



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Art and Design**

**High School M630**

**231-249 East 56 Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10019**

**Principal: Frances DeSanctis**

**Date of review: December 18, 2014  
Lead Reviewer: Rod Bowen**

## The School Context

Art and Design is a high school with 1,438 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 25% Black, 53% Hispanic, 12% White, and 9% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 43% of the students enrolled and girls account for 57%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 89.6%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teachers employ assessment strategies that yield actionable feedback. Common assessments generate data on student performance, which is tracked over the course of the year.

### Impact

Feedback from teachers clearly communicates next steps for improvement in student work. Data from common assessments are used to inform curricular and instructional adjustments.

### Supporting Evidence

- Mid-term and final exams are used across grades and content areas to inform curricular and instructional shifts. In math, common assessment data informed the design of a lesson where skill-specific stations were organized around the room and students rotated to the stations as needed, given the skills that they were challenged by. Data from math assessments also revealed a pattern of students confusing which mathematical step to apply, resulting in more modelling as an instructional strategy as well as targeting level 1 and 2 students for more discreet intervention.
- While talking to students about their work, a young man noted that feedback on an essay highlighted that he needed to explain with more details and use better grammar. Another student that had received a 90 on a global history essay shared that she could have earned the additional 10 points had she used more straight forward language and got to the point quicker.
- In reviewing student work products, scored rubrics were accompanied by next steps from the teacher such as, "Use quotes in evidence. Stay with one opinion throughout the essay. Finish conclusion."

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

Teaching practices are becoming aligned to a set of beliefs about how students learn best. However, across classrooms the quality of student discussion and work products is uneven.

### Impact

Students are not consistently engaged in high levels of thinking and participation.

### Supporting Evidence

- In an AP English class, students were observed debating whether or not a character was a tragic hero. In addition to the discussion, the teacher prompted a writing task with a Common Core instructional shift by saying, "When I come around, I'll be looking to see that you're integrating specific examples from the text."
- In an architecture course students answered such discipline specific technical questions such as, "What ordering principal could we use given the linear layout," as well as more open questions like, "What else do we have to look at in developing this site plan?" Responses to the later question included incorporating Islamic iconography given the culture and location of the site, as well as considering traffic patterns.
- In a social studies class, time was spent cultivating prior knowledge. However, when students asserted contradicting facts, the confusion was not resolved. In addition, the main learning activity was to copy abbreviated notes from a PowerPoint presentation.
- A math lesson that was observed revealed some students following the prescribed steps yet without producing parallel lines, while some drew parallel lines without following the appropriate steps. Though there were students who did follow the procedure correctly, the teacher-dominated lesson did not ensure success for the majority of students.

## Additional Findings

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

Curricula and academic tasks do not consistently emphasize higher order skills across grades and subject areas for all learners, including students with disabilities.

### Impact

All students do not consistently have access to rigorous curricula designed to meet their varied learning needs.

### Supporting Evidence

- An English Language Arts (ELA) planning document showed that students would make claims about gender roles and cite evidence from the text to support the claims. An AP ELA lesson plan stated that students would analyze and compare poems and song lyrics highlighting similar themes and controlling ideas.
- However, a science lesson plan showed that the main activity, which was to observe phenomena and record measurements, was to be followed by clean up, with no opportunity to synthesize, or apply their understanding of what they had experienced.
- In a social studies lesson plan, the main activity was not delineated, only a short list of questions was present.
- Not all lesson plans included evidence of the teacher acknowledging a diversity of learning styles. In some plans, there were instances of differentiated do nows and/or exit tickets, however there was little evidence of multiple access points for the main learning activity. For example, an ELA lesson plan showed a group activity where students would collaborate on analyzing text and writing an evidence-based persuasive paragraph. Though the task was clear, how grouping was to meet the needs of students was not explicit in the plan. In other cases, multiple entry point strategies were alluded to in vague terms. For example, “provide internet resources” and “SMARTboard – PowerPoint”, however there was little sense of exactly how these measures were targeted to support specific students or student groups.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

The school is developing its processes of effectively communicating with parents regarding student achievement and feedback for supporting academic growth. High expectations for students are not communicated consistently across all subject areas.

### Impact

Parents are not consistently aware of their children's progress. Students are not consistently clear on how to prepare for the next level outside of the arts.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school's consistency in communicating and sustaining high expectations is found in its arts programming which consists of, but is not limited to, courses in animation, architecture, cartooning, film & video. Numerous arts partners support work-based learning experiences as well as the Career and Technology Education offerings.
- Parents claimed that students who graduate and attend art schools are over prepared in their first year of foundation courses because of their arts education at Art and Design. They also noted that the school could provide more writing and academic support. This was confirmed by students who asserted that the school prepares them very well for careers in the arts, but less so for college.
- The school introduced Skedula to the community this year as a means of providing ongoing up to date information on student achievement, assignment completion and attendance. However, parents noted that there are inconsistencies regarding the accuracy and timeliness of the information on Skedula. As a result, most rely on the progress reports that are given out three times per semester.
- Lastly, parents noted that there are inconsistencies in the accessibility of teachers, specifically via email. They agreed that the parent coordinator has been invaluable in supporting teacher follow through and overall communication with families.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

The school is developing its structures for the majority of teachers to collaboratively engage in inquiry work, including the analysis of student data and work products.

### Impact

The impact of teacher teams has yet to reach the instructional practices of the majority of teachers, thus missing opportunities for increased student learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- Subject area specific departments meet formally once per month. Informal meetings occur more frequently depending on the content area. The majority of these meetings are used for curricular planning.
- Grade teams meet weekly. The 9<sup>th</sup> grade team is engaged in an inquiry process informed by a base-line reading assessment administered earlier in the year. Data analysis revealed that many students were struggling with making inferences. The team is in the process of implementing teaching strategies that will address the skill gap. All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students will be reassessed in January to see if progress has been made. This type of grade-wide inquiry approach has yet to take hold in the three other grades.
- A teacher team was observed participating in a yet to be taught lesson so that the presenting teacher could receive feedback from colleagues on what supports and scaffolds might be needed. However, their recommendations were based on their opinions and awareness of students. No student work or data was used in this process.
- Teachers noted that during grade team meetings they coordinate peer observation, do Skedula training, and have started to talk about students. They are also starting to look at student data together, and use trackers to look at what students are reading.