



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Coalition School for Social Change**

**High School M409**

**2351 First Avenue  
Manhattan  
NY 10035**

**Principal: John Sullivan**

**Date of review: April 22, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Richard Cintron**

## The School Context

Coalition School for Social Change is a high school with 311 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 41% Black, 53% Hispanic, 2% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 30% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 79.0%.

## 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>Developing</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>Developing</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>Developing</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>Proficient</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>Developing</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

High expectations are consistently communicated to the staff via the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, during professional development, and through other forms of communication. Leadership and staff successfully communicate expectations connected to college and career readiness with families to support student progress.

### Impact

Collaboration and support among staff, students, and families, foster high expectations for all and prepares students for the next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal has met with staff as a group and then individually to discuss school-wide and individual expectations for classroom teaching practices and interactions with students. Professional development is aligned to support staff and is experienced in whole group, small group, and individual settings, and conducted by the administration, teacher leaders, and network specialists. Examples include sessions such as Socratic seminar to enhance student engagement and discussion, student writing strategies, Higher-Order Thinking (HOT) questions for teachers and students, accountable talk strategies, the principal's book club, and strategies to support students' social and emotional growth.
- Parents shared how the school does an excellent job of informing them of all upcoming events and provides regular updates about their children's academic progress. Parents mentioned how teachers contact them by phone and through the school's online system, Pupil Path, to inform them of how their children are doing in class, remind them of upcoming exam dates, alert them of missing assignments, discuss lateness and attendance concerns, and inform them of when their child has outperformed expectations. Parents spoke to how teachers also use Pupil Path to provide parents with on-line resources, provide model work samples for difficult problems, and regularly answer student and parent questions regarding homework. The principal also spoke to how the school has increased opportunities for students to make-up credit and receive tutoring, both before and after school, and has partnered with various outside organizations such as Asphalt Green, Young People's Chorus, NYC Transportation Authority and Mt. Sinai to expose students to various career opportunities.
- Students mentioned that they regularly go on school trips to learn about colleges and also have the opportunity to visit additional colleges through the schools partnership with the Beacon program. Parents mentioned how in addition to these trips, the school also arranges for various colleges to visit the school to speak with students and that the guidance department, beginning in ninth grade and continuing until students graduate, does a very good job of helping students and parents understand the college application process and how they can maximize all of the resources and supports available to them. The principal explained that the number of Advanced Placement classes, the number of students enrolled in them, and the number of students who participate in College Now classes, have all increased since last year. A review of the school's High School Quality Snapshot revealed that the school's Postsecondary Enrollment Rate after six Months has also increased.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide entry points into the lesson and student discussions reflect uneven levels of student understanding.

### Impact

In most classrooms, limited facilitation of student-led discussions and active student engagement curtail opportunities to promote higher-order thinking and rigorous participation, thus hindering a diversity of students from demonstrating their thinking skills.

### Supporting Evidence

- During classroom visits some teachers asked only low level recall questions that did not call for students to strategically think or to extend their thinking. In a living environment class the teacher asked several questions only requiring students to give one word answers and accepted the first answer that was given with no further discussion. In a geometry class, when the teacher asked students questions about a problem they were working on, again the question required a simple one word answer after which the teacher then expanded on the student's answer for the rest of the class.
- Although the principal explained that the school's main instructional focus is increasing student to student discussion, in classrooms visited, teaching strategies to encourage student discussion and have students defend their ideas were heard in only some classrooms. In a health class where students were reading an article on teen pregnancy, after each student read a section of the article aloud to the class, the teacher summarize what the student had just read for the class. In an earth science class, when students did not immediately answer questions asked of the entire class, the teacher just provided the answer for them and did not facilitate any further conversation. In an algebra class, however, when students had questions in their group concerning the assignment, the teacher directed students to once again revisit the task and discuss it with the group members or to consult with other groups who were working on a similar tasks.
- Across classrooms visited, although students worked collaboratively and were purposefully grouped by teachers to provide peer support and ensure access for all students, not all students were actively engaged in the discussions within their groups and some students were unable to articulate the work of the group and show their understanding of the material being covered. For example, in a global history class where students were studying the differences between art from the Renaissance and Medieval periods, although students worked with their partners, some students could not explain why they were learning this material. In an earth science class, when the teacher assigned the Do Now question for students to complete in pairs, twelve students did not answer the question and waited for the teacher to explain the answer. In an algebra class, however, all students were engaged in discussing the problem of the week with their group members. When students were asked why they were working together on this particular problem, students responded that these types of logic problems help them to see patterns which are helpful in learning math and that working with their classmates helps to develop better ideas.

## Additional Findings

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

Curricula and academic tasks do not consistently emphasize rigorous higher order thinking skills across all grades and subjects areas. Curricula and tasks do not consistently reflect planning to provide access for all students.

