of an eventual five-paragraph essay, including citing evidence of literary elements in a short story and thesis development.
- Across classrooms, higher-level thinking was reflected by tasks that required that students make real-life connections. For example, in a math class, students were asked to make real-life connections to linear equations (greater/less) using money. Students struggled with the task, but persisted in completing the assignment with individualized support from the teacher. In a Living Environment class, students were asked to analyze predictions about the future characteristics of a species based on given environmental changes. Through a hands-on activity, students used tools to simulate the feeding of birds in various environmental conditions. During a US History class, students were tasked with completing a graphic organizer of the three branches of government that would include the individual powers of each branch as well as checks and balances.
- In most classrooms, students were seated based on an Assessment Component. In an US history class, students were asked to sit in different areas of the room according to which step of the final assessment process they are up to (i.e. reading/annotating; filling in graphic organizer; writing topic sentences; writing first draft of paragraphs). Students moved to each station as they accomplished each step of the process.
- In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classroom students had Check-In Cards to go with their table. Once students were at their correct tables, teachers modeled how to use the check-in cards to monitor student progress. Students worked at their own pace to complete the required components of the final assessment: annotate short story, literary elements graphic organizer, topic sentences, and first paragraph outline and draft. A student stated that; "the goal is to have a very strong paragraph that we can use as a model as we write our other two body paragraphs".

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use and create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

Impact

Teachers provide actionable feedback to students that inform next steps for increased student achievement. In addition, the use of common assessments drives curricula modification and adjustments in teachers' instructional practice that support students meeting goals across classrooms and subject areas.

Supporting Evidence

- When designing assessments administration asks that teachers focus on two or three priority Common Core learning standards per unit. Teachers assess these priority standards three times throughout the year to measure student growth. Units culminate with summative assessments that assess mastery skills and include a hands-on component.
- The Whole School approach is used to support teachers in the design of the units with formative and summative assessments developed as well. The school uses a one to four mastery-based grading policy. The principal shared that the school wanted an accurate reflection on what the kids know. For example, a student shared during the student meeting: "I had to pull evidence from a text to support my claim. I was not able to do it which is a 1. When I get all the way to 4 then I've mastered it".
- Faculty and administration use various sources of data to measure student progress and inform the necessary modifications in curricula and teacher pedagogy. For example, they use the JumpRope online grading system and Star reading levels data to drive purposeful grouping. According to the principal, the school is "trying to use this data as a living tool."
- Students are grouped according to the Mather Core Values (action-oriented, risk-taker, aware, collaborative, and responsible). Students work on these core values and teachers are adjusting their curricula to address students' core values. During the team meeting, teachers discussed how they do this to ensure that they are making changes and swapping ideas based on looking at assessment data and student work.

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core learning standards and content standards and make purposeful decisions to integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined by using student work and data.

Impact

The school's approach to building coherence and promoting college and career readiness for all students so that a diversity of learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities, have access to curricula leading to improved performance.

Supporting Evidence

- The faculty and administration reached consensus to utilize a standardized lesson plan and unit plan template. A majority of teachers use them and the principal and teachers stated that "it allows us to think about the common core and student outcomes." Lesson plans and units are designed to incorporate priority and supporting standards around the Common Core learning standards.
- The school uses the Atlas curriculum mapping online program so teachers can maintain their lesson plans and unit plans. Teachers of all subjects including Career and Technical Education (CTE) engage in interdisciplinary curriculum mapping through Atlas. This school wide adopted process facilitates the development of Common Core aligned curricula and instruction thereby promoting coherence across grades and subjects.
- This summer, the school began with a series of professional development (PD) in the common core learning standards and how to modify curricula to meet all learners. Teachers explained: "We started the PD series by unpacking the common core standards, breaking it down to which skills were embedded in the standards and what the contents were. We had our teachers work with their partners and special education partners in grade teams to talk about: What that looks like in the class? How we should sequence these standards appropriately from ninth grade to tenth grade, and how do we design assessments that truly evaluate the students' skills in these common core standards? That is something we started this summer and continue to do throughout the year." An instructional coach supported work in the design of common core units.
- Teachers utilize the unit and lesson plan templates as a support in their curriculum planning. All staff is provided with: A Mather Unit Plan Template; A Mather Lesson Plan Template/Checklist; Atlas and Year at a Glance calendar. During this process, school has identified priority standards, staff selected eight to twelve priority standards that they focus on during the year. An example of a teacher activity that highlighted the approach to curricula development was the Common Core Standardized discussion, where teachers utilized a template and sequenced their priority standards in the order they would be addressed.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity, promoted the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards, and embedded distributed leadership structures.

Impact

Teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning, and effective teacher leadership has developed school-wide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has teams in place such as instructional strategies team, teacher planning team, grade teams, advisory team to name a few. The principal stated that the goal is “to provide effective collaborative instruction.” For example the advisory team initiated regrouping students around the core value skills reporting and grouping students who were not action oriented.” Teacher teams initiate these kinds of decisions and administration provides feedback as well as supports and resources.
- An example of distributive leadership was demonstrated by two team leaders who lead professional development. They lead their individual Wednesday team meetings and reported that when they have problems, they seek solutions before turning to administration for help. According to the Principal: “We believe in “solutionizing” when things are an issue” Another example was a committee tasked to examine restructuring the schedule so the school can provide students more time for reading each day.
- The guidance department meets every Wednesday. They developed the advisory curriculum and ensure that staff is delivering the curriculum effectively and help monitor the progress by visiting advisory sessions. The Special Education department and the coach set the agendas with the PPT team. The team discusses discipline, student needs, and school structure around school safety. In a team meeting, the staff articulated that they own these different pieces of the instructional program and the business manager runs the office. The Principal serves more as a team member and consultant. According to the Principal: “They are in charge of their domains.”