



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Manhattan Early College School for Advertising**

**High School M280**

**411 Pearl St  
Manhattan  
NY 10038**

**Principal: Matthew Tossman**

**Date of review: May 5, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Mark Ossenheimer**

## The School Context

Manhattan Early College School for Advertising is a high school with 96 students in grade 9. The school population comprises 32% Black, 44% Hispanic, 17% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48.0%.

## 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>Focus</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>Additional Findings</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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The school leader consistently communicates high expectations of professionalism and instruction connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching to the entire staff. Teachers and staff systematically communicate a set of high expectations for all students connected to a path of college and career readiness and provide clear feedback and advisement supports in relation to those expectations.

### Impact

High expectations and supports to achieve those expectations result in a culture of mutual accountability for those expectations among staff. Students, including high-need subgroups, are able to own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- All staff attended ten days of summer professional development in August to prepare for the opening of Manhattan Early College School for Advertising (MECA). School expectations were communicated in the staff handbook at the summer professional learning. All staff received training in Understanding by Design (UbD), curriculum mapping, the MECA unit planning template, and task rigor and alignment to support teachers in meeting curricular expectations. Three teachers attended an additional three-day training through the Buck Institute on project-based learning. They then led professional development for the full MECA staff on project-based learning and this approach became integrated into the curriculum planning process school-wide.
- In-coming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and their families participate in entry interviews to develop a strong school home relationship the summer before enrollment either at the school or at the student's home. Students participate in a summer bridge program for two weeks to learn school expectations for the early college program as well as receive math and literacy enrichment. Students interact with MECA staff and college professors from Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), the school's CUNY partner, and engage in math and literacy enrichment activities on the college campus.
- The advisory program meets three times a week to engage students in community building, social-emotional development, and academic support to meet academic goals. All teachers are assigned as Advisors and have a small group of 12-14 students. In addition to providing one on one coaching to students regarding their progress, they also serve as the main family contact as indicated in phone logs and the online Pupil Path system.
- All grade 9 students meet with the BMCC admissions department in preparation for their first college class in grade 10. Students observe current college classes to understand first-hand the expectations of a college class. Thirty BMCC students from the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and the Young Male Leadership Academy serve as classroom aides and student tutors working with students on areas of targeted support during and after school.

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula so that learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

### Impact

Teacher pedagogy across the majority of classrooms is engaging and meets the needs of learners resulting in meaningful work products where students are able to demonstrate their thinking. However, some teachers do miss some opportunities to provide students with needed scaffolds or extensions.

### Supporting Evidence

- In a Visual Thinking Lab class, students were engaged in a culminating project to design a business plan, company identity, and a presentation to pitch a new food truck business. Students were engaged in applying skills and knowledge of the design process, advertising, commercial art, technology, and presentation skills allowing students to demonstrate their range of understandings through multiple mediums. As a scaffold to this project, every student had a teacher-developed mini-notebook that contained time management tools, key vocabulary, and the project expectations in the form of rubrics. However, while the offered extension provided reinforcement of the same skill set and processes, it did not push students to develop a higher level of application.
- During a Humanities integrated co-teaching (ICT) class, students engaged in a close read of *Red Scarf Girl* annotating text with post it notes. Students used color-coded post-it notes to identify evidence of the themes of culture (blue) or revolution (yellow). Students then worked in small groups to discuss key aspects of the chapter in terms of the main characters and their reactions to the events they experienced during the Cultural Revolution. Each group was provided a specific graphic organizer with key questions to provide support for students to synthesize their discussion with the text. However, the graphic organizers did not directly reference the previous activity of examining the text through culture and revolution, which led to some students having difficulty in starting the discussion and task.

Students in an Algebra ICT course engaged in solving linear-quadratic equations both graphically and algebraically through substitution. Teaching strategies provided entry points for all students. For example, every group had a key math vocabulary sheet at their table and both teachers conferenced directly with individuals and small groups using a small white board to scribe while students discussed their problem-solving process demonstrating their thinking. Groups were heterogeneous in order to provide support for lower performing students. Some higher performing students engaged with their peers once they had completed the task. However, the lack of specific group roles or conversation starters limited students from greater ownership of the learning within the group process.

## Additional Findings

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

The school leader and faculty ensure that the curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and relevant content standards, as well as integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits across subjects for a diversity of learners.

