



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**High School for Arts, Imagination and Inquiry**

**High School M299**

**122 Amsterdam Avenue  
Manhattan  
NY 10023**

**Principal: Stephen M. Noonan**

**Date of review: February 27, 2015**

**Lead Reviewer: Marjory Matthieu-Kodjovi**

## The School Context

High School for Arts, Imagination and Inquiry is a high school with 427 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 38% Black, 59% Hispanic, 1% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 10% 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 82.0%.

## 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

School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students and provides clear, focused effective feedback and guidance supports.

### Impact

The schools's effective communication of expectations results in successful partnerships with families to support student progress that ensures all students, including high-needs subgroups, own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- During the student meeting, students all shared that at least one adult knows them well. One student said “our teachers look out for us...there is a high level of respect between staff and students.” Teachers shared that they attend to the students’ social-emotional needs and administration helps to maintain that. One of the school’s goals is to help students develop independence and self-advocacy so that students are well prepared and college ready. Furthermore, the school uses a program called Restorative Practices / Justice (RJ) to address the number of suspensions and incidents. The program keeps in mind the individual perspective of students and staff, while allowing each to identify with the goals and motivations behind the actions of the other. According to students, teachers, administrators and parents, the use of RJ circles, a process that builds on values and sharing, has significantly reduced the number of suspensions and incidents of all types this year. Students feel like they have a voice in the school. Every staff member, including administration, received training in restorative practices through ongoing professional development. In addition, eight students, comprised of seniors and juniors, each recommended by an adult, received training in restorative practices to act as peer facilitators and assist during RJ classroom circles. They also run the restorative detention program.
- Parents state they are appreciative of updates that teachers regularly send to keep them informed regarding curriculum, academic expectations, and their children’s progress. Parents indicate good follow-up with opportunities for reciprocal conversations with teachers. They also shared that they can access teachers’ websites and an on-line grading program to keep informed of their child’s progress towards college and career readiness.
- The school collaborates with Lincoln Center Education (LCE). Through this partnership, students work several times throughout each semester to study works of art with teaching artists from LCE in cooperation with their classroom teacher and parents. This exposure to the arts occurs throughout a student’s entire high school program. The planning sessions involve interdisciplinary grade-wide teams. All staff members receive training in aesthetic learning models provided by ongoing professional development at Lincoln Center. As a result, this year the school has created an aesthetic learning inquiry team in collaboration with LCE to study student engagement and the effects of aesthetic learning on engagement.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

The Danielson Framework for Teaching informs teaching strategies that align with the curricula. Although students are engaged in higher levels of thinking across classrooms, some classes do not provide strategic multiple entry points and high-quality supports and extensions into the curricula.

### Impact

The implementation of extensions does not yet always enable all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities, to engage in appropriately challenging tasks and to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- Students work in groups across classrooms. Teachers develop tasks so that students work collaboratively and engage in student-to-student discussions. In a grade 11 US history advanced placement class, the aim was “How did President Roosevelt fix the problems of the Gilded Age?” Students worked in groups as they read documents with highlighted key vocabulary and answered questions such as “How did trust-busting correct problems of the Gilded Age?” Students completed a graphic organizer and engaged in higher-level thinking as they discussed the questions within their groups.
- While students shared that they consistently work in groups and engage in discussions using teacher prompts as well as visuals, extensions to the lessons did not consistently and fully engage English language learners and higher achieving students. Classroom visits revealed that even though students are engaged in discussions about tasks, those who finish early have limited opportunities to extend their thinking beyond the assigned tasks.
- Collaborative team teaching activities support learning for students with disabilities. Across classrooms, there was evidence of engagement, modeling, hands-on activities, feedback from teachers, questioning skills, assessment, writing, peer interaction and teachers serving as facilitators. Learning tasks and activities align with the instructional outcomes and challenge student thinking. In an integrated co-teaching (ICT) algebra class, the teacher modeled the steps to find the roots and represent them on a graph. Students collaboratively worked to solve and then explain their answers. In a global studies class students referenced text evidence to define the economic impact of the Crusades. However, in two classrooms, the lessons, teaching strategies and planned activities did not yield student work products for a variety of learners that reflect the expectations of the curricula.
- A review of units and lessons illustrates that teachers reference Common Core Learning Standards as part of their pedagogical practice. Across classrooms, teachers used strategies that engaged students in the instructional shifts aligned to the Common Core. Students utilized technology to gather research, synthesize data, create products, and apply concepts through problem solving. In a grade 11-12 chemistry class, students discussed and presented vocabulary (coefficient and subscript) and were asked to explain, “given  $2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ , what is the difference between the 2 in front and the 2 in the subscript?” as well as make the equation obey the law of conservation of matter. In conversation with students regarding the task, one student stated, “we are learning to balance simple chemical equations”; another student shared “we are trying to apply the law of conservation of matter to chemical equations”.

