



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Heritage School

High School M680

**1680 Lexington Avenue
Manhattan
NY 10029**

Principal: Dyanand Sugrim

**Date of review: April 17, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Hongying Shen**

The School Context

The Heritage School is a high school with 312 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 33% Black, 64% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 26% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 83.0%.

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	Focus	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	Additional Findings	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	Celebration	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	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

**3.4 High
Expectations**

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff and the school community and provide families with ongoing feedback on student academic progress.

Impact

The school's effort to communicate and support high expectations results in accountability among staff, students and their families.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate high expectations to the staff via weekly meetings and professional learning time. School leaders meet with the Professional Development Committee, which comprises teachers from different departments to design professional development sessions around the Danielson Framework for Teaching for the entire staff. Besides providing teachers with instructional feedback in Skedula, school leaders have conversations with individual teachers regarding their lesson plans and observe the lessons planned to give further feedback on the next steps. The school is implementing a teacher inter-visitation structure to solidify a culture of mutual accountability for the expectations.
- School leaders and staff consistently offer ongoing feedback to families regarding student progress and help them understand the path to college and career readiness. Parents are invited to the monthly breakfast with the principal, and topics shared at the meeting include how to read a transcript and how to understand financial aid for college. Teachers have progress report conversations with each student at the end of each marking period and the grade 12 guidance counselor keeps track of progress of the graduating cohort and communicates with parents regarding their academic progress, college application and post-secondary goals.
- The school has an annual curriculum night, when teachers discuss with parents and incoming students the classroom and coursework expectations and the upper grade students share their learning experiences at the school with the families. Some students said that they would come back to be part of the curriculum night again after their graduation, because they want to share how the school prepares them for college and post-secondary careers. Two parents shared how all the teachers support their students with disabilities and that they are proud to be graduating with Regents diplomas.
- All students are encouraged to take advanced placement and higher-level courses in physics, chemistry, trigonometry and calculus. Students in sophomore, junior and senior years have the opportunity to take college classes and earn college credits with College Now at Hunter College. The school communicates with parents via Skedula, a web-based grade book, lateness and absentee tracking system, and through emails. Students in grades 9 and 11 attend college summit courses once a week and they learn how to analyze transcripts, apply to different types of colleges, and what colleges look for. Parents raised funds to sponsor breakfasts for the Saturday Academy. Parents shared that the school keeps them well informed of their children's daily attendance as well as their academic progress toward expectations for college and career readiness.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Developing

Findings

School leaders and faculty are making progress in building Common Core aligned curricula across grades and subjects. The school makes adjustments to prepare students for a more rigorous math curriculum.

Impact

Although the increased alignment in math curriculum is beginning to provide all students access to cognitively engaging tasks, the academic tasks that emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills are inconsistent across grades and in other subject areas.

Supporting Evidence

- Coaches have worked with all departments to develop Common Core Learning Standards aligned curricula and performance tasks. The school is implementing two performance tasks for each semester, with a mock Regents assessment between semesters for all grades and subjects. Teachers develop performance tasks and Regents like questions and connect the Regents assessments to Common Core Standards.
- The design of the algebra curriculum prepares students for a more rigorous, college bound curriculum aligned with the math common core standards and it has been modified to address the different needs of students. For example, it identifies sub-skills such as combining like terms and understanding the terms and coefficients and incorporates the topic of addition and subtraction of polynomials to advance student understanding and learning. The school is beginning to focus on aligning content standards and integrating the instructional shifts in curricula, and will continue to make purposeful decisions to build coherence in curricula across grades and subjects.
- The grade 10 performance-based math task entitled “oil spill” requires students to apply their knowledge not only in writing an equation of a circle, but also on area of a circle and to be able to analyze and solve the problem. The learning plan for this task includes tiered lesson for students with disabilities and grouping English language learners (ELLs) with English proficient students as translators to support them. A review of the grade 9 English language arts (ELA) curriculum reveals that it includes lists of both fiction and non-fiction texts and essential questions. However, the overview chart provides only unit names, dates and the approximate length of time that the units will be taught. In addition to the short descriptions of formative and summative assessments for each unit, the grade 9 ELA curriculum is not aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards outcomes or objectives that emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all students.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and teachers continue to plan lessons that reflect the school's set of beliefs of how students learn best. The use of strategic entry points to engage all students learning varies from classroom to classroom.