### Impact

The school's curricular decisions build coherency across subjects, provide access for a diversity of learners, and promote college and career readiness for all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- As an early college school with a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, the school has developed in concert with BMCC and advertising industry professionals, a coherent six-year program. The scope and sequence prepare students to begin taking college courses in grade 10 and CTE courses prepare students to major in and obtain an Associates Degree in Multimedia Arts, Multimedia Programming, or Business (Advertising and Media).
- The key advertising and media career skills identified for Year 1 include creative exploration, written communication, and purposeful problem solving. A review of unit plans demonstrates these skills are embedded into curricula. For example, an Intro to Advertising course engages students in creating a product, developing brand identity, and presenting a media campaign as a vehicle to learn, apply, and develop these skills.
- The school uses a block semester schedule that allows teachers to revise curriculum between the Fall and Spring semesters based on the data from the previous semester's students. For example, the humanities course and English language arts courses were revised to align themes and Common Core skills such as claim-counter claim in argumentative writing. A unit plan review demonstrates that the second semester of humanities focused on China specifically as a lens to cultural and individual identity using *Red Scarf Girl* as text. The English language arts course revised the argumentative writing unit on Identity in Adversity to include text from Amy Tan "Fish Cheeks" as a way to connect key ideas and skills between the two courses students take simultaneously.
- Lesson plans demonstrate that tasks are planned and refined to provide access for a diversity of learners. For example, an Algebra plan included general modifications for all students that included a plan for less complex examples if needed. Additional entry points for below grade level students include prioritizing solving linear functions graphically first before quadratic functions and including a scaffolded worksheet. The lesson plan also includes specific supports for individual students that include the students' strengths and weaknesses. For example, one student was targeted to receive a problem-solving checklist and manipulatives.

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

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments and rubrics aligned to the school's curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress across subjects.

### **Impact**

Assessments provide actionable feedback to teachers and students regarding student achievement and results are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Rubrics are used across subjects for performance tasks. For example, English language arts uses the New York State Common Core aligned rubric for argumentative writing, as well as a department developed rubric for writing short memoirs. The Algebra course includes a unit-scoring rubric that student groups use to self-monitor progress and the teacher uses through item analysis to determine levels of mastery. The Visual Thinking Lab and Intro to Advertising courses have a common presentation rubric that embeds industry standards, content, and technical skills aligned with the school's media career skills. Student work in classrooms and during the student meeting consistently demonstrated actionable feedback to students on their progress.
- An analysis of the Measure of Student Learning (MOSL) in ELA and scholarship data from the fall semester led to an adjusted curriculum in social studies in order to create greater student engagement with content and more depth of Common Core writing skills. For example, the global history scope and sequence shifted from a chronological plan to a themed-based curriculum allowing students to engage more deeply in higher order thinking tasks. The unit's second semester embeds key units from the organization Facing History that include "Identity and Community" and the Common Core aligned "Decision Making in Times of Injustice." Teachers are using formative MOSL data to measure effectiveness of these shifts.
- All students have a daily period called Learning Lab. The school uses weekly scholarship data to place students with specific teachers and support staff as an academic intervention, skill reinforcement, or extension of student work and skills based on their need. Student progress is monitored and class assignments are adjusted throughout the semester on a weekly basis.

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

Teachers are engaged in structured inquiry based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams consistently analyze student work and assessment data for students they share.

**Impact**

Professional collaborations result in strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers and progress toward goals for students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- A review of the staff schedules demonstrates that a revision in the second semester provided an increased amount of common prep time for co-teachers. Agendas and minutes show that teachers across subjects during this time revise lesson plans and adjust units for closer alignment to Common Core standards, develop strategic entry points for students in lessons, review student work, and norm grading criteria using school and course rubrics. This collaboration during common prep time has strengthened the instructional capacity of teachers, particularly co-teachers who support one another’s development of instructional scaffolds for all students.
- A team of English language arts and special education teachers during an observed team meeting reviewed lesson plans on Romeo and Juliet in relation to scholarship data. The team worked to revise the unit and lessons to provide strategic scaffolds for low, mid, and high performing students. For example, on a lesson centered on translating Shakespearean English into modern English teachers identified key text for lower performing students and devised a plan to allow for choice of text for mid-level students so they could enter the play at their comfort level.
- Math and science teachers discussed in a teacher interview that they had participated in a professional development session on data-analysis and brought that work to their teams. The science and math teachers with their special education co-teachers made the key decision to adopt these practices for analyzing student work on tests. For example, math teachers align each question to a learning objective or a cluster of learning objectives that are aligned to the Common Core. Student performance on individual questions are then documented and aggregated to provide important insights for performance at the student, class, and grade levels. The charts for individual students are also included with the assessment when it is returned to the student. The team uses the item analysis to inform future instruction by developing small group instruction or re-teach strategies, and provide targeted tutoring during the daily Learning Lab period.