



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Manhattan Bridges High School

02M542

**525 W. 50th Street
Manhattan
NY 10019**

**Principal:
Mirza Sanchez Medina**

**Date of review: January 22, 2015
Lead Reviewer:
Hongying Shen**

The School Context

Manhattan Bridges High School is a high school with 525 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 100% Hispanic students. The student body includes 57% English language learners and 2.2% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 91%.

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	Focus	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	Additional Findings	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The school leaders and faculty ensure rigorous and coherent curricula in all subjects. The curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and are accessible for all students.

Impact

There is at least one argumentative writing unit in each subject across grades and rigorous habits and higher-order skills are implemented in all subjects to prepare students to be college and career ready.

Supporting Evidence

- The instructional cabinet and school leadership team developed the Comprehensive Educational Plan goals, which are aligned with the citywide instructional expectations (CIE), Danielson Framework for Teaching, Four Pillars, and the Common Core Learning Standards to guide teacher work in creating coherence in instruction across grade levels and subject areas, with a focus on rigor, critical thinking, and argumentative writing.
- The grade teams and department teams collaborate on developing and aligning nine to twelve grades units of study with the Common Core.. As a result, each subject has implemented at least one argumentative writing unit.
- The school leaders strategically integrate the training on instructional shifts in the school professional learning events. This was evidenced in the school professional development plan. This plan informs teachers across grades, subject areas how to implement rigorous habits and higher-order skills in the units, lessons so that all learners, including English language learners (ELLs), students with disabilities, and honor students are prepared, and are able to demonstrate their thinking in their argumentative writing.
- The school uses a general argumentative writing guide across grades and subjects, which includes guidelines for claims/positions, evidence, analyses, counterclaims, and links to argument. Each subject develops their argumentative writing projects based on the guidelines and scaffolds the writing process for all learners.
- A review of unit plans show that rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in the academic tasks. For example, the living environment writing unit, entitled “should we continue to develop and use food from genetically modified organisms (GMOs)?” requires students to give background information about GMOs. Students explain facts from the readings to cite evidence and state a position to develop a logical argument. The literacy in English language arts for ELLs’ unit requires ELLs to examine two texts to gain a deeper understanding of the importance of college education and as a final product, to make an informed argument, supported by evidence about the topic.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson framework for teaching and the instructional shifts, but some practices are test driven.

Impact

Across all classrooms, teaching practices reflect challenging learning tasks that invite students to explain their thinking. Teachers provide scaffolds for learning and every student is supported to master the skills and content.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the bilingual/dual language curricula, which are rooted in the belief that the mastery of communication skills in both English and the native language is the key to realize student fullest potential in a multicultural society. The school follows a translanguaging approach to language development and explicitly teaches students how to direct their own learning of bilingual academic skills and study habits for success in high school and college
- Across the vast majority of classrooms, lessons are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts, and planned with clear instructional outcomes, student to student interaction, focus on academic vocabulary and questioning and discussion techniques.
- All students are supported in the bilingual or dual-language classrooms and are provided with multiple entry points for learning. In a ninth grade bilingual Living Environment class, the teacher provided students with graphic organizers to help them compare and contrast mitosis and meiosis. An animation was shown for learning the process of meiosis. Students worked in small groups to discuss the similarities and differences between the types of cell divisions, with the graphs and the visual aid.
- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers provide high support for challenging tasks. In an ESL class visited, students worked in groups completing a double entry journal graph with guiding questions, which scaffold for synthesizing the two texts they read about Sonia Sotomayor and Hilda Solis. While in a health class, students were writing an argumentative essay on “Which is more important: talent or hard work?” following the argumentative writing guide with claims and counterclaims.
- In a tenth grade earth science class, the teacher applied Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels in the learning tasks: students recalled the basic knowledge about states of matter (DOK Level 1), predicted future changes of matter based on temperature (DOK Level 2) and created a graphic organizer of the different states of matter (DOK Level 4). The lesson was presented in both English and Spanish whenever necessary, with diagrams, graphs, images, and videos.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The school uses common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress toward goals across grades and subjects. Teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

