



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Vanguard High School**

**High School M449**

**317 East 67<sup>th</sup> Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10065**

**Principal: William Klann**

**Date of review: May 12, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Richard Cintron**

## The School Context

Vanguard High School is a high school with 486 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 26% Black, 57% Hispanic, 5% White, and 10% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 85.0%.

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

## Area of Celebration

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

All teachers are engaged in consistently examining teacher practice and student data within inquiry-based structured professional collaborations. Distributed teacher leadership is embedded across all areas of the school.

### Impact

School-wide instructional coherence is seen throughout all classrooms and teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect teaching and learning across the school resulting in increased student achievement.

### Supporting Evidence

- All teachers regularly meet in department and grade level teams, as well as in informal learning groups, to review student and teacher work products to ensure alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and share best practices for increasing student achievement. During a literacy teacher team meeting, teachers used a school-wide protocol to look at student work, examine the teacher's lesson plan and discuss next steps for supporting struggling students. Teachers explained how these conversations have been instrumental in helping to identify common practices for supporting all students, building coherence across the school, and raising student achievement. Examples teachers discussed included using common sentence starters and similar graphic organizers to support struggling students with writing in all literacy and humanities classes. Adopting a common school-wide method of annotating to support struggling readers in all content area classes. Teachers explained how targeted changes such as these have allowed them to raise the reading levels of almost all students from the fall semester to the spring.
- The principal meets weekly with the school's teacher leadership team which is composed of representatives from all teacher teams who agree to serve on the leadership team for at least a year to a year and a half. The principal and teachers explained how this yearly rotation of teachers allows for all staff members to assume a leadership role at the school, creates accountability among teachers within their teams, and allows all voices and new ideas to regularly be heard. The principal explained that the role of the leadership team is to ensure that student scholarship, observation trends, professional development, and issues related to the social emotional support of students is consistently discussed. Data connected to these areas is analyzed at a team and school-wide level.
- Teachers spoke about how they have a strong voice in school-wide decisions that proactively drive the direction of the school. For example, teachers collaboratively worked with the administration to create their Progressive Redesign Opportunity Schools for Excellence (PROSE) proposal to further develop and strengthen the school's culture of intervisitations. Teachers spoke about how teacher teams are responsible for hiring all new teachers and also creating a support structure for them by providing individual mentoring for them with developing unit and lesson plans and understanding the expectations of graduation level performance based assessments. Teachers also mentioned how they create their own curriculum and how they are Advisors to students as well as how both of these tasks play critical roles in supporting students with reaching and surpassing graduation requirements.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Higher order skills are consistently emphasized in curricula and tasks across grades and subject areas for all students.

### Impact

The school's purposeful curriculum decisions build coherence and promote cognitive engagement and college and career readiness for all learners, including English language learners (ELLs), students with disabilities and highest achieving learners. Although students are consistently exposed to higher level tasks across grades and content areas, are required to demonstrate their thinking, and are provided with the necessary supports to access those tasks, the school has not yet strategically integrated the instructional shifts across all grades and subject areas.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school's decision to use Jumprope, an online curriculum mapping resource, is consistently building coherence across grades and content areas. All teachers use this planning tool and are able to view each other's work products and provide feedback. Teachers are able to align student learning goals with the Common Core Learning Standards and/or state content standards and make instructional adjustments from student work and data results aligned to the needs of specific student populations.
- A review of written lesson plans across all content areas revealed that in-class learning targets consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills such as evaluating a speaker's point of view and their use of evidence to defend their ideas, developing logical arguments, analyzing information from multiple sources, and applying concepts in real world situations. For example, in a tenth grade humanities class, students were asked to develop a central idea and find evidence to support that idea. In a ninth grade algebra class, students were asked to write an algebraic rule for the number of cords in a circle as a function of the number of points on its perimeter and explain why their rule makes sense given the context of the problem. In a tenth grade literacy class, students were asked to develop an argumentative claim on diverse perspectives about the issue of cell ownership, defend their ideas with textual evidence, and self-monitor their participation in a Socratic discussion.
- A review of written lesson plans revealed scaffolds and entry points such as the use of graphic organizers, purposeful grouping, differentiated tasks, flexible use of time, one to one conferencing, student choice, and the identification of key vocabulary so that all learners including English language learners and students with disabilities, can demonstrate their thinking. For example, a tenth grade geometry lesson was planned to allow students to work collaboratively in purposeful groups with other students who were presenting the same triangle exhibition. A ninth grade robotics lesson was planned to allow students to choose different roles in their groups and were provided with tiered questions that still addressed the same content. A tenth grade literacy lesson was planned to allow additional time for students to prepare responses for Socratic Circle questions.

## Additional Findings

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching strategies strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports for all learners. Student discussion and work products reflect high levels of student thinking, participation and ownership.

### Impact

In the vast majority of classrooms, all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, are motivated and actively engaged in classroom activities and discussions, resulting in them producing meaningful work products that prepare them for college and career.

