

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Frederick Douglass Academy II Secondary School

Secondary School 03M860

**215 WEST 114 STREET
MANHATTAN
NY, 10026**

Principal: Osei Owusu-Afriyie

**Dates of review: Nov 14, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Ilene Altschul**

The school context

Frederick Douglass Academy II Secondary School is a/an Secondary School with 429 students from 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 73.2% Black, 21.9% Hispanic, 0.2% White, and 2.6% Asian students. The student body includes 9.1% English language learners and 25.2% special education students. Boys account for 58% of the students enrolled and girls account for 42%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013 - 2014 was 84%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</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 Finding	Proficient
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	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 Finding	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	Additional Finding	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	Celebration	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Finding(s)

All teachers are engaged in professional collaborations and vested in increasing school-wide coherence and student achievement. Teachers take on leadership roles and are integral in key decisions that affect student learning.

Impact

As a result, there is an increase in teacher capacity and teachers take ownership towards improved achievement for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers participate in department teams and grade teams. The department teams analyze assessment data, and develop lessons and unit plans. The grade teams focus on the social-emotional data, such as attendance and credit accumulation. In addition, the grade teams collaboratively develop lessons for the community class.
- During the team meetings each teacher articulates how they will apply the suggestion or strategy that was discussed and then it is followed up at the next meeting discussing the impact. This is referred to as a “wrap around strategy”. For example at the math team meeting, one teacher presented three solutions to an extended response problem. Teachers asked clarifying questions, examined artifacts, and next steps. As a result it was identified that the students may have had difficulty understanding what it means to provide an explanation and would benefit from explicit modeling and teaching.
- Teachers state that the work of the inquiry teams impacts their curriculum development and instruction. They review the assessment results and identify the objectives where more than 50% of the students were unable to master. Student data is charted through the assessment analysis form and color coded by mastery. The teachers then reflect on, “Where did I go wrong? How can I reteach to ensure mastery?”
- Teacher explained that the science department team has developed a school-wide lab report that is scaffolded through the grades leading to instructional coherence. As the students reach the high school level there are less supports. They also indicated that they visit each other’s classes and use an intervisitation protocol to look at the learning environment and engagement.
- Teachers take on leadership roles such as instructional coach, data specialist, and team leaders. All team leaders participate in the Teacher Leadership Facilitation training through Teachers College. The administration meets with the instructional cabinet to follow-up on the work of the teams. Teachers state, “The administration is 100% in favor of anything we want to do that will benefit students.” Based on a survey, classroom management was identified by the teachers as a priority and three sessions were developed and held afterschool. Teachers indicated that they place emphasis on their planning and value the input from their colleagues. Teachers stated, “They feel a sense of ownership about their teaching.”

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Finding(s)

Across classrooms, select groups of students were engaged in the lessons and received supports to successfully complete the task and demonstrate higher order thinking. There were uneven levels of student thinking and participation across the school.

Impact

The school is inconsistently providing entry points for all learners as evident in work products and discussions inhibiting increased achievement for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- In a math class, teacher began the lesson with a video clip to engage the students and provide a context by explaining the relevance for the learning objective. This set the stage for the lesson however further supports were needed in guided practice for all students to successfully master the objective.
- While in classrooms, students were sitting in groups and encouraged to work with their partners around the task however the students were primarily working independently and asking the teacher for assistance.
- During a class visit, students were using the jigsaw protocol to learn about sectionalism and evaluate a specific region of the United States. In another class, students were engaged in a fish bowl activity observing the discussion about “Maslow’s Theory of Hierarchical of Needs” through the Socratic seminar. In both classes, students were engaged in high-level tasks however not all students participated in the discussion limiting their ability to demonstrate their thinking. Conversely, in other classes, lessons were teacher directed and the line of questioning went from teacher to student.
- A review of student work revealed varying levels of thinking from students citing a claim and using evidence to support the claim, to understanding a text and the importance of the text to identifying and comprehending information. For example in 9th grade Global History students were to gather facts about the Delian League or the Peloponnesian League. This information will be used to determine which side would offer better protection in war. In a 6th grade English language arts class, students were identifying characteristics of a pharaoh without referring to the text for evidence.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Proficient

Finding(s)

School leaders and faculty ensure that the curricula are aligned to the CCLS and to the instructional shifts with emphasis on analyzing texts and identifying supporting evidence. Teachers refine the tasks for subsequent units based on the review of student work and data.

