



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Central Park East

**High School M555
1573 Madison Avenue
Manhattan
NY 10029**

Principal: Bennett Lieberman

**Date of review: March 18, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Marjory Matthieu-Kodjovi**

The School Context

Central Park East is a High school with 459 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 25% Black, 63% Hispanic, 4% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 33% of the students enrolled and girls account for 67%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 93.0%.

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	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	Focus	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	Celebration	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:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training to support growth towards those expectations. School leaders and staff effectively communicate and partner with families to support students on their path to college and career readiness.

Impact

Clear expectations regarding professionalism, instruction, communication aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and professional development, result in a culture of mutual accountability. A system of reciprocal communication with parents results in partnerships that support student progress towards expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Parents shared that in collaboration with the school, parent workshops are given throughout the year around understanding high school academic requirements, promotion criteria, and graduation requirements. In addition, progress letters that are sent to them during the middle of each marking period highlight if their children are in jeopardy of failing a class or classes and the guidance counselor works with the families to devise a plan to support the student in achieving academic success.
- The school engages students in a four-year Seminar program. Students and administrators shared that in Freshman Seminar all ninth grade students participate in curricula that engages them in topics that address academic mindset, development of academic habits, fundamental and developmental critical thinking skills, study skills, college and career awareness and exploration, and peer mentoring sessions. Sophomore students concurred, that the sophomore and junior Seminar classes heavily emphasize college and career awareness and exploration. For example, a student shared that “The school and our teachers help us making connections between our current academic choices and performance, and post-secondary preparedness and make us realize that or face our options.” The senior Seminar is co-taught by an English teacher and the College Counselor, as part of a partnership with the College Bound Initiative. Both teacher and counselor work collaboratively with College Youth Leaders to assist students through the entire college application and financial aid application process.
- The school has developed the Peer Group Connections, a peer-to-peer mentorship program. Through their partnership with Center for Supportive Schools (CSS), 20 rising juniors are selected, after a rigorous application and interview process, to act as support to a new class of ninth grade students. Students shared that the application process provides them with a unified clear picture of expectations as well as feedback on how to meet expectations. The ninth grade students participate in peer mentoring in groups of 12 students with two peer mentors, one time a week for 52 minutes throughout the year and engage in activities that promote discussions around a variety of social-emotional and academic topics. The mentors and mentees remain together throughout the year.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classes, teachers use rubrics and create assessments directly aligned to the curricula in order to track, analyze, and understand student mastery. They use the data to adjust assessments and academic tasks.

Impact

The clear portrait of student mastery has caused teachers to adjust curriculum and instruction in order to increase student achievement; however, some targeted students are not yet consistently provided enough meaningful feedback.

Supporting Evidence

- Students, teachers, and administrators, shared that school wide the staff use SCUBA (Scan, Circle, Underline, Box, Annotate), a text annotation strategy that allows teachers to assess the level of students' comprehension of text. Other examples of common assessments include test correction strategies whereas summative assessment results are analyzed by student response so that teachers can adjust instruction to meet the needs of students. A mock Regents' Exam is scheduled with an Earth Science assignment, which includes a student self-assessment, and the entire math department uses Delta Math for practice with math skills and fluency.
- The English language arts (ELA) department uses both teacher-created assessment data, formal & informal, and standardized assessment data, Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) and Regents' exams, to inform instruction in both designing and redesigning units and lessons. For example, last year after administering a mid-line MOSL assessment, the ELA Department determined that students did not acknowledge counterclaims in their argumentative writing. To address this issue, each teacher revised his/her curriculum to include more extensive review on the elements of argument, with special focus on the importance of acknowledging counterpoints and the structure for doing so in a formal argumentative essay. The end-line MOSL exam results showed that the overwhelming majority of students were able to acknowledge counterpoints in their arguments. This year, in addition to reinforcing students' ability to acknowledge counterclaims, teachers are focusing on refutation.
- The school use of Double Entry Journals (DEJs), Google docs, and rubrics, for each grade level, consistently support students in understanding what they need to do and how they will get there, and allows staff to provide focused feedback to students.. Additionally, teachers and administrators shared that the use of DEJs serves as an instructional and assessment tool relative to the analysis of student writing on classroom formative and summarize assessments that is used in conjunction with Regents and Advanced Placement (AP) exams. Furthermore, in the vast majority of classrooms visited all academic tasks had an accompanying rubric that students use to know exactly what they have to do and how to evaluate their own work. Yet, although students are fully benefiting from meaningful feedback regarding progress in the midst of their struggle, some students shared that there are times that feedback does not always "extend their thinking".

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks, are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects, and are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Across all classrooms students demonstrate cognitive engagement and higher-order thinking through their participation in rigorous, curricula and academic tasks that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. All students have access to this rigor and are cognitively engaged, regardless of their performance level.

