



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

A. Philip Randolph High School

High School M540

**443 West 135th Street
Manhattan
NY 10031**

Principal: David Fanning

Date of review: April 16, 2015

Lead Reviewer: Fred Walsh

The School Context

A. Phillip Randolph Campus High School is a high school with 1360 students from grade nine through grade twelve. The school population comprises 31% Black, 61% Hispanic, 1% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 86.0%.

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	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	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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused.

Impact

Teacher collaborations promote the achievement of school-wide goals and result in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers articulated how they share best instructional practices connected to targeted areas of focus identified by analysis of student data. Teachers have begun conducting structured inter-visitations which provides feedback from peers and improvement in practice. Teacher teams produce two artifacts as feedback to their departmental assistant principal. For example, after visiting a colleague's 9th grade math classroom, a teacher implemented a strategy where students come to the board, show and explain their work, then ask questions of the class. This practice was observed during the review which successfully engaged all students.
- Department teams meet weekly and review samples of student work products. Students who scored lowest provide teachers with evidence of how tasks, rubrics and instruction need modification to address student's struggles. For example, the science department's item analysis reveal student struggle with scientific diagram analysis. The department revised units to include more frequent use of diagrams in classroom tasks and activities.
- Instructional strategies, determined by teacher teams and related to school-wide areas of focus, were seen in all classrooms. For example, in all classrooms visited, students were using, analyzing and annotating informational text.
- Math teachers implemented a peer-assessment protocol they titled *Two Stars and a Wish*, where students exchange papers and provide feedback with two positive comments and one area to improve. Teachers articulated positive impacts peer feedback has had on student outcomes. For example, a teacher spoke to students using peer feedback to correct mistakes, resulting in their using alternative problem solving strategies. Additionally, in written tasks, peer feedback results in improved use of key vocabulary terms.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and to a set of beliefs about how students learn best. Student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Uneven facilitation of questions and discussions resulted in inconsistent student engagement and limited opportunities for all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners, to participate and demonstrate higher order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- In classrooms visited, questioning strategies to promote higher levels of student thinking and discussion were inconsistent. For example in a earth science lesson, teachers questions were low level, asked in rapid fire and provided little wait time. Some students called out or raised hands to indicate understanding while the majority of the class, including students with disabilities did not participate. Accountable talk prompts were posted in most classrooms; however there was little evidence of student-to-student discussion. In the majority of classes observed, teachers repeated student questions and answers instead of redirecting their responses back to the class to promote student thinking and discussion.
- Student work products inconsistently demonstrate high level thinking or rigorous work habits. In an Advanced Placement (AP) Language and Composition class, students worked independently to find words in a text from a list provided. They then circled the words and chose one to write in a sentence. Student responses varied from no response to a complete sentence. In an Integrated Co Teaching (ICT) living environment lesson on evolution, students were required to look at a diagram and respond to what they saw. Teachers circulated during the activity however not all students completed the assignment. In an earth science lesson, the do now required that students answer one multiple choice question, with a single word answer, in five minutes. In an anatomy class time ran out, and as a result students did not have opportunity to start or complete the writing task / assessment of the lesson.
- In a Common Core Algebra class students completed a do now problem, requiring them to graph a quadratic function. A student was called on to come to the SMARTboard, show her work and elicit questions and answers from the class, while the teacher evaluated the presentation. In an English language arts class, students read and annotated how the author depicts desperation and human nature in the book, *Night*. Students were paired and asked to share notes. In the majority of classes however, instruction was teacher-centered, with uneven levels of cognitive engagement.