Impact

The school consistently uses ongoing assessments across grades and subjects and analyzes student work to inform the development of school instructional focus. Teachers develop a picture of their students' strengths and areas for growth. This information is used to help teachers direct instructional strategies that help all students achieve their highest potential.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses the school-designed tests in math, English language arts (ELA), science, and Spanish to assess all ninth graders for effective programming. The English and ESL department also use a school-designed level-set assessments to know the ELL language abilities at the beginning of the school year to create a clear picture of ELL progress. The data is used to adjust instruction as they advance in grades.
- Each department conducts Mock Regents exams and analyzes the results to differentiate and adjust curriculum to allow all students multiple opportunities to meet the standards, thus preparing students for mastery in the Regents exams. The math teachers analyzed the Engage NY math modules and realigned the topic of quadratic equations in a logical and cohesive unit to adjust the state curriculum to student needs. To support ELLs in understanding written questions, teachers apply scaffolds of translation and the identification of cognates, and basic reading comprehension strategies, like annotation and think-aloud to support ELLs in understanding written questions.
- The school implements a 72-minute period per class program to accommodate the time all students, especially ELLs, need to apply their learning in the classrooms. During this period, they receive support as well as the ongoing and at the moment feedback to ensure mastery of the learning tasks. For example, the math department created a math problem solving protocol to guide student-learning process.
- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers do not just give a test and move on, but train students in using a Test Corrections Protocol in all subjects to identify the errors made and make corrections. They provide justification for a new answer, thus promoting student autonomy in studying for exams and engaging students to take ownership of learning to be better prepared for independence in college.
- Teachers use the content standards and Common Core Learning Standards to design exams and structure curriculum to include student preparation time for exams. For example, math teachers from all grades met and created two pacing models of three lessons + one-day review + one day assessment or two lessons in three days with one extra day for supporting skill development to meet student needs. Students use the "I Can ..." graphic organizer in all subjects, written in Spanish and English, to review the concepts learned and practice for mastery.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school leaders systematical and clearly communicate high expectations to the entire staff. The school's culture for learning supports and ensures that all students are prepared for the next level.

Impact

The school designed courses and programs enable all students, including English language learners and students with learning disabilities to complete advanced coursework and become college and career ready.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leaders communicate high expectations to the entire staff at the school conferences and department meetings, evidenced in the school's comprehensive professional development (PD) plan. The school vision and missions are shared in the school's instructional expectations guidebook, which focuses on teacher professional growth and responsibilities, curriculum development, and promotion of a positive and supportive school culture, the elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching.
- The school's high expectations are reflected in the designs of the program sequence, which enables all students to be on the pathway to college and career readiness. The program design includes four-year sequence of Engineering or two year sequence of Information Technology coursework, with work-based learning, four years of science and math coursework, four years of college and career seminars, Honors English, pre-calculus, and advanced placement courses in Spanish Literature, Spanish Language, English language, environmental science, macroeconomics, statistics, and calculus.
- Students take a college and career Readiness seminar once a week for all grades, ninth through twelfth. Students reflect on their current academic performance, set goals, and make action plans to attain their goals. All students participate in career awareness, job shadowing, and internship activities, which are built as part of their high school experience.
- Guidance counselors use a protocol to support all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities and meet with each student with an individualized programmer to help them on path to attain the highest Regents diplomas. All the committees and staff teams, including school quality, peer observation, department, grade, and youth development teams roll out the school-wide initiatives of reaching college readiness benchmarks collectively to ensure mutual accountability for the high expectations.
- College advisement team uses the College Access and Research in Action (CARA) model to create a comprehensive grade nine to twelve college readiness and advisement program. The college advisor, seminar teachers, and guidance counselors have established a college readiness culture and work with students, teachers, parents to ensure that every student is prepared for college and/or post-secondary college and career prep options.

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

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in structured inquiry teamwork, take leadership roles in creating a culture for learning, which strengthens instructional practice, and affect student achievement.

Impact

The school leaders promote teacher leadership and focus on improved student learning. Teachers constantly refine their practice and support one another through inquiry team work and peer visitations to affect student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leaders and the department teams work collaboratively to analyze the school data at the beginning of the year and set department goals and student learning benchmarks, grade-by-grade, regarding Common Core Learning Standards and ready students for the Common Core Regents. The professional development (PD) team, which is comprised of the principal, AP, teachers, and UFT representative sets agendas for the department and grade level teams to ensure school-wide instructional coherence and the team works on nine to twelve grades vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment with Common Core Learning Standards; argumentative writing units have been implemented across grades and subjects, for example.
- To strengthen teacher instructional capacity and promote the implementation of CCLS units, the PD team designed a PD session, where teachers brought their student writing samples of low, intermedia and high quality for analysis and learn how to give specific feedback for students to improve their argumentative writing in all subjects. The team produced a MLA style guide for all grades and a writing rubric for the school initiative. Native language arts CCLS aligned student writing portfolio revealed that teachers used graphic organizers and writing rubrics to guide student writing and gave feedback along the writing process.
- In keeping with the distributed leadership structure, a school quality team has been formed to join the cabinet in the effort to align teacher practice with Danielson Framework for Teaching, CIE, and CCLS and to ensure school-wide instructional coherence and to make decisions that would affect student learning across the school.
- Teachers initiated and formed a peer observation team to take the lead on facilitating the school peer observation rounds. At the team meeting visited, the teachers studied the results of the survey they conducted on line and the comments teachers shared after their peer observation. Some comments were “Learned new techniques on how to group students geared for open ended discussion,” “I saw how a talented teacher used difficult, primary sources for a very mixed class with great success” and “the visit, though short, was energizing.” The team discussed how to answer the challenge of ensuring follow-up when teachers do not have schedules that allow for easy connection and interaction.
- All teachers have completed at least one peer observation, with the objectives to foster a professional culture, share best practices, and support colleagues in implementing highly effective practice; thus affecting student learning across the school.