



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Manhattan International High School

High School M459

**317 East 67th Street
Manhattan
NY 10065**

Principal: Gladys Rodriguez

**Date of review: April 1, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Richard Cintron**

The School Context

Manhattan International High School is a high school with 331 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 16% Black, 42% Hispanic, 12% White, and 29% Asian students. The student body includes 77% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled, and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92%.

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	Well Developed
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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Focus	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect a coherent belief about how students learn best. Teaching strategies strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports for all learners and extensions into the curricula.

Impact

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

Supporting Evidence

- The administration and teachers clearly identified a common approach to teaching and learning that included principles such as heterogeneity and collaboration, experiential learning, language and content integration, localized autonomy and responsibility, and a common learning model for all students. Included in this document is a section that explains what is meant by each principle, the components of a successful classroom related to each principle, and what to look for when visiting classrooms that would constitute evidence of these principles in action. Posters are hung in all classrooms and offices, and all teachers were able to speak to the importance of these principles as a driving force for how all school-wide decisions are made. During a student meeting, students spoke to how practices highlighted in the document were commonplace in all of their classes across grades and content areas. Visits to classrooms and an examination of lesson plans also revealed the same evidence.
- When asked, the vast majority of students could articulate what they were learning and why it was important. In a geometry class where students were learning about how geometry relates to building houses. Students explained how architects use proportions and standards of measurement to help them draft plans and use mathematics to justify their decisions. In a twelfth grade government class, students were able to explain how participating in a Socratic seminar, whether as a participant involved in the discussion or as an observer who was taking detailed notes using a rubric, helped build skills such as using evidence to defend an idea, active listening, asking questions, and observing and evaluating opinions, which they would need in college or in a career when they graduated high school. In addition, students also spoke to how these skills were connected to their graduation-level performance-based assessment tasks (PBATs) and that they understood why these common practices were taught in all their classrooms.
- In the vast majority of classrooms observed, questioning strategies to promote higher levels of students thinking and discussion were consistently seen. In an English language arts class, as students worked in groups discussing their ideas about Macbeth Act 1, when students asked the teacher questions, instead of answering them, the teacher redirected the questions back to the group or to the text.
- In the vast majority of classrooms observed, students used academic vocabulary, evidenced-based accountable talk from a variety of sources in whole class discussions and while working within their groups, and cited specific evidence from the texts they were reading when answering questions or defending their arguments.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the school teachers use common assessments to track student progress and make adjustments to curricula and instructional decisions. Teachers consistently use ongoing checks for understanding and students self-assess, allowing teachers to make effective adjustments to meet all learners' needs.

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

- Across classrooms, teachers consistently asked students to self-assess their work and peer-assess the work of their classmates. For example, in a biology class where students participated in a Socratic seminar, some students used a rubric to self-assess their participation in the discussion, while other students used a rubric to peer-assess the work of their classmates who were participating in the seminar. When asked, students explained how they regularly engage in similar activities where they assess themselves and their classmates and how both giving and receiving feedback help them to know what they need to improve on. In a literacy class, students worked in groups of three using a protocol to share their outline, their focus statement, and a struggle they were encountering in developing an argumentative essay. Students took turns sharing their work and then listening to their group members discuss their work, share a potential next step with them to improve their work, as well as share a strategy to overcome their identified struggle. During the conversations, students used accountable talk, referenced the protocol they were using, and made reference to the rubric that accompanied the task.
- In classrooms observed, teachers consistently used a variety of methods to check for understanding, such as, one-on-one conferencing with individual students as well as groups of students, purposeful questioning and regrouping, and individual student reflections. Teachers then used this knowledge to make effective adjustments to meet the needs of all learners. For example, in a ninth grade algebra class where students were working individually on computers using an online program to reinforce their knowledge of linear equations, the teacher monitored their progress at her own station, facilitated partnerships between students in the class who had already demonstrated mastery and between those students who were still struggling but were close to mastery, and conferenced with those students who needed more intensive one-to-one targeted support.
- The school has developed a comprehensive school-wide assessment plan that includes a diagnostic assessment, three interim assessments, and a summative assessment for all classes. Teacher teams regularly examine student work products during the year from these assessments and use the knowledge to create goals for students and to adjust curricula and instructional supports. For example, rubrics have been modified, and a literacy coach has been assigned to each grade level team to offer additional support to the school's large English Language learner population. Math and literacy teachers are increasing the use of online programs such as Learning Upgrade and Reading Plus, to allow teachers to track student progress towards mastery in the moment and to target individual supports.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Higher order skills are emphasized in curricula and tasks in a coherent way.

