



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

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2014-2015**

**Manhattan Occupational Training Center  
High School**

**High School M721**

**250 West Houston Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10014**

**Principal: Antoinette Bello**

**Date of review: May 6, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Robin Cohen**

## The School Context

Manhattan Occupational Training Center is a high school with 188 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 32% Black, 56% Hispanic, 4% White, and 9% Asian students. The student body includes 45% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 61% of the students enrolled and girls account for 40%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 83.0%.

## 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>Well Developed</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</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>Focus</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</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>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

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

School leaders have created a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for instruction, via the use of Danielson's Framework for Teaching, producing a culture of mutual accountability. Workshops and performance updates keep families apprised of student progress towards college and career readiness.

### Impact

Structures that support the school's high expectations result in effective academic and personal growth of students and adults. Students are prepared for transition from school to work and the community.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school has established systematic structures within an environment of positive attitudes that engages and informs all stakeholders leading to a path of college and career readiness. Administration articulates high expectations through emails, faculty meetings, post-observations, and conference day workshops, as stated by classroom teachers and paraprofessionals during class visits. School leaders provide professional development opportunities for staff, and college and career learning options for students. This fosters a culture of mutual accountability for all members of the school community.
- High expectations are consistently communicated to all constituents through a variety of means such as the student, staff, and parent handbook. The parent handbook informs families regarding the school's procedures and policies, curriculum and assessments, their behavior program (STARS), and community/family resources. To further strengthen a school-home relationship which helps foster and support student achievement, families are invited to participate in Best Practice Fairs, Transition Fairs, Parent-Teacher Conferences, Agency Tours, and monthly parent workshops.
- Administrators have established strong social-emotional expectations for students through their Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) program. The implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, Career Development & Occupational Studies (CDOS) standards, and Danielson's Framework, fosters best practices for staff. This has led to higher expectations for both students and teachers. Teachers collaborate and analyze student growth regarding career readiness skills. Worksite teachers utilize the Transition Band of UNIQUE for instruction. Math instruction is embedded in real life problems. For example, in a self-contained (12:1:1) bilingual 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> grade class, the essential question posed was "What math skills do we use to plan a party"? Some students used arrays; others used equal groupings and drawings. In sharing their findings, one group stated "When you plan a party you need to know how to share equally - that sharing is division."
- Presently, 25% of 721M students have made movement to a Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Seventeen students (9.3%) have moved into new programs such as Harvest Colligate HS and Chelsea HS Inclusion Program. Three students were changed from alternate assessment to standardized assessment and 29 students (15.9%) are receiving reduced or terminated related services.

## Area of Focus

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

The school uses common assessments and rubrics aligned to its curricula to determine student progress. Teachers check for understanding, providing actionable feedback.

### Impact

School leaders and teachers have an ongoing understanding of the performance and progress of all learners which informs instructional practices at the team and classroom level. However, meaningful teacher feedback resulting from student self-assessment and peer-to-peer assessment varies, thereby, limiting student awareness of their next steps.

### Supporting Evidence

- Students Annual Needs Assessment Inventory and Formative Assessment of Standards Tasks (SANDI/FAST) assessments are administered twice yearly which measures students' reading, writing, communication, and math skills, and are used to help generate Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals. These goals were visible on all students' desks; however, students referencing their goals throughout the instructional period vary.
- Teachers use data to identify students' area of need, establish class-wide instructional foci, and form flexible reading and math groups. Students are aware of the concept of "grouping"; however, they are not always able to articulate either verbally or through the use of adaptive communication devices their understanding of the groupings and the range of work that needs to be done with their peers.
- Assessment results and student work samples are reviewed weekly as seen during a collaborative team meeting. The team uses the data to make adjustments to lessons such as additional teacher/paraprofessional modeling, hands-on materials, and the use of audio-visual aids. Teacher feedback was seen during classroom visits; however, in a few classes feedback was vague. For example, one teacher wrote "increase fluency" on a math worksheet. During the small group meeting, students were able to tell me what they were learning today, however, not all students were able to say specifically what they needed to do to earn the "4" on the rubric.
- Across classrooms ongoing checks for understanding, as seen during classroom visits included cold call, 1:1 conferencing with classroom teacher, checklists and rubrics that meet the cognitive level of students, and thumbs up/thumbs down. During classroom visits, students were given time to self-assess and "talk to their partner", however, early prompting by adults was seen in some classrooms.
- The school-wide focus for 2014-2015 is the continued steady growth in Domain 3 of Danielson's Framework for Teaching. Teachers' growth in their questioning and discussion techniques is evident in classrooms visited. However, teachers stated the need to focus on strengthening peer-to-peer assessment practices, thereby fostering interaction and collaboration amongst students.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The school provides a curriculum that is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards, and tactically integrates the instructional shifts. The school continues to deepen, expand, and refine their curriculum maps, units of study, and performance tasks to ensure a range of learning experiences across the continuum of services.

