



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Hudson High School of Learning Technologies

M437

**351 West 18th Street
New York
NY 10011**

Principal: Nancy Amling

Date of review: February 24, 2015

Lead Reviewer: Caron Martin

The School Context

Hudson High School of Learning Technologies is a high school with 462 students from grade nine through grade twelve. The school population comprises 27% Black, 60% Hispanic, 5% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 66% of the students enrolled and girls account for 34%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 85.0%.

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	Additional Findings	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	Celebration	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

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

All teachers engage in both grade level and content area inquiry based work. Through systematic continuous analysis of student work products and pedagogy, teachers are able to demonstrate coherence and increased achievement for all learners.

Impact

The work and variation of teacher teams provide the vast majority of teachers with opportunities to engage in structures that result in professional collaboration while addressing student progress towards school wide goals. Teacher teams collaboratively adjust their planning and share instructional strategies through what they call, "Frankenstein Lessons" to support improved teacher practice across classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- Tenth grade teachers developed a common writing framework based on collective learning about student achievement and collaborate with guidance counselors to inform student-programming decisions. After noticing that the depth of student responses had shifted with more sophisticated vocabulary, the framework is used across grade and content areas, whereby students are developing transferable skill development that will progress across their portfolio work at the school.
- School leaders cited an increase of 66% of student retakes passing the Global History Regents in January 2015. This improvement was correlated to teacher team strategies such as item analysis of past Regents performance, determining specific skill gaps, revising the curriculum to address those with greater concentration, and using the descriptive consultancy protocol to review student work and teacher practice. The use of these led to identifying either collective gaps in the content or successful teaching moves, like adopting one another's Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies that affected teacher practice across the community.
- School leaders structure and support opportunities for teachers and students to participate in inter-visitation cycles, organized around an area of focus drawn from the Danielson Framework for Teaching teacher observation data. Students provide feedback to teachers on pedagogical practice and adjustments are then made to the presentation of content and instructional strategy.
- The school schedule supports common planning periods while also providing teachers additional time to meet and discuss curriculum across grades and subjects thereby ensuring alignment to the Common Core learning standards and instructional shifts.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Instructional practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the school's beliefs about how students learn best. However, while strategic entry points into the curricula are provided, discussion opportunities and extensions that foster deep reasoning in student work products varies across classrooms.

Impact

Across classrooms, work products reflect overall student participation with all students, including those with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs) able to engage with challenging content. However, inconsistent practice of questioning protocols result in missed opportunities to engage students in deeper meaningful discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- While conversations with students and teachers indicated that student groupings are flexible and vary dependent on tasks and content area, extensions to lessons were not always present or did not fully challenge learners, including students with disabilities. In two math ICT classes observed students were approaching completion of a task or were ahead of their peers in understanding the lesson content, yet it was unclear as to what options were available to extend their learning and deepen their understanding.
- In an eleventh grade history class, students were asked to observe a video and then create their own open-ended questions. While some students asked open ended questions, "I wonder what would happen if there were a U.S. Crash now?" other questions were closed and there was no mid-course correction by the teacher, "Did they get the money back? How much time did it take to lose the money?"
- In a ninth grade English class, students were seated together either in pairs or groups of four. Students were asked to watch a clip of the Chronicles of Narnia and record observations. Following this task, the students in their groups shared their notes then discussed which observations were common amongst the group and then shared out with the class. The teacher took notes as students were sharing with one another both in the groups and as whole class. Students were asking one another what they noticed from the clip and pushed one another to expand on the observations they made.
- Across classrooms visited, lesson plans had a clear structure that included common core instructional shifts aligned to both the Hudson Core Beliefs, an Instructional and Professional Framework are aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching (FfT). Core beliefs that support such practices as positive tone and culture as well as the use of assessment and data to drive instruction directly align to Domains 2 and 3 of the FfT.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

All curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards. Academic tasks and content are planned, reviewed and revised using student work and co-planning so that all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities access cognitively engaging tasks.

Impact

The schools approach to reviewing curriculum, student work products and co-planning across all content areas has provided teachers the ability to build coherence in classroom practice and prepare students for college and career. Using shared instructional strategies, rigorous habits and higher order thinking are demonstrated across the curriculum.