### Supporting Evidence

- In classrooms visited, strategies to promote higher levels of students thinking and discussion were consistently seen. In a eleventh/twelfth grade history class, as students worked in groups analyzing an article on Anti-Chinese Riots in Seattle and identifying potential evidence to defend their claim, when students asked the teacher questions, instead of answering them, the teacher reworded the student's questions and directed them to discuss potential answers with their group members. In a tenth grade humanities class and a tenth grade literacy class, students used a last word protocol while working in their groups to ensure all students' voices and thoughts were heard without interruption.
- Teaching strategies to encourage students to defend their ideas were consistently seen across the vast majority of classrooms. In a tenth grade literacy class, when students were working in their groups discussing excerpts from the book they were all reading, they consistently referenced evidence from the text they to defend their ideas and to challenge other students ideas. When students did not use evidence, other students in the group reminded them and asked them to provide it.
- Teachers used a variety of strategies to ensure all students could access the material. In a eleventh/twelfth grade history class, students used graphic organizers to record their findings and organize their thoughts as they analyzed the article they were reading. In a eleventh/twelfth grade Physics class, students were given the opportunity to select several different assignments to complete during the class to demonstrate that they could distinguish between momentum and kinetic energy while still answering the same end of lesson assessment question.
- When asked, the vast majority of students could articulate what they were learning and why it was important. In a robotics class where students were conducting experiments to predict the number of rotations required in order to program their robot to move, students explained how scientists conduct experiments to create rules in order to ensure that when they scale their experiment up or down the rules will help them to know how much they have to compensate. In a tenth grade geometry class, students were able to explain how watching the teacher model how to present an oral defense presentation, allowed them the additional benefit of not only reading about and being told about what a strong presentation looked like, but also to see and hear what one looked like. In addition, students explained how these skills were connected to their exit conferences at the end of the year and their graduation-level performance-based assessment tasks (PBATs).

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

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use assessments and rubrics aligned to the school's curricula to provide actionable feedback to students and teachers. Across the school teachers use common assessments to track student progress and make adjustments to curricula and instructional decisions.

### Impact

The monitoring of student progress at the teacher team and classroom level results in all students' having a clear understanding of their next steps for demonstrating mastery in all content areas and in increased student achievement.

### Supporting Evidence

- The use of rubrics accompanied by specific actionable feedback from teachers to students and students to students is an established ritual for improving student achievement across the school that the principal, teachers and students were able to speak about. Student work displayed in classrooms, hallways, and in student writing folders, included rubrics and targeted feedback from teachers. Students spoke to how they regularly use rubrics in class and with homework assignments and how teachers confer with them to provide warm and cool feedback as well as next steps. Samples of feedback from a humanities teacher called for the student to use transition words to support the introduction of the students counter argument and then gave samples of some transition words. Samples of feedback from students to students were seen in the majority of classrooms and hallways and also included warm and cool feedback as well as next steps.
- The school has developed a coherent school-wide assessment plan that includes baselines, benchmarks, and end line assessments in all classes. End line assessments for students in ninth and tenth grade classes take the form of roundtables at the end of the year in which students have the opportunity to practice defending their work to their peers. Students in eleventh grade sit for exhibitions which is similar in nature to graduation-level performance-based assessment tasks (PBATs) which all twelfth graders must complete. End of unit assessments during the year are common across all subject area classes and align to end line assessments. During teacher team meetings, teachers regularly examine student work products from these assessments and use the knowledge to adjust curricula and instructional supports. For example, literacy teachers used results from student writing assessments to reprogram tenth grade literacy classes to ensure all students could receive needed support as well as enrichment opportunities to improve their writing and have seen increases in student writing scores specifically for struggling students.
- Teachers and students spoke to having goals in all of their classes. The school uses an online system called Jumprope that allows teachers to identify standards that are being taught in all classes, and also allows students to set goals and update them regularly throughout the unit once they have reached mastery level. Students explained that all teachers give weekly understanding checks to help students gauge their progress towards mastering the standard being addressed during the week. Teachers mentioned how they use the results from these weekly understanding checks to either re-teach material or to identify students who may be struggling. Students also spoke about how teachers regularly conference with them using samples of their own work and leave them feedback in Jumprope so that they can make adjustments to their goals or determine if they need additional support from the teacher or their peers.

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

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff. Staff has established a culture that provides all students with clear, focused, and effective feedback, guidance, and ongoing support with college and career.

### Impact

A culture of mutual accountability exists between all staff members. Students are motivated to own their own educational experience and support their peers so that they are prepared for college and career decisions.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school is a PROSE school and teachers have accepted responsibility for implementing a strong school-wide intervisitation program that is driven by teachers and targeted to specific areas of need across the school. In consultation with the leadership, the school has chosen to focus on designing coherent instruction, using questioning and discussion techniques, and engaging students in learning. All teachers have created individual goals connected to these areas and are regularly observed by the peers who provide them with feedback. In addition, teachers maintain a portfolio of evidence to share best practices and celebrate their own learning. The principal spoke to how teachers have completely owned this process and have held each other accountable. Teachers spoke to how they regularly review teacher work products connected to their goals and that this process was helping to strengthen instructional coherence across classrooms.
- The school has a very detailed professional development plan that was collaboratively created to support the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and the school's instructional learning goals. In addition, all teams have developed their own learning goals and engage in their own professional learning to ensure coherence across the school. For example, the literacy team is working towards building teachers ability to support student's comprehension of increasingly complex texts. The humanities team is working on developing teachers' ability to support struggling students with the use of multiple entry points. The principal spoke to how teachers have taken ownership for their own learning and consistently challenge and support one another.
- During a student meeting, when students were asked how they knew they were ready for the next grade, students spoke at length about how they are taught to own their own education and to manage their own progress. Students spoke about how they use Jumprope to track their grades and the feedback they receive from teachers, communicate with teachers to ask questions and receive additional support, create their own goals aligned to standards they are studying, and eventually support them during student led conferences with their parents.
- The school offers a number of different opportunities to support students with college and career readiness so that all students can own their educational path. All students take mandated college readiness classes, visit colleges beginning in ninth grade, attend guest speaker series held at the school, and receive various supports from many of the school's outside partners such as the YMCA and Ivy Key. Parents and students specifically spoke to how the school's Advisory program is a driving force for students and that Advisors regularly support them with all college and career decisions.