



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Arts and Technology**

**High School M494**

**122 Amsterdam Avenue  
Manhattan  
NY 10023**

**Principal: Anne Geiger**

**Date of review: November 21, 2014  
Reviewer: Eva Ostrum**

## The School Context

Arts and Technology is a high school with 588 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 31.3% Black, 60.7% Hispanic, 2.6% White, and 4.3% Asian students. The student body includes 12.2% English language learners and 20.7% special education students. Boys account for 68% of the students enrolled and girls account for 32%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013 - 2014 was 81%.

## 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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</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>Developing</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>Developing</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Developing</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>Focus</b>	<b>Developing</b>

## Area of Celebration

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

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations regarding elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching as well as the importance of the school's instructional focus, and are developing professional development supports and a system of accountability for teachers. The school is implementing systems to provide feedback to families regarding student progress toward meeting college readiness expectations. Feedback and guidance supports are developing the level of detail and clarity needed to help prepare students for the next level.

### Impact

Teachers are beginning to share an awareness of the school's instructional focus, and structures are developing to provide feedback to families and guidance/advisement supports to students regarding student progress toward meeting expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders shared that the school has identified literacy and accountable talk as two points of focus, and teachers confirmed that school leaders consistently communicate high expectations regarding the Danielson Framework for Teaching as well as these areas of focus. School leaders are in the process of establishing an accountability system for teachers as the school works towards implementation of its instructional focus. For example, the principal is implementing protocols for common planning time so that teacher attendance and participation at these meetings can be confirmed.
- School leaders partner with the network to provide teachers with support aligned to the school's literacy focus. For example, teachers in the English language arts and social studies departments were given the opportunity to observe a network literacy coach model effective questioning strategies aligned with the school's accountable talk initiative. Teachers who observed the modeling confirmed that they benefited from it.
- Students spoke of benefiting from the school's Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) classes, and parents shared that the school takes their children to college fairs and on visits to college campuses. However, parents stated that there is inconsistency in the communication regarding the college search and application process, and that they must seek out this information from the school themselves.

## Area of Focus

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

A minority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach. Teacher teams are in the process of building an inquiry process to analyze assessment data. Distributed leadership structures are developing to support leadership capacity building.

### Impact

As the use of an inquiry approach is developing across teacher teams, teacher team work does not typically result in improved teacher practice or progress toward goals for groups of students. Teachers are not consistently included in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams are beginning to analyze student work using a protocol that was introduced in the English language arts department. For example, teachers from the English language arts department modeled how to use the protocol to analyze student work for their colleagues from other departments. However, other teacher teams have not yet incorporated an inquiry approach in their teacher team work.
- Teachers have used common planning time that school leaders have created in the schedule to examine student data from Regents assessments. Teachers described this as an opportunity to look at past successes and failures, although they did not provide examples of how this work has improved teacher practice or progress toward goals for students.
- School leaders are creating leadership opportunities for teachers in specific areas in which they see teacher strengths. For example, teachers conducted professional development for their colleagues on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). However, the principal stated that the majority of the new teachers in the building are also new to the profession, which makes it difficult to engage them in leadership roles.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty are in the process of aligning curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrating the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks inconsistently emphasize rigorous habits and/or higher-order thinking skills for all learners and do not consistently reflect planning to provide students with access to the curricula and tasks.

### Impact

As curricula and tasks are inconsistently aligned to the Common Core, they do not always emphasize rigorous habits or higher-order skills for all learners. Due to inconsistent planning for refinements to meet the needs of the learners in the school, student cognitive engagement and academic growth is impeded.