Supporting Evidence

- Curriculum maps and lesson plans integrate the instructional shifts. For example, documents across subject areas and grade levels provide opportunities for students to form claims and counter claims through the schools perspective evidence analysis strategy. When meeting with students, the group synchronously responded, “We do it in almost every class.” Ninth grade students described using the practice when reading new content, while teachers stated they use the strategy to assist ninth graders grasp essential meaning from texts in English classes, while tenth grade Global students use the strategy through a paragraph organizer responding to the question: Why can the Industrial Revolution be considered progress for some people and a hindrance for others?
- The Senior Big Idea Project provides all 12th grade students opportunities to demonstrate higher order skills while emphasizing real world application in a project based, peer-learning environment through rigorous thinking and problem solving. The Big Idea Project challenges students to generate learning goals based on their own passions, integrate skills into processes and use their 13 years of schooling to apply their work to the outside world. The Big Idea Project Research process is modeled after the SUNY Albany Science Research in the High School Program, which helps ensure success in college and career .One requirement of this project is the research paper students must submit. Students are completing skill specific aspects of this Big Idea Project from ninth grade through first semester of the senior year, with this project being the culminating task that also assists in the required personal essays for most college applications.
- Lesson plans across classroom visits are grounded in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies, providing students various options for presentation of process, product and content.
- Teachers plan and revise curriculum at least once per week through both horizontal and vertically identified “cohort teams”. Designated working time, each Wednesday afternoon from 12:45-2:20 allow for collaboration and planning.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teachers use common assessments, rubrics and grading policies aligned to the school's curricula to gain a clear understanding of student progress toward goals. Systematic monitoring of work products and curriculum inform teacher feedback to students and adjustments to instruction.

Impact

Through data tracking and curriculum reviews teachers are engaged in reflecting upon student progress and then providing specific and actionable feedback to students. The shared use of online tools allows teachers to assess student progress across grades and content areas therefore resulting in real-time curricular and instructional adjustments.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers monitor student progress through grade level teams and the use of Skedula on a daily and weekly basis. Both students and parents referenced using Pupil Path to monitor progress and stay on track with assignment completion. Online data from *Khan Academy* and *IXL* provides up-to-date information about students' levels of understanding in the Algebra classroom with regard to previously covered topics. This data informs student talk during Algebra common planning time.
- A review of student work and online portfolios indicated real time feedback on all projects, writing tasks and other formative assessments. All feedback for all student work and submissions is shared electronically amongst the entire school community.
- During a ninth grade ICT Algebra class, teachers were observed electronically logging student response via iPad and Chromebooks through Google Classroom, teachers immediately identify confusion or misconceptions of responses then deliver immediate instructional adjustments.
- In addition to the use of Mock Regents as a common assessment strategy to inform student progress, all content area teachers across grades administer the MoSL Writing Performance Task to deliver baseline data, informing teachers of the collective gap in students ability to complete claim and counter claim arguments, leading to the revision of writing curriculum and incorporating the Perspective Evidence Strategy across grade levels.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations to the entire staff in a variety of ways. The staff consistently informs families of ways to ensure student progress and while communicating the content knowledge and skills students are expected to attain for the next level of achievement.

Impact

Structures that support the school's high-level expectations build a strong culture for learning that communicates those expectations and provides the supports to achieve them across staff, parents, and students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers report that the instructional rounds and inter-visitation cycles, in particular the inclusion of student feedback, increase the level of expectations for instruction and curricula. Instructional rounds foci are determined through trends in teacher observations as well as the Hudson High School of Learning Technologies Core Beliefs Instructional Framework, aligned to the Quality Review and Danielson Framework for Teaching. This process is further deepened by having student's participation and feedback.
- Teachers and staff members have recently adopted Skedula as a tool to track student progress toward graduation standards and to report progress to students and their families. Parents stated they view Pupil Path on a daily basis to check their child's grades and academic progress. As a new initiative, Hudson has the goal of ensuring approximately 35% of all parents utilize Skedula by June 2015.
- Parents report that teachers, guidance staff, and school leaders communicate by means that are appropriate and effective to inform them of student progress and are available to conference with them about particular issues or challenges.
- Hudson High School follows a 1:1 laptop policy where by students maintain the majority of their projects and class assignments, inclusive of all writing assignments in their E-Portfolios and Google Classroom. The school wide use of these tools allows teachers to continuously provide students with feedback and opportunities to support their learning in preparation for the next level of understanding or progression in their College and Career Ready Path.
- College preparation experiences such as visits, and monthly workshops to inform parents of the college application process were identified as additional supports during both student and parent meetings.