### Impact

All students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, are not consistently challenged with high-level tasks that push student thinking and promote college and career readiness nor are they provided with the necessary supports to access those tasks limiting college and career readiness for all learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- Conversations with the school leadership as well as a review of curriculum documents revealed that the school is still in the process of aligning curricula in all core subject areas to Common Core Learning Standards or content standards and integrating the instructional shifts. The school is currently in the process of defining criteria for what students need to know and what skills they need to master to move to the next grade in all subject areas. Although teachers are provided feedback on teacher work products by their peers and the administration, the school has not yet developed a system to collect this information to ensure that feedback is being implemented and that it is helping to develop a of common understanding across the school for measuring rigor in all teacher work products.
- Lesson plans are inconsistently written to cognitively engage learners and challenge them with higher order tasks. While most lesson plans did include objectives related to Common Core Learning Standards that teachers were planning to address, summative tasks were not always aligned. For example, in a health class, although the lesson plan read that students would gain a greater understanding of contraceptives that are available to them, the summary assessment asked students to determine if all questions from the Do Now had been answered and to write down any other questions they still had. In a living environment class, although the lesson plan read that students would create a memorable way to think of each organelle in their cells analogies project, express their knowledge of organelles via paired research project “Organelle Observations”, and model diffusion and osmosis during lab and class work, the summary assessment called for the teacher to collect a cell identity handout and to ask all students to stand, answer a few questions independently, and after they answered they would sit down.
- A review of curricula documents revealed that targeted supports for students who struggle are not always specific nor are they consistently planned for in all subject areas. For example, while a review of lesson plans in health, geometry, and earth science did not indicate any intentional planning to support struggling students, English language learners, or students with disabilities, in an algebra lesson plan, the teacher planned to purposeful group students to ensure students could work collaboratively to support each other, and in a English language arts lesson plan the teacher planned to provide students with levelled texts on the same topic.

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

Teachers inconsistently use rubrics aligned to the school's curricula. The practice of teachers regularly checking for understanding and incorporating student peer and self-assessment is emerging.

### Impact

The inconsistent use of rubrics, checks for understanding, and student peer and self-assessment limit teachers' ability to provide all students with actionable feedback regarding student mastery.

### Supporting Evidence

- Student work displayed in hallways and classrooms did not consistently include rubrics with feedback from teachers describing specific next steps for how students could improve. For example, on some papers, feedback to students focused on how they needed to include further evidence to defend their writing. On other student papers feedback was either absent or included just praise for work well done even though it was not at mastery level. Although teachers, school leadership, and students all spoke to how students use rubrics and are provided feedback for all writing assignments, students could not articulate how the feedback they receive from teachers is helping them to develop their writing skills and how they were developing as writers.
- Across classrooms, teachers' use of checks for understanding in order to make effective adjustments to meet all learners needs varied. In an algebra team teaching class, while students worked collaboratively in groups on a single problem of the week, teachers circulated to all groups and spoke individually with each student to ensure they were on task and using their group members to support them with the problem. After speaking with every student, teachers used a classroom Dojo application to electronically record students' progress towards mastery in real time and displayed the information on the white board in the front of the room so that students could monitor their own learning. In other classes, teachers only asked questions to the whole class or called on select students to determine if all students understood and then moved on with the lesson after receiving a few answers. For example, in an earth science class, after students worked on the Do Now problem, the teacher asked students to raise their hand if they answered the question correctly. Six students raised their hand and then the teacher moved on with the lesson.
- Across classrooms, teachers' use of peer and self-assessment practices varied. In an English language arts class, students worked collaboratively in groups to defend their ideas about the most significant points included in an article on how education was considered by some people to be the best equalizer to opportunity. In their groups, students were assigned roles and used a Final Word protocol to provide their peers with feedback as well to reflect and refine their own ideas concerning the article. After all students had participated in the protocol, students would then independently develop a written response to a HOT question, provided by the teacher. In other classrooms, although students worked together in pairs or in groups on similar problems, they did not peer or self-assess their work or other student's work but instead waited to hear from the teacher to determine if their work was correct. For example, in an earth science class, when students were working in groups on a similar question, when they were asked how they knew their answers were correct, some students responded that the teacher had told them the answer was correct while other students responded that they did not know why their answer was correct.

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

Teacher team collaborations inconsistently promote the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. The analysis of student work products used to make school-wide modifications to curricula materials is emerging.

**Impact**

Although teacher teams are engaged in professional collaborations by grade and department, the work of the teams has not yet resulted in improved teacher practice or progress towards goals for groups of students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Although teachers meet in teams to develop instructional strategies to support groups of students that they work with, there is no school-wide structure in place for how improvements to teacher practice connected to those strategies is tracked. When asked about how teacher team work is impacting teacher practice, the principal explained that teachers are much more willing to open their doors to each other and receive feedback from the administration and that the school is becoming a community of learners. However, currently, school leadership is not tracking specific instructional strategies that teams of teachers are implementing in order to provide targeted feedback. Teachers also expressed that although they are sharing practices and visiting each other classrooms; a school-wide or even department-wide intervisitation plan has not yet been created but is being planned for next year.
- Although teacher teams are engaged in structured professional collaborations to review student data and teacher work products in order to strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers, work products created by teachers are not consistently aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. For example, although teachers receive feedback from the peers regarding the creation of lesson plans, a review of lesson plans revealed that not all tasks were rigorous and supports for struggling students were not consistently seen. During a teacher team visit, although teachers were observed using a protocol to interpret student work and the implications for classroom practice, the task that produced the student work was not rigorous.
- Teacher team work is at various degrees of implementation across the school. While grade and content teams regularly meet once a week, have identified targeted students to support, and look at student work to develop strategies to support students, students do not have specific goals tied to identified skills that they need support with. Teachers discussed that student goals are more general than specific. However they are moving in that direction for next year. With no consistent school-wide structure, teachers and school leadership could not speak to specific progress towards mastery for targeted students.