



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Repertory Company High School

High School M531

**123 West 43rd Street
New York
NY 10036**

Principal: Manuel Urena

**Date of review: March 6, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Caron Martin**

The School Context

Repertory Company is a high school with 236 students from grade nine through grade twelve. The school population comprises 44% Black, 44% Hispanic, 8% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 19% of the students enrolled and girls account for 81%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.0%.

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	Celebration	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	Additional Findings	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	Additional Findings	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	Focus	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

All curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Through consistent planning for higher order thinking strategies all learners are provided opportunities to use rigorous habits in order to demonstrate their thinking, including ELLs and SWDs.

Impact

All students experience a meaningful curriculum that promotes authentic writing, complex problem solving and a chance to develop talents which showcase their learning in multiple ways. Through careful consideration of student needs when selecting and adapting curricula that is CCLS aligned, all students, including those with disabilities and English Language Learners are engaged in academic tasks which emphasize rigorous habits across grades and subject areas.

Supporting Evidence

- Repertory designs, reviews and adjusts curriculum utilizing Atlas Rubicon, a web based curriculum mapping software which enables teachers to develop cross-curricular units, vertical/horizontal and common core alignment. Upon review of a Living Environment unit plan students are required to develop an argument to support or refute a hypothesis using data. A Language Arts unit plan, students are required to cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, thereby developing a skill across content areas and in varying contexts.
- All lesson plans, demonstrated instructional coherence across classrooms visited with purposeful planning incorporating sections for Criteria for Success, Learning Intention, Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Level 3-4 questions and Accountable Talk tools.
- In reviewing lesson plans, eight out of eight indicated differentiation strategies, specific to the content area, for students with disabilities, English language learners and the bottom one-third. Specific examples include: peer assistance from a student facilitator to work one on one with students while in small group, guided questions for some students, heterogeneous small group instruction, visual learning tools and pair-share reading to aid in the development of DOK questions by students.
- Repertory requires all students to engage in grade level research projects aligned to the common core learning standards. Through grade level scaffolds, students are able to build their research skills over the course of their high school career. The use of evidentiary writing is demonstrated throughout their writing in all subjects. Upon review of multiple curricula materials, such strategies as Checkpoint #1: Prior Knowledge, Questioning Hinge Point Challenge, and explicitly teaching academic vocabulary were all included as supports to increase students' ability to thoughtfully respond to written prompts and essay topics.

Area of Focus

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

All teachers are engaged in collaborative professional development teams focusing on implementation of school wide goals. The 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, however the use of protocols for student work and assessment analysis varies across grade level and content area teacher teams.

Impact

Through continuous analysis of student work products and pedagogy, teachers are able to demonstrate a shared understanding and use of strategies resulting in increased achievement for all learners. However, the uneven use of teachers leading and facilitating teacher team work results in unclear application of protocols that would lead to teachers making key decisions about school improvement.

Supporting Evidence

- In reviewing approximately ten sets of 30 minute team meeting minutes from the Math/Science, Social Studies/English and Performing Arts teams meeting content reflects a focus on both administrative logistics and academic improvement, such as determining when (month/day) to collect thesis statements creating school-wide coherence to discussing the learning needs of specific groups of students.
- As observed, teacher teams analyze student work, generate student data, set SMART goals, with the objective of closing the achievement gap for all students by focusing on the Common Core. Teachers reviewed work from an advanced ELL student using an established protocol. They then used the specific work to determine targeted strategies for individuals and groups of students. The team was able to discuss the increased gains in writing proficiency for the bottom one-third sub-group through consistent application of the inquiry process. Grade level teacher teams collaborate on the design and implementation of "Grade Level Research Projects" for students they share across the grade and consider how to ensure representation of the Common Core instructional Shifts across content areas, through the Grade Level Research Projects. Each research project requires students to use text based evidence when supporting claims using information gathered from non-fiction and informational content sources.
- 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. Over the course of the school year, inter-visitation topics focused providing small group instruction while others focused on identifying ways teachers are successfully using accountable talk strategies.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, pedagogy is aligned to the curricula and demonstrates a shared school-wide belief about how students learn best, through giving them the tools to succeed both individually and within groups while recognizing everyone learns in different ways, informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and school wide collaboration. Teaching strategies provide all learners opportunities to demonstrate high levels of reflection, engagement and ownership.

Impact

The coherence of teacher beliefs supports all students to be engaged in cognitively challenging tasks across classrooms. Student work products demonstrate higher order thinking and reflection, fostering student ownership and extending learning opportunities for all.

