



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

High School for Health Careers and Sciences

M468

**549 Audubon Avenue
Manhattan
NY 10040**

Principal: Javier Trejo

**Date of review: February 11, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Fred Walsh**

The School Context

High School for Health Careers and Sciences is a high school with 595 students from grade nine through grade twelve. The school population comprises 16.8% Black, 79.2% Hispanic, 1.2% White, and 1.5% Asian students. The student body includes 30.8% English language learners and 10.6% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 86%.

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	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	Developing
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

Findings

School leaders and staff successfully communicate expectations connected to college and career readiness with families to support student progress. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that consistently communicates a college going culture.

Impact

A culture of learning and collaboration between staff, students and families fosters high expectations for all and prepares students for success at the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- The school offers students and families a range of college and career planning workshops throughout the year. Upper grades participate in SAT preparation and Advanced Placement courses and follow a rigorous fall semester college tour schedule. The school's partnership with Catholic Charities Community Services, provide juniors and seniors with after school programs which include, the college essay, life skills, Free Application for Federal Student Aid applications, and New York City food bank volunteering. All participating students attend a two-day college and career focused retreat. This has resulted in steady increases in the number of students who successfully completed approved rigorous courses within four years of high school.
- Parents spoke to the positive impact on their child's progress from ongoing teacher communication via telephone, email and *Pupil Path*, the school's online grading system. Parents were uniformly satisfied with the open-door policy of teachers, staff and school leaders and how promptly they address their child's individual needs. The parent coordinator collaborates with the parent association to provide workshops to promote parent engagement in the progress of their children. An examination of the school survey revealed that more than seventy five percent of parents have attend five or more workshops throughout the year, in support of their child's development. Over ninety percent of parents report satisfaction with the school's communication and having high expectations for their child.
- Students understand the school's expectations with respect to academic achievement, college preparation and their responsibility to the school community. The student government, comprising of two representatives per grade, meet with school leaders to ensure their voice is heard and issues are addressed. Monthly town hall meetings provide a forum for student government and school leaders to update the school community. Students' spoke of the school's myriad college and career guidance supports provided by staff and community based partner organizations.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best informed by the Danielson Framework. The quality of student work and discussion reflect uneven levels of students thinking and participation.

Impact

Teaching practices across classrooms do not provide consistent access to curricula, particularly for English language learners and students with disabilities, leading to uneven engagement and low quality work products. As a result, student progress toward academic proficiency, participation and college readiness is hindered.

Supporting Evidence

- In classrooms visited, questioning strategies to promote higher levels of student thinking and discussion were inconsistent. For example in math lessons observed questions were asked rapid fire and choral responses were accepted. Students called out or raised hands to indicate understanding while the majority of the class, including English language learners did not, despite the teacher's encouragement. In an eleventh and twelfth grade algebra 2 / trigonometry lesson, the teacher's questions were rapid fire. All student responses were called out.
- Although students were grouped for cooperative learning, when prompted by the teacher, student participation in discussion around a text or solving problems, was inconsistent. For example, in an eleventh grade English language arts lesson, students engaged in a think-pair-share, discussing their responses and connections to a quote of the day. All students were cognitively engaged in the activity. However, in a second eleventh grade English language arts class, designed to engage students in Socratic seminar on the topic of Robert Frost's poem, *The Road Not Taken*, few students were engaged. The do now activity required that students describe three choices made that day, giving the option to write about important or inconsequential choices. Students were not provided time to share responses, instead two were called on to share. Written responses were not evaluated.
- Demonstrated understanding of lesson concepts and tasks by students varied across classrooms. In math classes, the teachers' had limited success with engaging all students, as a consequence, student participation and completion of work products was uneven.
- The use of scaffolds such as the identification of key vocabulary words, the use of technology, and purposeful grouping were seen in some classes. However, these practices were not consistently seen across classrooms, limiting some student's ability to access higher level tasks. For example, in a living environment lesson on asexual vs sexual reproduction, teachers provided visual aids, graphic organizers and chunking strategies for reading non-fiction. In a geometry lesson with an aim, "Why the Law of Cosign is necessary?" the teacher presented a video clip and used colored chalk and chart paper to model mathematical concepts.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills across grades and subjects.

