

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Harvest Collegiate High School

High School 02M534

**34 West 14 Street
Manhattan
NY 10011**

Principal: Catherine Burch

Dates of review: December 10, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Marisol Bradbury

The School Context

Harvest Collegiate High School is a high school with 232 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 20% Black, 56% Hispanic, 17% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 25% special education students. Boys account for 44% of the students enrolled and girls account for 56%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013 - 2014 was 92.0%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core

<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</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	Developing
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	Proficient

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	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.	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

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

Teacher teams consistently examine and analyze student work and results of assessments. Distributive leadership structures provide teacher voice and capacity building.

Impact

The work of teacher teams and teacher leaders has resulted in improved pedagogy and assessment instruments as well as progress toward meeting school goals to improve reading and writing.

Supporting Evidence

- Members of the English department identify learning goals aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the New York Performance Standards Consortium Performance Assessment: Literary Analysis. Teachers focus on evidence quality, claims, and close reading, resulting in improved student ability to write argumentative essays.
- Members of the English department look at student work to evaluate tasks. During the meeting observed, teachers discussed the result of a student's pre-writing activity. At the end of the meeting, the presenting teacher agreed on implementing sentence starters and the cognitive apprenticeship model to help the student focus on the task and write on demand.
- Teacher leaders stated that they create time in their department meetings to share best practices, such as close reading and journal entry strategies. They also help colleagues reflect on their practice by implementing the consultancy and tuning protocol in their conversations.
- Teacher leaders stated that across departments, teachers have a voice by identifying goals for the year. For example, the English department focuses on close reading, the science department focuses on understanding and interpreting data, the social studies department focuses on the "core stories", and the math department focuses on student benchmarks.
- Teacher leaders, who represent each subject area, meet with the principal to discuss the professional development plan, policy, and school goals.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

While teachers articulate a set of beliefs about the habits of mind and heart and instructional support that includes questioning and discussion techniques, the use of strategic entry points and extensions that promote deep reasoning and discussion vary across classrooms.

Impact

Across classrooms, curricula extensions support high performing students to produce meaningful work products. However, there are missed opportunities for students with disabilities to engage in appropriate challenging tasks and demonstrate high levels of participation.

Supporting Evidence

- In one math class where students were grouped homogeneously, one group of students was not able to articulate the purpose of the lesson or the mathematical concepts they were working on, with the exception of one student who attempted to help his peers. While there was a special education teacher who monitored the work of these students regularly, all students worked on the same activity sheet. According to the lesson plan, students who were identified as meeting and exceeding standards had the opportunity to complete a second activity sheet.
- Across classrooms, students participated in class discussion by responding to teacher-generated questions. Students responded to one another in only one global history class, in which they responded to the prompt: "Why do we value private property more than human life?"
- Across classrooms observed, student writing was focused on the use of activity sheets and organizers to share brief descriptions and summaries of concepts and documents.
- In a chemistry lab aimed at helping students infer about the internal structure of the atom, the tasks did not allow students to make a connection between the concepts and real world applications.
- While the goal of independent reading time is to promote engagement, stamina, fluency, and self-awareness, there is a large gap between high and low performing students. In the three English classes observed, some students logged more than 40 books, while others had not logged any or had logged comic books only.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Teachers are in the process of aligning curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards. Academic tasks that emphasize higher order skills, rigorous habits, and planning to provide all students access to the curricula, vary in quality across classrooms.