Impact

The inconsistent provision of multiple entry points leads to uneven engagement in appropriately challenging tasks and uneven demonstration of higher order thinking skills in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The school aims to implement the workshop model to create a school wide coherence in lesson planning, which follows an "I do," "we do," and "you do" structure. Four out of the seven classes observed utilized the workshop model, with elements of a mini lesson, group or pair activity, and an individual assignment. Although the teacher directed the students to work in pairs or in groups, sometimes there were no scaffolds planned within the group work to provide multiple entry points so that all learners engage in the challenging work. In an integrated collaborative teaching US history class, a teacher assigned each group one of the documents from a Regents exam and asked them to answer the questions on the document. Students worked individually within the group and used a checklist to annotate the document while reading. When a group of three was called to the front to present, there was not an agreed upon answer, while many other students were still trying to access the documents they were working on to formulate answers.
- In a grade 10 integrated collaborative teaching ELA class, students worked in pairs to design discussion questions to understand the text. The teachers provided students with disabilities and ELLs with a guided reading focus to help them formulate questions. The teacher modeled how to write higher-order questions using a Depth of Knowledge chart to support the students. In pairs, students were guided to first write down what they wanted to discuss individually, then to listen to and record each other's thoughts, and finally to re-examine their own thinking about the reading based on the exchange of ideas with the partner. While in an earth science class, although the teacher asked challenging questions and instructed students to talk to their neighbors, there were more teacher-student interactions than scaffolded student-student discussion.
- The majority of observed lessons utilized the workshop model for all learners, but there were missed opportunities to include teaching strategies that would consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. In an algebra class, the lesson was about a trigonometric function presented during a ten-minute mini-lesson. A few students participated in a teacher-student interaction to solve a problem as in "we do" of the workshop model. Students were then to work on a project to apply what they learned. Although the teacher instructed the students to work with a partner, some students sat with their own worksheet or asked the teacher for help.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school uses common assessments and grading policies that are aligned to the curricula to determine student progress. Teachers use the assessment results to adjust instruction.

Impact

The implementation of an assessment plan that involves multiple benchmarks across grades and subjects provides teachers with the data to identify gaps in content and skills to adjust instruction and curricula.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has begun to implement two performance tasks and one mock Regents exam per semester across grades and subjects. The performance tasks are aligned to both content standards and the school curricula, which emphasize students using primary source documents, citing evidence, and annotating texts. The grade 9 English performance task required students to select one topic from the four choices provided, to read three texts that accompanied the topic selected with annotation for each reading, and to write a source-based argument on the topic.
- The scheduled performance assessments and mock Regents exam produced data for teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers share the breakdown results with students and help them understand their learning. A grade 11 English Regents reflection document from a student revealed the itemized scores the student got for listening comprehension, reading comprehension, answering questions about controlling idea paragraph and literary element paragraph and writing a critical lens essay. The student answered the reflection questions on the document such as “what area do you need to work on the most?” and “What are two specific, realistic actions that you will take to achieve that goal?” Yet, there was a missed opportunity for teachers to provide actionable and meaningful feedback to individual students regarding their work to offer a clear portrait of student mastery in addition to the itemized scores.
- Teachers use the assessment results to keep track of student progress in all subjects, and to adjust curricula and instruction. The mock Regents algebra two item analysis of one class revealed that the percentage of correct answers in “writing functional notation” and “simplifying power of 1” was 0%. The teacher planned lessons to incorporate the math skills in the Do Now activity and day-to-day math worksheet activity until students mastered the skills. The teacher notes on the grade 9 argumentative essay writing from the English department showed that teachers identified students’ struggle with finding textual evidence and articulating point of views. Teachers planned to adjust instruction by implementing Socratic conversations in lessons, where students would record each other’s speech and then give written feedback to the partner. Teachers have started discussing how to build skills in instruction and in curricula from grade to grade, so that all students can demonstrate increased mastery.

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 on improving student learning and strengthening teacher instructional capacity. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data for students on whom they focus.

Impact

The professional collaborations facilitate the sharing of best practices among coaches and teachers that is positively affecting student-learning outcomes. The consistent analysis of data and student work of the focus group of students is resulting in improved student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet one period a day during the common teacher professional development time and the special education teachers collaborate with content area teachers on developing lessons, creating Common Core Learning Standards aligned performance tasks and evaluating student work. Coaches lead team meetings and support common planning of the content teachers to promote the achievement of the school's instructional goals.
- A review of department team meeting documents reveals that teachers regularly analyze student work products and assessment data and do lesson plan study to improve practice. For example, the English department used a lesson plan tuning/analyzing student work protocol to examine a lesson plan and student work sample. Teachers asked clarifying questions to get information related to the learning objectives and guided the presenting teacher to reflect on clear objectives that would help students achieve the learning goals. The English teachers analyzed the errors the students made in the mock Regents tests, identified the areas of need and provided each other with suggestions for improvements in teaching.
- The math department uses ATLAS Learning's student work protocol to examine student work samples. At the observed team meeting, teachers reviewed the student work on quadratic functions/solving by factoring and identified the area the students were struggling with. Teachers on the team shared how they approached the problem and suggested strategies. The science department documented the work on examining the design of the performance tasks and student performance. The team concluded that the students had difficulty interpreting graphs, comparing information and making connections; therefore, instruction would focus on higher-order questions and on providing students with guidelines for answering those questions.
- Teachers collaborated on working with the group of ELLs and consistently analyzed each ELL's performance in every subject class and on the Regents exams. Teachers shared the analyses summary for each ELL and the English as a second language team set up conferences with each ELL to discuss learning goals, set up academic interventions and help them prepare for the Regents exams. As a result of teacher teamwork with the focus group, the school has met the Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives of ELLs making progress in learning English and reaching proficiency in year 2013-2014. Teacher leaders have developed whole-staff professional development activities and the school is working towards building a school-wide instructional coherence that would increase student achievement for all learners.