Supporting Evidence

- This year the English language arts department collaborated to ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Standards with a focus on argumentation and digital literacy skills, which required the integration of various non-fiction texts, as well texts in multiple mediums, resulting in curricula that now include a greater focus on argumentative writing and multi-modal project-based assessments. Administrators shared, “these new foci have significantly improved students’ ability to compose argumentative texts especially with regard to acknowledging counterclaims and their composition of texts across genres, such as essays, digital stories, movies, wiki pages, and blogs. Integration of the instructional shifts are evidenced in programming and instructional strategies that include Membean an Online Vocabulary Program, teaching digital literacy skills, individual writing conferences with students, close reading and analysis of a variety of texts, and incorporating a greater variety of discussion strategies.
- Across grades, the science department has worked to align labs to Common Core Standards by increasing the focus on using evidence from the lab data to support conclusions. Science classes all include “Scientific Literacy” components in which students read current event articles related to the content they are learning in class. For example in the ninth grade Earth Science and tenth grade Living Environment classes, students are using FRAMES, a research based content enhancement strategy, which enables them to organize their thoughts while taking class notes, analyzing data as a group, and/or presenting information to the class.
- Inquiry teams focus on improving the academic performance of the students performing in the lowest third. All teams are engaged in action research projects in which they focus on student assessment data and student work. This ongoing refinement strategy for curricula and academic tasks based on looking at student data and work is evidenced in universal access and cognitive engagement across classrooms. For example, the school has aligned all coursework in the Language Other Than English (LOTE) classes to NY State LOTE standards and it is scaffolded between units and within units to give students appropriate rigor in order for them to successfully synthesize information and skills for summative assessments and the Spanish LOTE exam at the end of their coursework. The passing rate for the Spanish LOTE exam has been above 90% for many years, and last year it was 100%.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching strategies strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports and extensions into the curricula and student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

Impact

All learners, including English language learners (ELLs) and student with disabilities (SWDs), are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

Across classrooms teachers use discussions and or Socratic seminars. Students learn how to use evidence to support a claim or argue multiple perspectives, create and use high level questions and discussion, have student choice, set deadlines for themselves, engage in real-world learning (internships, field trips, community service), academic enrichment, extra-curricular activities, are encouraged to respond to one another's mistakes/questions, and how to help each other.

- Across all classrooms, teachers use practices that provide multiple entry points, supports, and extensions to all students: modified student work i.e., printout of the week's lesson, revised or choice assessments, digital supports; group discussion (Socratic seminars, Jigsaw, parallel seminar), small guided groupings; scaffolding; modeling, student choice, as well as graphic organizers. Protocols such as turn-and-talk and how to review a unit are in place so that students have opportunities to engage in discussions. Visual images and various mediums of written texts are used often to support student learning and understanding. In math and science classes, students were able to articulate the protocol and use personal reflections.
- In the final session of a three-session lesson, eleventh grade ELA students created a web-based resource to showcase their knowledge and understandings of the novel *The Things They Carried*, by Tim O'Brien and used nonfiction texts related to the Vietnam War. Students engaged in a digital gallery and assessed each other's wiki pages. In small groups, students visited three other wiki pages and using a graphic organizer assessed the quality of the group's wiki page. They took notes, answered questions as to why they focused on the page, made suggestions for revisions, developed questions for the group, and commented on the strongest elements. Students stated, "The last DEJ was strong and had more in-depth analysis and made strong connections. The picture connects to the chapter and gives insight on what it was like in the field." Another student shared "the last DEJ was strong because it was able to give us a clear background of what is going on. Strong connections with what is happening. He talks about literary elements and all actions that are taking place." Both collaborative and independent assignments allowed students the ability to talk things out with their peers and challenged them to reach conclusions.
- A vast majority of teachers incorporated the use of technology such as SMART boards and laptops into their teaching, as support for all students including SWDs and ELLs. Students are strategically seated to allow students at different performance levels to work together. In a Humanities class, students were heterogeneously grouped to strengthen the skills of high achieving students and provide peer support for struggling students. In another class, some groups were altered so that the co-teacher worked specifically with the struggling group on specific skills or activities.

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 inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity and distributed leadership structures are embedded.

Impact

As a result of the collaborative teams, teachers continually make strong key decisions that support student improvement and strengthen teacher practice.

Supporting Evidence

- Department teams are run by teachers who serve as experts in content and facilitation. Administrators and staff shared that at the weekly grade level meetings teachers and guidance counselors alternate taking the lead “giving everyone the opportunity and experience of leading a meeting.” These meetings are driven by protocols and almost always include the observation of student work products. A teacher shared, “the leader, systematically follows a protocol which includes sharing relevant grade level events, challenges, successes, discussing students who are not being successful, and following up with student concerns from the prior week.”
- Teachers shared that they have doing lesson studies in all teams across all content areas. Teachers schedule these studies volunteer, and always use materials from the lessons. One teacher shared, “We introduce what we have been doing and look over the lesson, give each other feedback and have conversation about how it went how it can be improved, and have interdisciplinary conversations where domains overlap.” Another teacher shared, “teachers come with specific intentions ...I did this, how can I make it better and here is the student work ...this is what I saw and always help each other and think about how I am going to do that next week...is there anything I can do to improve my lesson next week...”
- Teachers reported that the administrators really support their professional learning by providing them with “time” so that they can continue scope and sequence work, planning, assessment design, and curriculum revision. In addition to their once a week meeting teachers and administrators shared that inquiry teams meet across grades every day. For example, teachers shared, “when we meet in inquiry, it’s not only high stakes assessments that we are reviewing, and that we are using to drive instructions but also daily lesson plans and more informal formative assessment that we are reviewing every day ...even across discipline. Additionally, the special education teacher shared that, “this I am pushing into ninth grade English and global ...the big thing that we have been doing this year is SCUBA (for text coding). Each single teacher can say...did you SCUBA and the kids know it...in all classes they are not just doing it because we require them but, they do it even on the questions or task and bringing it into English...students do not need the prompts as much.” An eleventh grade student for example shared that she uses SCUBA every single quiz or text she gets, she automatically start “SCUBAing” the questions, and in English and global classes, and automatically does it now.