## Additional Findings

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

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula and tasks align with the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

### Impact

As teachers align curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards, integrate the instructional shifts, and embed rigor in curricula and tasks across grades and subjects, they build coherence that promotes college and career readiness for all learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- All teachers developed units of study through the Understanding by Design process with Universal Design for Learning to plan their curricula. Across classrooms, teachers display the essential questions, aims, objective, academic vocabulary, and an agenda on the board as supports for students. These curricular supports are visible in every classroom in the school and guide students in following the lesson and in accessing curricular materials.
- Lessons consistently incorporate higher-order and rigorous thinking skills for all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities. A global history lesson plan on the Black Death included an essay organizer with writing prompts, visuals and a document based question essay on the same topic to engage all learners in the rigorous task.
- The observed teacher teams reviewed needs assessment surveys focused on the use of assessments and questioning, used student work to revise the tasks and created necessary supports for students. They post their agendas and minutes online within Google Docs and those documents demonstrate a consistent pattern of teachers and teacher teams using student work to refine tasks.
- Special education teachers co-plan with teachers across all subjects in order to differentiate units and tasks to create greater access for students with disabilities. The special education teacher created an individualized education plan snapshot that general education teachers use in planning for the needs of these students.
- The curriculum is rich and varied, providing extension activities via application of learned skills through projects, including accelerated courses that lead to Regents and advanced placement examinations.

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

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics aligned to the school's curricula and provide feedback. Teacher assessment practices reflect the use of on-going checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

### **Impact**

The use of rubrics and clear grading policies aligned to the curricula provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student progress. The use of checks for understanding and teacher assessments ensures that teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms, teachers use or create rubrics and data trackers aligned with the school's curriculum. Teachers provide feedback via notations written on student work, and the use of rubrics and praise. Analysis of feedback indicates that it consistently provides actionable, meaningful next steps to students. During the student meeting, most work displayed and shared by the students had feedback with next steps, such as "where did you find this evidence?", "How do you know...?", "Can you clarify what you meant...?", "How does it affect...?" and "Now that you've done this, how can you synthesize and analyze your information?"
- Teachers monitor student progress via student work, exit tickets and the use of shared assessments in addition to questioning as a check for understanding across visited classrooms.
- Checks for understanding and differentiation were evident in both plans and observed lessons. In an ICT class, a teacher adjusted instruction when a student entered late. Upon entry, the student went to their seat and one teacher provided the student with copies of the distributed work as well as the modified version of the text and explained the task as other students were engaged in the work, thereby using that opportunity to adjust the instruction to meet the needs of the students.

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

Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work to inform their practice and to move groups of students toward their goals. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have built leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

### Impact

The school's structured teacher teams and their assessment of data strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers and have afforded teachers a voice in key decision that affect student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- The inquiry team and the guidance counselors focus on credit accumulation. They collect and interpret transcript and assessment data and share them with all teacher teams. Each teacher team focuses on lower achieving groups of students and what their specific needs are in the classroom. According to teachers and administrators, the inquiry work on these student groups has helped to ascertain why these particular students initially fell behind and to enable development of appropriate corrective measures to meet the needs of each student. These findings have led the school to develop Saturday school, credit recovery, test prep, after school tutoring and teacher professional development in differentiation and lesson design. A special education teacher shared that this work has raised awareness of staff and students as to where each particular student stands in credit accumulation.
- Teachers shared that the school has structures in place to provide peer-to-peer feedback. Teachers coordinate and lead departmental as well as inter-departmental visitations through the small learning communities. They collaboratively establish protocols, develop tools, and decide on the specific lens with which to guide inter-visitations. Additionally, teachers supplement the observation cycle, whether formal or informal, with a self-evaluation. When observations begin, conversations are grounded in evidence from low inference transcripts of class visits with the purpose of targeting areas for improvement
- The school has reorganized their team teaching structure. It was evident that the co-teaching model is not limited to classes with a special education population. The school utilizes three different co-teaching models: simultaneous teaching where two teachers teach the same lesson to two smaller groups, lead teaching where one teacher teaches and the supporting teacher assesses, and a blended learning model where one teacher leads the lesson while the second teacher facilitates learning using online tools.
- Across departments and subjects, teachers stated they have autonomy in their decision-making. Teachers shared that everyone leads and shares in the responsibility of professional collaborations indicating high levels of shared accountability. Teachers develop agendas together and rotate team roles such as taking minutes and recapping next steps, uploading all documents to the school's Google drive.