



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Wadleigh School for the Performing and Visual Arts

Secondary School 03M415

**215 West 114 Street
Manhattan,
NY 10026**

Principal: Tye Chin

**Date of review: December 18, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Fred Walsh**

The School Context

Wadleigh Secondary School for the Performing and Visual Arts is a secondary school with 531 students from grade 6th through 12th grade. The school population comprises 53% Black, 44% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 34% of the students enrolled and girls account for 66%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 80.9%.

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	Developing
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	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	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	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	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff, provide training and have a system of accountability for those expectations. School leaders and staff establish a college-going culture that conveys high expectations for all students and offer ongoing feedback to help families understand student progress toward those expectations.

Impact

Structures that support the school's high expectations have created a culture of shared accountability and ownership of increased student achievement, college and career readiness. Staff, students and their families understand their role in the school's continued improvement.

Supporting Evidence

- The faculty handbook, weekly staff newsletters, and the regular use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching reinforce school-wide expectations for teaching and culture. High expectations are presented in the handbook such as the school's grading and attendance policies, classroom responsibility and dress code. The newsletter, published each Monday, provides staff with key information, progress on school improvement initiatives and reminders of upcoming school-wide events.
- Parents shared that teachers regularly send updates on their child's progress via their online grade reporting system, Engrade along with phone calls and emails. The school provides parent workshops on college and career readiness. Students participate in college fairs and visits throughout the year.
- Frequent classroom observations and feedback from classroom visits hold staff accountable for meeting expectations. Teachers reported they receive timely and accurate feedback on teaching and professional development on instructional practice and youth development topics. For example, staff received training on the subject of emotional intelligence.
- The school's advisory program, monthly town halls and ongoing staff professional development ensure a collective understanding and achieving of the school's mission: "Combining the pursuit of education with character building and preparing students to function in the global market." All students are programmed for small group advisory. During advisory and lunch periods, students are provided with guidance and feedback on their college and career options by their guidance counselor.
- All seniors and middle school students are expected to participate in the College for Every Student program, engaging students in peer-mentoring, service projects and college campus visits. The school's partnership with the Children's Aid Society has enabled a week-long college fair, held in the gymnasium. Partnerships with the Apollo Theater, Operation Hope and Young Professionals for Change enable students to participate in career readiness programs both during and after school.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best. Teaching practices inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

Teaching practices are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. However student involvement in lesson activities was uneven with inconsistent completion, and/or a lack of ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- During classroom visits to earth science, global studies and English language arts classrooms, questions were of a low cognitive level. For example a teacher asked, “What is a caste system?” and “Who would be the unskilled workers?” In most classrooms teachers repeated student’s answers for the class to hear. In one English language arts class the teacher successfully used accountable talk prompts to engage the class in discussion which revealed higher order thinking skills. Yet, in a science class the teacher asked, “What is a parent rock?” and questions and answers were moderated by the teacher without student-to-student interaction.
- In the majority of classrooms visited, teachers required students complete a Do Now assignment. However there was little evidence of how Do Now activities were used as an instructional tool or how students receive feedback on their work. The administration and staff believe that students learn best when engaged and actively participating in discussions that promote student learning. Yet, students completed these activities as a matter of procedure without context to the day’s learning. For example, when students were asked about how the day’s learning objective connected to broader understanding of the unit, students were unclear with their responses.
- Consistent with the school’s instructional focus, during classroom visits, teachers displayed three pivotal questions on the board to prompt discussion. Some pivotal questions displayed for students included, “How is theme different from the subject of a piece of literature?” and “What information supports your argument regarding the geographic feature you have selected?” The use of questions to promote higher-order thinking skills during observed lessons however, was inconsistent. Students were not directed toward, or engaged in pivotal or higher-order thinking discussions.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