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 Standards. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

Impact

Teachers make purposeful decisions to build coherence and promote cognitive engagement and comprehension of curricula of all students ensuring career and college readiness across classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- Curriculum documents reviewed consistently differentiate materials and strategies to address diverse learning needs. Lesson plans across grades and subjects address learning styles, ability level and social/emotional factors. Plans demonstrate thoughtful planning and consider individual attributes when assigning groups, providing resources and presenting material. For example, a geometry lesson on applying circle rules specified pairs of students and matched accordingly to ability and awareness of cultural heritage. In an English language arts lesson, students were paired based on a recent summative assessment and teacher's classroom observations.
- Unit and lesson plans reviewed consistently incorporate the school's instructional focus on literacy across content areas and align to Common Core Learning Standards. Tasks require students to read complex texts, annotate, cite text evidence, analyze information, develop claims and counter claims, and apply concepts to solve real-world problems. For example, a living environment unit titled, *The Effect of Smoking on Pregnancy*, incorporated a task requiring students read an article, and write a letter in response explaining the biological effects of smoking on the fetus. In an ICT English language arts class students were assigned an argumentative research essay, using multiple non-fiction texts as sources to support a position opposing or supporting the death penalty.
- Teachers meet once a week in department and grade teams to create and modify tasks and ensure they emphasize rigorous, higher order thinking skills. End of unit tasks and samples of student work displayed in the hallways and found in student portfolios were aligned to Common Core Learning Standards. For example, a literacy project on display, aligned to Common Core writing standards and the Regents thematic essay was designed to include multiple writing scaffolds and culminate in a final essay. Student work revealed a clear progression toward meeting standards.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teachers create assessments and use rubrics aligned to the school curricula providing students and one another with actionable feedback. Data from common assessments is used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Impact

The school's use of common assessments, data analysis and feedback allows teachers to determine student progress toward goals and adjust curricula and instruction accordingly to meet the needs of all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Student work products reviewed and posted on displays around the building are consistently graded using teacher-created rubrics. Teachers provide all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners with actionable feedback on how to improve their work. For example, a student's document-based essay in social studies indicated how a student could improve by analyzing all facts and be more thorough in his analysis.
- Students interviewed consistently spoke to the use of rubrics in their classes and how they are graded on homework assignments. They articulated how teachers confer with them to provide feedback to improve their work. Students explained how teachers allow students to use this feedback to re-submit work in order to show growth in their learning. Students also spoke to how they use rubrics during in-class writing assignments to peer- and self-assess, and how this process has helped them to become better writers by being able to give other students feedback.
- Three teacher teams were observed analyzing student assessments and work products to revise rubrics, tasks and teaching strategies. For example, the ninth grade math team looked at writing samples from their common summative assessment where students struggled most. Collaboratively, they determined that the rubric required revision to ensure fairness and accuracy in grading the task.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and careers. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students.

Impact

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

Supporting Evidence

- The school offers students a college and career preparatory experience through advanced course work in the academies of engineering, medicine and humanities. Upperclassmen have the opportunity to enroll in college courses through the City College of New York and Touro College. A tenth grade student, enrolled in an anatomy class described how the class is preparing him and motivating him to pursue a career in medicine.
- To support students and parents with owning their college decisions, the school has a dedicated college advisor who facilitates all college visits, annual college fairs, hosting college events for parents and coordination of *Naviance*, a web-based college application system. The school's website includes links to highlight all advanced placement and advanced level coursework offered at the school.
- Teachers across grades and subjects consistently communicate the school's instructional focus, which is also posted prominently in every classroom. Teachers celebrate student progress and achievement by exhibiting student work on bulletin boards throughout the building. Ninety percent of teachers surveyed in the most recent school survey agree or strongly agree that the principal makes clear to the staff his expectations for meeting instructional goals.
- The school's web-based grade reporting system, *PupilPath*, helps families and students stay informed on academic progress, how to improve on work and opportunities for additional support. All assignments, quizzes and tests are posted on the platform. Parents are informed of their child's performance and are recommended by teachers to attend after school, or Saturday tutoring, enrichment and college scholarship opportunities. 84% of parents take advantage of this online resource.
- Parents and students articulated the school's instructional focus and spoke to the school's high expectations for college and careers beyond high school. A tenth grade student described how his teachers consistently use rubrics and class grading policies to motivate him to improve his grades.