Impact

Across grades and content areas, the curricular and planning decisions to build coherence and alignment to standards and performance based assessments vary, thus preventing consistent emphasis of rigorous habits and equal access to the curricula by all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The Socio-Scientific Thinking Course exposes students to the human impact on the environment. The lesson planning for this course incorporates problem-solving real life issues of interest. Topics include climate change, water pollution, extinction, and farming, among many others. Tasks include collaborative testing, analysis, research, and drawing of conclusions. While these tasks were aligned to the curriculum, the Common Core, and final assessments, this was not the norm in other classrooms.
- While a review of the course description for lower and upper classes reflects rigorous ideas that promote higher order skills, a review of lesson plans shows an emphasis on graphic organizers and activity sheets that elicit low level thinking. Additionally, the absence of curriculum maps and unit plans aligned to content standards and the Common Core prevents teachers from making purposeful decisions.
- The course description of an introductory biology class encompasses the investigation and resolution of several case studies, such as crime labs and myth busters aimed to explore the underlying molecular mysteries that build up to create life. Students are expected to conduct experiments, debate conclusions, and research sources for answers. However, the tasks ask students to cut paper shapes resembling various DNA molecules and paired them with their respective bases in order to form a strand. The activity sheet includes low level questions such as, "What base does adenine pair with?" or "What base does guanine pair with?" These tasks failed to cognitively engage all learners in the class. In addition, the absence of a plan inhibited the teacher from providing a thoughtful rigorous lesson aligned to the description of the course.
- The course description of an Algebra II course called Society and the Environment states that students will mathematically model human demographics and the environment and utilize various functions to interpret societal and environmental trends, as well as apply algebraic tools to answer questions, to which there are no definitive answers. However, the lesson plans include activities such as cutting out and matching cards, and filling in the blanks, which do not allow students to apply algebraic tools to answer questions to which there are no definite answers.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school uses assessments aligned to the school curricula, Habits of Mind, and creates common assessments and rubrics to determine student progress.

Impact

Teachers provide actionable feedback to students regarding student achievement towards the core Habits of Mind and the analysis of assessment results inform instructional adjustments.

Supporting Evidence

- School wide common formative and summative assessments are administered at the school level every six to eight weeks. As a result of these assessments, the school created an Art Therapy course for 15 students, who needed academic intervention and counseling. The social worker and a special education teacher co-teach this class in order to provide targeted academic and socio-emotional support.
- After analyzing data from summative assessments, the social studies teachers adopted a rubric for assessing argumentative writing. The rubric includes habit of perspective, habits of evidence, habit of connection, and habit of voice. Through the use of this rubric, teachers promote the habits of mind and ensure students develop insightful compelling arguments.
- English teachers use a collective assessment protocol to identify students who meet, approach, and do not meet skills regarding close reading. As a result of the analysis, teachers identify and implement strategies, such as adding structures to seminar, practice close reading, partnering, and grouping.
- The school uses a rubric starting at "No Evidence" "Beginning" "Approaching Gateway" and "Gateway". This rubric is aligned to the Common Core and provides coherence over four years of high school. Students entering 11th grade move to "Approaching Collegiate" and "Collegiate" levels. Outstanding work is identified as the "Cum Laude" level. During conversations, students stated that the use of rubrics helps them understand the learning and work necessary to master the skills.

Findings

School leaders, teachers, and teacher teams communicate high expectations for all students connected to college and career readiness, offer feedback to families, and provide guidance to prepare students for the next level.

Impact

Structures and systems of communication support students and their families to understand academic progress so that students prepare for college and career.

Supporting Evidence

- Parent meetings provide information about the school philosophy and expectations. For example, parents attend the open houses, tours, and visiting days. Once students are accepted, parents participate in the welcome meeting where they are made aware of the reading expectations, extracurricular activities, and Gateway and Capstone projects. Parent attendance at parent-teacher conference ranges between 62% and 86%.
- The Capstone is a performance assessment required for graduation in English, history, math, and science. Students present a literary analysis, historical research paper, scientific lab, and complex math problem to at least three assessors.
- Parents shared that their children develop college level reading habits and their vocabulary has increased significantly due to the amount of reading they do in school.
- Students are offered 57 academic credits in four years. Moreover, the school offers College Now courses and extra-curricular activities, including the project arts, music, art, dance, chess, drama, chorus, basketball, and stepping-up tap.
- Students participate in orientation sessions where they become aware of their expectations and connect with their advisors. Through advisory, students engage in student-led conferences. All 11th grade students participate in a weekly collegiate futures class where they explore college options and expectations. As a result of these programs, student daily attendance is 92%.