Supporting Evidence

- Webb's Depth of Knowledge level 3 and 4 prompts are addressed in all lesson plans for classrooms observed. In a Living Environment class, students were observed freely discussing how mutations affect the process of natural selection while in an 11th grade Theater History class, students were observed using DOK level 2 and 3 questions to discuss Commedia dell'Arte performances by their peers.
- Across all classrooms visited, articulated teacher strategies and small group instruction demonstrated instructional coherence aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. In all classrooms visited, the use of DOK 2, 3 and 4 level stems, students working in small groups or pairs as well as displayed and stated criteria for success in multiple places were observed.
- Repertory students are provided multiple entry points across content areas and grade level through the use of the E-Portfolio, utilizing visual tools when creating their own DOK questions, demonstrating content knowledge and mastery through performance and accessing student facilitators to reteach/explain challenging content. Such practice aligns with Repertory's Core Instructional Principles of expecting students to learn by doing, always providing the end goal as well as steps to improve and ensuring teaching decisions are intentional and reflective to improve student outcomes.
- Upon reviewing ten students E-Portfolio and other work products, high order thinking skills and rigor were demonstrated through such tasks as stating an argument for how to solve a quadratic equation, identifying impacts of imperialism in Africa and discussing the reasoning for using one mathematical strategy over another.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across all classrooms, teachers and students use a variety of formative and summative assessment practices to provide students with meaningful actionable feedback. Through the systematic use of varied checks for understanding across grades and content areas, all students are aware of next steps for increased mastery and achievement.

Impact

All teachers develop a broad picture of their students' strengths and areas for growth and use this information to adjust curriculum resulting in informed decisions that positively impact student progress across all classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- Atlas Rubicon provides teachers with customized reports that illustrate any gaps between the targeted standards and assessed standards in student progress. Teacher teams use these item-skills analysis reports to work towards closing the gap during their grade and content team meetings.
- Teachers also identify criteria for success displayed in all classrooms based on skill/project specific mastery as well as supporting documents provided to students during individual and group work time. Such documents include visual supports/posters while others were graphic organizers made available to students if they chose to use them. Students were observed referring to posters around classrooms when completing tasks or checking in with partners to gain greater understanding of the content.
- Repertory Company uses E-Portfolios for all students, enabling teachers to assess student work as a school community while empowering students to set goals and reflect on their progress. Student work in E-Portfolios are used during student led conferences to not only reflect on the progress of their learning but also as a way to articulate to parents and teachers how they learn best. Additionally, students utilize E-Portfolio to seek and provide peer feedback. During the student meeting, all students stated they not only receive feedback from their teachers and one another across grades, but that they also seek feedback from family members, friends and others outside the school community through the E-Portfolio system.
- During teacher team meetings, as evident in team meeting minutes, teachers collaboratively design or adjust rubrics to provide students actionable feedback based upon the task rubric; "Nia, 4.5/5. You did a good job interpreting the documents to support your thesis.... Next time I suggest you include more historical evidence", "Neah, 10/10. (Warm) all your work is shown correctly and step by step. (Cool) For part C please explain in details why the speed is slowing down and what does it have to do with velocity and acceleration."

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and teachers communicate high expectations to parents and families in a variety of ways. Through the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, school staff sustains school wide expectations that inform instructional guidance and support preparing students for the next level.

Impact

Clear expectations and communication result in students, their families, and all teachers having a deep personal investment in the success of every student informed by systematic progress checks resulting in clear next steps leading to improved learning for all students. .

Supporting Evidence

- The principal sends an Administrative Bulletin, via email, every week to staff members. This bulletin highlights important information captured through instructional tips connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, teacher team meeting minutes, and weekly announcements. Additionally, these expectations are reinforced through the online teacher portal.
- Repertory has adopted eight Core Instructional Principles, posted throughout the school community which serve as expectations for both teachers and students; *Professional development only matters if it translates from paper to practice, driving real improvements to student learning and Rigor: An expectation that students will demonstrate success with consistent high standards for academic achievement*, to name a few.
 - In all classrooms visited, teachers had posted their expectations through articulated learning intentions and essential questions. Classroom expectations were posted as well.
- When asked what the school values, parents overwhelmingly stated, “The school values our children’s education and empowering them for the future. Teachers are role models and the school pushes students to take AP Courses.” Parents also stated that they receive monthly progress checks in addition to utilize “parent friendly” Pupil Path to track student progress.
- During the student meeting, all students stated they receive feedback on their work “all the time from every teacher.” Feedback varies from Pupil Path entries, rubrics and statements on submitted writing assignments and drafts through each student’s E-Portfolios, which all students have from ninth grade through twelfth grade. Another student stated, “You always know what is expected through our rubrics and the learning intentions; they tell us the criteria for success.
- Parents receive monthly newsletters from the school. Enclosed in each newsletter is an additional “Parent Institute” newsletter specifically for parents of high school students that provides the parent community with strategies to help support academic growth of their children such as using a project board to help manage deadlines, motivating teens to write by encouraging them to share their writing and steps that help teens identify and understand key concepts in text.