Impact

All students, including English language learners (ELLs), students with disabilities and highest achieving learners, 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 leading to college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school is a member of the New York Performance Consortium and has aligned all curricula documents to ensure that students are prepared for their graduation-level performance-based assessment tasks (PBATs) which are evaluated by external assessors using Consortium rubrics for writing and oral presentations. This has allowed all departments to have clearly defined criteria for what students need to know and identify, and imbed specific college and career readiness skills connected to reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language, as well as connections to real world applications coherently across all content area and grade curricula documents. A review of teacher work products across all subject areas revealed purposeful planning by teachers for how all students would show mastery of these skills at each grade level.
- Lesson plans across all content areas revealed that in-class tasks consistently emphasize higher order thinking skills such as developing claims and citing evidence, developing logical arguments, analyzing information from multiple sources, and applying concepts in real world situations. For example, in a biology lesson plan, students were required to use evidence from various sources to identify ethical issues raised by genetic engineering. In a government lesson plan, students were required to use evidence from various sources to determine if the policy of appeasement was the right decision for England in 1938 and to develop an argument for whether or not aggression should ever be appeased. In a literacy lesson plan, students were required to use evidence from various sources to determine the single strategy that has been most instrumental in furthering gender equality.
- The school has developed several systems and structures to ensure that all teacher work products are regularly reviewed and that teachers have the necessary supports to produce high quality teacher work products aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and graduation-level PBATs. All teachers use Hess's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) wheel as a shared definition of rigor and a curriculum share protocol based on Hess's "Guide for Self-Assessing a Common Core-Aligned Task". Teachers work in teams to develop work products and then receive feedback from their peers and the administration. The school has also created a lesson plan template that is used by the vast majority of teachers that asks teachers to identify targeted CCLS, content and language objectives, key vocabulary, connections to real world applications, essential questions, strategies and rational for differentiation, and assessments used during the lesson.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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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 around high expectations exists among 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

- A review of the school's very detailed faculty handbook clearly outlines not only all staff professional responsibilities and expectations, but also provides the history of the school, the educational philosophy, the approach to supporting English language learners (ELL), the school structure, and information about the school's website. The principal spoke about how faculty regularly review the handbook and take ownership of not only modifying it on a yearly basis, but also ensuring that all new teachers are familiar with the schools high expectations and the systems and structures in place, such as the grade and department level teams, for support and accountability.
- The school's professional development calendar provides opportunities for teacher to own their own learning and support the growth of the entire school community. Teachers facilitate or co-facilitate all school-based professional learning and regularly attend and conduct workshops with the NY Performance Assessment Consortium and with the Internationals Network for Public Schools that are attended by the entire faculty. Workshops include Norming Portfolio Presentations, Digital Ready share, and Curriculum Share pilot.
- Parents and students spoke to how high expectations are communicated daily by all staff members and how the school has done an excellent job of supporting students with not only transitioning into the country as a newly arriving student but in understanding and accessing all of the supports that are available for them to own their own education and succeed in college. Students spoke to such programs as BMCC STEP, John Jay Upward Bound, Hunter College/College Now, and Bottom Line mentoring as all helping to support them towards graduating from high school and understanding what is expected of them in college. Parents spoke to programs such as YMCA Scholars, Big Brother/Big Sister, and Saturday Academy in helping to create opportunities to support students before or after school, on Saturdays, or whenever students and their families can access them. Students spoke to how they have regular conversations with all staff members; how teachers mentor them in twelfth grade in order to ensure they are prepared for their graduation-level performance-based assessment tasks (PBATs), and how older students mentor younger students. The principal spoke to how all of these opportunities have been instrumental in not only helping students' move towards mastery level work but in realizing that they own their education and are responsible for the entire school communities success. Data from the school's Quality Guide revealed that the 4-Year graduation rate, 4-Year College Readiness index, and the 6-Year College Readiness Index with Persistence have all steadily increased for the last three years.

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

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based 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

- The principal explained that, in line with the principle of localized autonomy and responsibility, and in the same way that students work in mixed groups, all teacher work on various teams and have a strong voice in all school-wide decisions. All teachers serve on grade level and discipline teams that meet regularly during the week. Decisions made during these meetings are discussed with the Coordinating Council which is comprised of all team leaders and the administration. In addition to these regularly scheduled meetings, the vast majority of teachers also work in smaller informal learning groups during prep periods or communicate through emails to discuss best practices and individual supports for specific students. An example of the impact of these meetings can be seen in the twelfth grade team's decision to use Reading Plus to assess seniors' reading levels enabling all teachers to better scaffold and differentiate support across classes and to provide targeted support to raise reading levels for the lowest readers.
- During a teacher team meeting, social studies teachers were engaged in looking at student work and the accompanying task, analyzing a teacher's lesson plan, and then discussing school-wide trends in writing to determine appropriate next steps. Teachers used a protocol during both activities and discussed various next steps to support all students, specifically targeted struggling students. Teachers agreed to implement the same scaffolding strategy, a graphic organizer with sentence starters, across all grades but to vary the level of detail provided in it for students as they moved closer towards mastery. Teachers also discussed what support would look like and sound like for students once the graphic organizer was eventually removed completely so that students would be able to maintain mastery level work. Teachers then agreed that they would visit each other's classrooms to observe implementation and share their findings with the rest of the staff.
- During two teacher team meetings, teachers spoke about how they have a strong voice in school-wide decisions and their leadership is not only valued but actively sought after. For example, teachers collaboratively worked with the administration to create their PROSE proposal to further develop and strengthen the school's culture of intervisitations. Teachers spoke about how these regular peer visits have been instrumental in helping to further strengthen teachers' ability to reflect and own their professional growth and to drive school-wide and small group professional learning opportunities facilitated by teachers. Teachers also spoke about how their impact on school-wide decisions is regularly felt through the creation of all curriculum documents, during individual mentoring sessions with twelfth graders who are preparing for graduation-level PBATs, and through conversations with parents about how to best to support them and their children.