Impact

The school's purposeful curricular decisions build coherence, and data-driven task refinements promote cognitive engagement and college and career readiness for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Lesson plans are consistently aligned to Common Core Learning Standards, requiring students to cite evidence, analyze information, develop claims and counter claims, and apply concepts to solve real-world problems. For example, a review of an earth science lesson plan required students read in pairs and analyze information from a text to draw a conclusion based on their findings. In a living environment lesson, students were required to work in pairs to compare five aspects with an organism that reproduces sexually with one that reproduces asexually. In an English language arts lesson plan, students worked together to create three dimensional representations of imagery from an eighteenth century text, *Sinners in the Hands of Angry God*. Using text evidence, students then presented their artistic representations, while defending claims to the class.
- Department teams meet each Tuesday and Wednesday to review unit plans and student assessments to collaborate on revisions to lesson plans. Department teams receive support from Generation Ready coaches, using Webb's Depth of Knowledge, the Danielson Framework for Teaching and Tri-State rubrics to ensure alignment and curriculum modification. Teachers use protocols to review student work and for analyzing gaps in proficiency.
- Teachers articulated the school's instructional focus of increasing literacy skills and how departments adapt unit plans and instructional strategies to address student deficiencies. A review of curriculum documents, across subject areas, revealed this focus. For example, a social studies unit included complex primary source texts strategies in the use of textual evidence to support a claim. A unit plan on the topic of nutrition in a health class required students read informational texts and draw conclusions about the relationship between health conditions and eating habits. Units reviewed include specific modifications and scaffolds for English language learners and students with special needs. For example, teachers' plans include flexible student grouping, varied level texts and visual aids and graphic organizers.

Findings

The school is developing in its use of grading policies and common assessments to measure and communicate student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas. Assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding across classrooms.

Impact

As grading practices are implemented inconsistently across classrooms, students are not always clear regarding how their progress has been measured. In addition, varied use of checks for understanding and the inconsistent use of student self-assessment, hinders the development of effective instructional adjustments in some classes.

Supporting Evidence

- Although students articulated how teachers use rubrics to assess them, their understanding of how the feedback process helps them move toward mastery varied, due to a lack of consistency of quality feedback and individual goals in core content areas. In science and English language arts lessons, students gave and received peer feedback on classwork. Students however, could not articulate how revisions of their own work improved their work.
- Across classrooms, teacher's use of formative assessment was inconsistent and strategies for checking understanding were limited. For example, in science lessons teachers assessed group work using a rubric. Teachers circulated the classroom and provided feedback on paired assignments. Across grades and subjects, teacher lesson plans included exit tickets. However, not all teachers made use of the summary activity. In math lessons, teachers asked whole class questions, with few students showing understanding before moving on to new material.
- The Measures of Student Learning team, along with school leaders discussed the use interim assessment data to determine areas of focus and actionable steps required to address needs. The school's practice of capturing data and modifying curricula however is emerging, and the identified strategies were not consistently seen across classrooms. For example, while the math department identified inference and citing evidence as an area of focus, strategies to support students in this area was not evident in the classroom.
- Although the school has implemented a school-wide grading policy, including six elements: homework, all assessments, projects/labs classwork, participation and notebook checks, the policy was not consistently understood by students. Not all students were able to articulate how their grades or progress was factored.

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, professional collaborations that promote achievement of school goals. Distributive leadership structures are in place so that teachers have built leadership capacity.

Impact

Teacher teams are aiding in the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards and strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers. Teachers are included in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet three times per week in department teams. Mondays', teachers meet to review curriculum and ensure units and lessons are aligned to standards and designed to address student needs. Teachers use Common Core Learning Standards, Webb's Depth of Knowledge and the Danielson Framework for Teaching to guide them through process. Tuesdays' meetings are dedicated to increasing student participation through questioning. Teachers develop interactive curriculum and lessons to promote student-to-student discussion and collaborative approaches to learning. Wednesdays' team meetings are dedicated to interim assessment and review of student work. Department teams use baseline assessments and follow protocols to identify student skills and deficiency trends and implications for planning and instruction going forward.
- In a science department team meeting, teachers collaborated in subject pairs, using the Danielson rubric and Webb's Depth of Knowledge wheel and lesson planning templates to design lessons to incorporate Common Core anchor standard 1: Citing text evidence, higher order questions and discussion techniques. Health and physical education teachers, working with a unit plan on the topic of mental and emotional health, collaborated on a lesson plan aligned to the school's goals and instructional focus. Together they selected a text and a series of text based questions to promote higher order thinking skills and discussion.
- Teacher team leaders facilitate all department meetings and attend bi-weekly team leader meetings with administration. Department team meeting topics and agendas are planned collaboratively to address school goals, student data and teacher practice trends based on administrator feedback. Teacher leaders spoke to how collaborating with administration has led to a change in culture and contributed to teachers having a more active role in the direction of the school. For example, teachers spoke to how they worked collaboratively to design the school's new professional learning cycle.