Impact

As a result, the school's decisions lead to instructional coherence that promotes college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers have developed and refined the unit calendars for every subject area. Each teacher develops a learning calendar aligned to the unit and the learning targets. The units include the Common Core Learning standards, the learning targets, learning activities and instructional supports, resources, academic vocabulary, and assessments. For example, the tenth grade Humanities interdisciplinary unit in English and Global History indicates that the students will be reading *The Autobiography of Malcom X* by Alex Haley and supplementing with additional primary sources including *The Barbados Slave Code* and *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*. Students will be expected to cite evidence and compose an expository essay linking Malcolm X's view with the Caribbean sugar trade that occurred in the Age of Exploration.
- Teacher lesson plans indicate instructional supports including scaffolded questions, grouping, use of graphic organizers, identification of the academic vocabulary and content vocabulary. In mathematics, all teachers are following the success for all instructional framework that includes active instruction, team huddle to provide students an opportunity to work in groups to unpack a problem, team mastery, lightning round and celebration or share.
- In English, students are engaged in the Socratic Seminar. To ensure all students are prepared, students access to the text prior to the lesson providing students additional time to prepare for the discussion.
- In department teams, teachers review the data from the assessments to make adjustments to units and lessons including reteaching. School has developed an assessment analysis tool that is shared through google docs. The assessment analysis identifies the students by tiers. Teachers refine their lessons and units to address the students' needs by tier. The red performance area indicates the objectives that less than 50% reached proficiency. Administration reviews the assessment analysis and provides feedback and comments to the teachers.

Finding(s)

While the school uses common assessments and then analyzes the data to create a clear picture of students' progress and mastery, the use of checks for understanding varies across the school. Teachers assess students' progress and provide actionable feedback.

Impact

Teachers are tracking student progress and adjusting curricula and instruction however the varying levels of checks for understanding and self-assessment is impeding students' ability to be aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal describes the school assessment practices to consist of eight assessments across the school year aligned to each instructional unit, analysis and identification of students into tiers, action plan including next steps for teachers and students, checks for understanding within the lessons and scholar self-assessment. As evident through the assessment analysis and the Individualized Scholar Success Plan (ISSP) teachers and administrators are tracking and analyzing student mastery to determine next steps. All teachers were trained in the level 1 question analysis by the principal. Teachers complete the question analysis for all assessments to identify the reasons students did not answer the question correctly. The ISSP is developed for students that are not showing progress and articulates the learning targets that are not mastered and the next steps.
- Teachers assess student work using common rubrics particularly in ELA and for science lab reports. Students receive feedback and state that it helps them to understand what they need to improve upon. One student explained that he will meet with the teacher to discuss his grade.
- Based on discussion with students they set goals and review their progress report during the "community" advisory period. Students state that the work is reviewed by the teacher but there are limited opportunities for the students to self-assess their work within each class period.
- Through professional teams, teachers collaboratively review the assessment analysis and make adjustments. The assessment analysis indicates mastery and maps the areas to target. Teachers explain that the tier III students work on higher level questions while the tier I and II students may be receiving additional support using visuals or focusing on vocabulary to reteach the objective.
- In middle school math, students are receiving academic support through Plato on-line learning. Students take a pre-assessment and then view tutorials and videos aligned to address the targeted areas.
- Teachers check for understanding through questioning, the "do now" and exit slips. In a 12th grade English class, students reflected on their effectiveness in the discussion while the other students provided feedback to their peers using the rubric however students had difficulty explaining their reasons around the scoring and were not all engaged in the reflection process. In another class, a teacher gave the students an exit slip to complete but there was limited time to complete and the question will provide the teacher with limited information for next steps.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Finding(s)

School leaders consistently convey high expectations through professional development, feedback, and communications. Teachers are accountable to the success of their students in preparing them for college and career.

Impact

Students fully understand the expectations and are prepared for the next grade level as well on a path for college and career.

Supporting Evidence

- Administration provides professional learning in tiers according to the needs of the teachers based on experience, observations, and content knowledge. Teachers then participate in independent professional development conferences once a month with the principal to discuss progress towards their goals and observation feedback.
- Faculty handbook articulates the core instructional philosophy, the instructional expectations including the workshop model configuration, lesson planning, and assessment. Teachers state that the administration holds them accountable to ensuring high expectations through their observations, review of their grades in Skedula, on-line grading system, and the review of the assessment analysis with feedback. Teachers also indicate that they feel there is high demand from the administration to increase rigor and that they have regular conversations to reflect on their work.
- School offers advanced placement (AP) courses in Environmental Science, US History, English Comp, English Literature and statistics. Students can also participate in CUNY at home and complete a Math and English college preparation course.
- Parents state that the school does an excellent job to prepare the students for college. The school staff believes college is an option for all students. One parent stated that her child is currently enrolled in a criminal justice class through the College Now program. Students have an opportunity to select a course through City College that is aligned with the career path and participate on Saturdays. In addition, the school provides SAT preparation classes as well as Advanced Placement classes for college credit. Parents state, "The school sets high expectations and the teachers are very engaged in the school culture gearing them to be successful."
- I-mentor program provides all high school students with a mentor that they regularly email with to prepare them for college. In addition, the school offers an advisory period called community that focuses on setting goals and ensuring success towards the next grade level. In grades eleven and twelve, the community period focuses on college planning. One student stated that community class provides him with an opportunity to express his feelings, read and feel part of a community. The school also provides a summer bridge course for students entering 6th and 9th grade in preparing them for the expectations of middle or high school.