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

Impact

The school's use of teacher feedback to students is used to adjust curricula and instruction and to create increased student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers collaborate on creating common assessments. For example, in all high school grades, English language arts and social studies teachers use writing samples to assess and adjust lessons to develop student's skills. Each Wednesday they meet to review student outcomes on formative and summative common assessments to determine adjustments to the curriculum and targeted student supports. During a meeting, a ninth grade English language arts teacher shared student writing samples and the team used the work to analyze the school's implementation of the Hochman writing curriculum.
- Student work products were consistently evaluated on a rubric scale and included specific next steps for students to improve. Students interviewed were aware of the assessment criteria across subjects and articulated their individual goals and needs for improvement.
- The school's Academic Taskforce, comprised of teacher-leaders, a guidance counselor and parent coordinator, representing core subjects and arts programs, holds monthly meetings to analyze outcomes and determine the impact of curriculum and adjustments to professional learning plans. From this the Academic Taskforce determined next steps to adjust instruction across the school. For example, teachers across disciplines used daily formative assessments to determine the need for more frequent and consistent use of Hochman strategies to address sentence structure errors.

Findings

School leaders and faculty are in the process of aligning curricula to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and integrating the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks reflect planning to provide students access to rigorous curricula.

Impact

Increased alignment of curricula is beginning to provide all students access to cognitively engaging curricula and tasks, across grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- In English language arts and social studies lesson plans and unit plans teachers use Hochman writing strategies that embed content into the writing process, while providing scaffolds to engage a range of learning styles. For example, in a United States history unit, titled Colonial Foundations, the performance task required students write an essay on the subject of European colonization of the Americas. Embedded in the unit are Hochman writing strategies such as distinguishing between complete sentences and sentence fragments. However, in science the curriculum is beginning to integrate the shifts and align the curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards. For example, although Common Core Learning Standards are included in unit plans, end of unit tasks do not yet align.
- Lessons are expected to have a minimum of three pivotal questions, or essential questions that promote higher order thinking skills. Although these pivotal questions are presented across subjects, the plans do not consistently demonstrate access for all learners. For example, in eleventh grade earth science, a lesson plan included the following question, "In what ways do heat and pressure affect the foliation of metamorphic rocks?" In a mixed grade visual art class the pivotal question for a pop art unit was "How can we create a project that is based on a pop art icon?" In a social studies lesson, students were asked to summarize the effects of the caste system. So, there is an inconsistency in the access that the level of questioning according to Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) and Hess' Cognitive Matrix.
- Using DOK, teachers are expected to develop daily activities that extend thinking with access for all students, including students with special needs and English language learners (ELLs). For example, in an eleventh grade English language arts lesson, students were heterogeneously grouped and tasked with answering text-based questions, covering a range of depth and complexity. In a tenth grade social studies lesson, students were purposefully grouped and pivotal questions ranged in complexity. A lesson plan and curriculum reviewed in tenth grade social studies required that students list the main geographic features of the world then work in groups on Regents-based thematic essay, using a graphic organizer. Yet mathematics lessons and units did not provide multiple entry points or scaffolds for struggling students as well as students with special needs.

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaboration. Distributive leadership structures are in place so that teachers have a voice in key school-level decisions.

Impact

The work of teacher teams promotes the achievement of school goals and the implementation of common core learning standards and strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers. Distributive leadership structures and teacher collaboration is resulting in improved student outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's Academic Taskforce, comprised of teacher-leaders, a guidance counselor and parent coordinator, representing core subjects and arts programs, is the primary academic decision making body in the school. Members of the Academic Taskforce sit on all grade-level inquiry teams. The Academic Taskforce focuses on instructional practices, school goals, culture and systems for improvement. For example, a teacher used an English language learning student as an example of the positive impact the school's instructional focus is having on her writing.
- As one target area, the inquiry team's focus on the implementation of the Hochman writing strategies to promote rigor and to engage students in common core aligned tasks across the curriculum. Each of the teacher teams meets three times per week and consistently analyzes assessment data and student work.
- Teachers interviewed consistently reported that distributive leadership empowers their input in the development of instructional resources across grades. Teachers articulated how their feedback was instrumental in designing the school's instructional focus.
- Teacher collaborations, across grades and subjects are strengthening practice and developing their leadership skills. Teachers share best instructional practices, connected to targeted areas of focus identified by the examination of student data. Teachers articulated that their meetings have helped to create a collaborative culture among staff members. For example, a music teacher described how higher order questioning skills and grouping of students are positively impacting learning.