### Impact

The school curricula decisions build coherence across grades and subject areas; provide instruction that is relevant, fosters and supports student independence, academic and behavioral growth, and college and career readiness skills.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school made purposeful choices about curricula based on student performance and periodic assessments such as Students Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI). In reviewing SANDI data, evidence demonstrated gaps in students' reading and writing skills. Therefore, to support those students in Alternate Assessment, the school developed a "two-fold" action plan. One teacher was trained as a Wilson Level II Reading Specialist, and Structured Methods in Language Education (SMILE), a multi-sensory approach to teaching reading and writing skills was implemented. This program is designed to support students with autism, students with intellectual disabilities, and students with traumatic brain injury. The programs balance informational and literary texts and focus on building academic vocabulary as seen during classroom visits.
- SANDI data demonstrates, in Reading for Information 1, the number of students on Level 1 decreased by 18%, Level 2 decreased by 6%, and Level 3, increased by 19%. In addition, in Reading for Information 10, the number of students on Level 1 decreased by 28%, Level 2 decreased by 27.5%, and Level 3, increased by 68%.
- The school created a curriculum team to help with the implementation of CCLS aligned curricula. The focus of the team is to continue to review, refine, and adapt the curriculum maps and units of study to meet the needs of their diverse student population. The team looks at student work products and teacher input to ensure all students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks. The school's belief of assuring access for all learners is embedded in all lesson planning. Entry points for all students are a collaborative decision-making approach that strategically focuses on the students' learning style, interests, and readiness skills.
- Throughout all classrooms visited, emphasis was noted in making content relevant to real life situations such as filling out job applications, learning to shop for groceries, and what does "proper attire" look like in different situations. In addition, the school provides direct social skills instruction using the Jed Baker Curriculum.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### **Findings**

Teaching practices across the vast majority of classrooms are aligned to the curricula and reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best as informed by Danielson’s Framework for Teaching. Lesson plans are well designed with individual pacing and supports to ensure all learners have the opportunity to produce cognitively appropriate and meaningful work products.

### **Impact**

Across all classrooms, the unified common core aligned curricula have fostered best teaching practices. Curricula extensions and high quality supports engage students in a learning environment that challenges students to produce meaningful work products.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Classroom instruction/lesson planning includes differentiated activities and multiple entry points through leveled texts, graphic organizers, visual aids, interactive/assistive technology, and manipulatives. The school community believes students learn best by being engaged in purposeful lessons that directly relate to their lives and include embedded opportunities to engage in productive conversations with peers and adults, in their preferred mode of communication and exposed to higher levels of questioning. Teachers emphasized this belief during teacher team meetings and classroom visits.
- The school’s instructional focus for school year 2014-2015 is “Collaborative Learning” which continues to emphasize Danielson’s Framework, Component 3b – Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques. The school researched collaborative learning strategies for their diverse student populations. Strategies such as: Think/Pair/Share; Cooperative Learning with Role Assignments; Thumbs Up; Turn and Talk; and Speak to the Class were suggested and were seen during classroom visits. Students used their preferred mode of communication including; Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) devices, Picture Exchange Communication (PEC) symbols, drawings, gestures, eye gaze, as well as, verbal responses. To help facilitate the collaborative learning process, students work in small groups. Teachers design their lesson plans with “Essential Questions” and “Focus Questions” for the paraprofessionals to use during small group instruction.
- Class instruction provides high quality supports and extensions, which include “Essential and Focus Questions”, requiring high levels of student thinking. For example, in a Transition/Work Study high school grade class, students were preparing lunch for their Culinary Arts program. The essential questions were “How do you have a successful lunch service” and “How do you make Greek Salad, Focaccia Bread and Blueberry Buckle”? Completed menus varied and included student writing and PECs lists.
- The school provides ongoing professional development on Danielson’s Framework for Teaching. School leaders are very vigilant in analyzing teacher performance. Based upon observations, both formally and informally, lesson plan review, and student discussions, it was noted that 43% of teachers showed growth in Component 3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques. Of this percentage, 30% of teachers moved from Effective to Highly Effective, and 13% moved from Developing to Effective. Staff members, teachers as well as related service providers and paraprofessionals, attributed this growth to the ongoing workshops.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

All teachers participate in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and inquiry-based teams to plan instruction, strengthen teacher practice and examine student work. Leadership structures offer a means for teachers to have input on key decisions about curricula and pedagogy.

**Impact**

The work of teacher teams has led to teacher leadership throughout the school, where collaboration among colleagues leads to identification of best practices resulting in increased student performance.

**Supporting Evidence**

- All teachers are involved in an inquiry-based teams and meet at least twice a week. The school uses a protocol developed by the Center for Collaborative Education. This protocol was adapted to support the needs of the school. Teams use multiple sources of data including student work products, SANDI/FAST baseline and end of year assessments, curriculum unit assessments, and teacher created assessments to understand trends across the school, grade, classes and individual students. Evidence of one inquiry-based teams' work, was the identification of the SMILE program to meet the cognitive needs of a subgroup of students within the organization.
- Unique to the school is their 'transition and worksite team'. Teachers stated the priority of the team members is to find positions (internships and/or volunteering) for students that can lead to future employment. For example, one student is volunteering at Seven Eleven. In addition, at V.A Hospital, students participate in rigorous jobs based on their interests and skills. Students work in billing, data processing, mail rooms, maintenance, and customer service. Presently, there are students working in hospitals, nursing homes, the N.Y. Public Library, Housing Works, and Marshalls.
- The PBIS team created and implements a program (S.T.A.R.S) that encourages positive and appropriate behavior to foster student achievement in learning. The team's core belief stresses the importance of maintaining a safe and structured environment based on clear expectations and a system of positive reinforcements in order to allow learning to take place. All classrooms display a S.T.A.R.S. Expectations' chart based on the environments within a school building. Evidence shows that the VADIR score at the close of school year 2013-2014 was (.95) while the previous year was (2.08). The difference in scores is a 46% positive decline. In addition, data shows that in April, 2014 there were 79.4% students earning Levels 3 & 4 (the highest) status, and in April, 2015 there were 79.3% of students demonstrating Levels 3 & 4 behaviors. However, data shows that students on Level 4 in April, 2014 were 37.7% to 45.2% in April, 2015. This data shows positive trend in students' display of appropriate behavior has a positive impact on the learning, social/emotional skills, self-esteem levels and transition skills.
- Members of the curriculum team stated they felt empowered and valued in their role in selecting the curricula for the entire organization. The team continues to create, adapt, and modify, lessons to further enhance the curriculum.