### Supporting Evidence

- Some students have access to curricular supports around the classroom that provide literacy scaffolding as part of the literacy initiative, although lesson plans across content areas do not yet consistently show evidence of planning to integrate literacy into instruction. For example, in an English as a second language lesson, visual aids were included to provide information for students on the habits of effective reading. However, an English language arts lesson plan expected students to use alliteration in their writing, but did not describe how the teacher would clearly define the stylistic literary device.
- School leaders shared that the school is in the process of aligning curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards. The school has implemented the research-based Carnegie Learning curriculum in the math department, and academic tasks in the math department are beginning to show evidence of this focus on alignment. For example, in a geometry class, the lesson plan incorporated several of the Standards for Mathematical Practice from the Common Core Learning Standards, such as Standard 5: Use appropriate tools strategically, and Standard 6: Attend to precision. However, the school has not yet implemented fully developed curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards in social studies or science.
- Lesson plans reflected inconsistent planning to provide access to students with disabilities and English language learners. For example, although a social studies lesson plan included a section on differentiation, an English language arts class did not.

**Findings**

School leaders believe that students learn best when they focus on literacy, expand their vocabulary, and engage in meaningful discussion prompted by rigorous questioning. Teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula, and are beginning to reflect coherence with this set of beliefs. Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula, and student work products and discussion reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

**Impact**

A lack of coherence in teaching practices and aligned to the curricula hinders student growth towards learning goals. Inconsistency in teacher practice leads to uneven engagement in appropriately challenging tasks and discussions, and uneven demonstration of higher-order thinking skills in student work products, including the work of English language learners and students with disabilities.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school recently launched an instructional focus that includes introducing students to relevant vocabulary at the outset of a lesson. In one social studies classroom observed, the teacher asked students to define the term non-political revolution. Students responded, “A religious revolution,” and “A social revolution.” The teacher’s introduction of this relevant vocabulary set the stage for the rest of the lesson, in which the class was focusing on the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution as two examples of a non-political revolution. In another social studies classroom, however, the teachers did not address vocabulary at the start of class. Students in this class expressed confusion about the terms deity and Enlightenment, and the teachers repeatedly defined the terms as they circulated around the room.
- In three Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) classrooms observed, both teachers interacted with students and provided support. However, they did so as two independent agents in the classroom, without the use of established co-teaching strategies that might have provided targeted instructional support. For example, in an English language arts classroom, one teacher discussed the PowerPoint slides, while the second teacher periodically interjected comments from the back of the classroom.
- School leaders emphasize the importance of teachers using accountable talk to engage students in classroom discussion. In some cases, teachers were observed using this strategy to push student thinking and discussion. For example, in a math classroom, a student provided a correct response, and the teacher asked the student to justify his thinking. Across classrooms, however, students were not observed pushing their own thinking in class or peer-peer discussions. For example, in an English language arts classroom, a teacher asked a series of questions, and proceeded to provide the answers before students had an opportunity to respond.

**Findings**

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments that are loosely aligned with the school's curricula. The school does not use common assessments to measure over time student progress towards goals. Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices do not reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

**Impact**

Teacher practice provides limited feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement, and teachers inconsistently use common assessments to measure student progress. Since teachers do not use formative data to make effective adjustments to lessons, students miss out on opportunities to address misconceptions or gaps in understanding.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school is beginning to implement and analyze the results of common assessments to measure student progress. For example, the principal shared that teachers have administered the reading Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) Performance Series assessment to all students, and plan to analyze results to inform planning for curricula and instruction.
- During the months of September and October of 2014, teachers met during professional assignment periods to analyze June 2013 Regents for those students scoring 55-64. Teachers gathered items skills analysis data. Using the Common Core Learning Standards as a reference, teachers have begun to look at how they might revise and refine unit plans to meet identified student need.
- Across classrooms, teachers do not consistently check for understanding in a way that would allow them to make effective adjustments to lessons to meet the needs of all learners. For example, in a social studies classroom, student groups shared their collaborative findings with the class, thus enabling the teacher to check for understanding across the classroom. However, in a math classroom, discussions with several students revealed broad misconceptions regarding the steps to calculate solutions to problems, with student responses varying in accuracy around the room. In this class, the teacher circulated around the classroom to confer with student groups, but did not adjust instruction despite the formative data that indicated a lack of understanding of the content. Instead, the private conferencing continued while numerous students continued to misapply concepts and formulae.