



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

**Pathways College Preparatory School: A College
Board School**

Middle - High School Q259

**109-89 204th Street
Queens
NY 11412**

Principal: Kimberly Mitchell

**Date of review: May 13, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Musa Ali Shama**

The School Context

Pathways College Preparatory School is a middle - high school with 587 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 91% Black, 5% Hispanic, 1% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92.1%.

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	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 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
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness to students and their families, and ensure that staff supports those expectations.

Impact

Systems and structures are in place to support students and their families and provide ongoing feedback to families

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty have developed a list of school-wide goals for school improvement that is clearly communicated to staff. Teachers receive feedback in observation cycles that encompass classroom observation data and analysis of student learning outcomes to provide next steps for professional growth. Professional learning is designed based on teacher needs and teacher input, and aligned to support school wide goals and implementing the instructional focus.
- As an Early College secondary school, students begin taking Regents exams in the eighth grade and students in the ninth to eleventh grade take the PSATs. All students starting in the sixth grade go on college visits to start engaging in the college search and application process. Students participate in the College Summit program, a college readiness program that provides training for a select group of students to become peer leaders. Peer leaders learn strategies on how to be successful in college to turn key to their peers.
- The school is utilizing the Parent Coordinator to increase the number of workshops offered to parents to inform and engage them on their children's progress and the college application process. Monthly workshops are conducted for parents on topics that target their needs and support them in working with their children such as logging into Skedula and monitoring their child's grades. Parents all agreed that; "the school was preparing them for the college experience". One parent stated that her child was taking courses at Adelphi University to start earning college credits, and had taken Advance Placement courses.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Teaching strategies including questioning techniques and scaffolds for students inconsistently provided multiple entry points into curricula and did not consistently engage students in discourse or high level thinking in the development of work products.

Impact

Across classrooms, student discussions and thinking reflected uneven engagement in the demonstration of higher-order thinking skills that led to missed opportunities to stimulate critical thinking for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms student discussions that reflected high levels of student thinking and participation was inconsistent. For example, an English language arts classroom with the Essential Question “How can we use the Socratic Seminar protocol to enrich understanding of texts / themes?”, students were engaged in a student led discussion where students responded to each other using evidence from the text. The teacher had students utilize accountable talk sentence starters, and students called on each other or inserted themselves into the discussions by agreeing or disagreeing. As the lesson was coming to a close, the teacher had students self-assess themselves using a Socratic seminar rubric to gauge their level of participation and ownership of their learning and had them share comments and thinking. This level of student engagement was not observed across classrooms, to wit: in a geometry lesson on congruent polygons, a teacher had students sitting in groups working through problems. He asked questions such as, “How do you solve problem number one?”, and “What did you do to solve number two?” These questions were posed to students, and resulted in the five students responding directly to the teacher. Questions asked did not stimulate group discussions, and resulted in low student participation that did not provide evidence of student thinking or student mastery of the material.
- Student work products that demonstrated higher-order thinking skills that were facilitated through the use of teaching strategies such as scaffolds and questioning were not employed with consistency across classrooms leading to uneven student engagement. For example, in a global history class, students were in the process of writing a Document Based Question (DBQ) essay regarding Industrialization. Students were provided with guided notes worksheet that allowed them to capture salient information needed to write their essay. In addition, the teacher provided students with a DBQ checklist that outlined the requisite elements of the essay. The teacher moved around the room conferencing with students and providing individual assistance to students. Students worked through the checklist and used their guided notes as they wrote their essay. However, in a Chemistry lesson, the teacher used Regents questions to review strategies and concepts. The teacher posed the same question to the entire class, asked questions such as “What concept do we use to solve this answer?” and “What is the empirical formula?” led to only six of the twenty one students participating and responding directly to the teacher.
- In four of eight classrooms, questions were aligned to Webb's Depth of Knowledge domains two, three, and four observed limiting all students thinking at high levels.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty have developed and refined curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards that integrate the instructional shifts to ensure that a diversity of learners have access to curricula.

Impact

Purposeful decisions have been made to build coherence to ensure all learners have access to the curricula and tasks are cognitively engaging leading to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty have identified skills aligned to college and career readiness that is embedded in the development of curricula to build coherence across grades and subject areas. The acronym P.O.W.E.R. (pick and peruse a text, outline and annotate the text, write evidence based claims, engage in accountable talk, rubrics for self-reflection and assessment). Teachers have worked collaboratively to embed these skills and Common Core Learning Standards across curricula and have scaffold the complexity of these skills vertically in curricula so that students are introduced to the skills in the middle school and should be able to master them by the twelfth grade.
- Curriculum is maintained using the Atlas Curriculum Mapping software. Core curricula followed the same format and contained the requisite elements of unit planning and indicated Common Core Learning Standards that were covered, the enduring understandings, essential questions, and the content covered the targeted skills, assessments, and learning plans.
- Across classroom visited, we observed teachers planned lessons that incorporated the instructional shifts to promote rigor aligned to college and career readiness. For example in a grade12 English language arts class, students were working on a research paper, students were developing outlines based on their annotated bibliography. Students had been taught how to research, identify credible sources, and had employed strategies of close reading in annotating text to prepare in producing a college level research paper.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teachers use and create assessments and rubrics that aligned to the school's curricula and analyze student data from common assessments to determine student progress toward goals.

Impact

Assessments are used to adjust curricula and instruction and lead to actionable feedback to students and teachers that support student learning leading to improved student performance.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers develop end of unit performance tasks that incorporate a real world application. The assessments are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards covered in the unit. Teachers use the student work to refine instruction and curriculum. The development of common rubrics to incorporate the P.O.W.E.R. strategies have been develop collaboratively by teachers.
- Item analysis is conducted on Regents data to identify areas of student weakness which result in refinement of curricula as well as the development of targeted intervention strategies. Scantron Performance series are used for summative assessments because it provides detailed data analysis of student achievement. Teachers work in teams to interpret data to inform their instructional practices. School leaders use data from assessments in observation cycles to provide feedback to teacher and ensure that student's learning outcomes are included in the teachers' improvement plans for next steps.
- The use of data trackers to monitor student progress towards graduation has led to modifications in student programs, the development of courses to provide students targeted instruction, as well as modified curricula to address student deficiencies. For example in math, regents data has resulted in the acceleration of some students into Trigonometry as well as the creation of a 2 year Algebra course to provide students a stronger foundation to achieve the college and career readiness metric.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teachers are engaged in professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and builds teacher capacity in leadership roles.

Impact

Teacher voice in key school wide decisions have impacted student learning across the school and have led to the strengthening of the instructional capacity of teachers.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet weekly in grade teams and engage in inquiry to identify strategies to support groups of students. For example, this year they focused on the lowest third in each grade to develop strategies to ensure that students were cognitively engaged and had access to curricula. They also meet in vertical teams to discuss strategies as well as developing and refining curricula aligned to the Common Core learning strategies. The P.O.W.E.R. strategies were outgrowth of teacher collaboration and leadership.
- Teachers engage in a process of looking at student work during team meetings. Teachers give each other feedback with a focus on improving instruction. For example, a vertical English language arts team that was observed, teachers used a Looking at Student Work protocol as they analyzed a Text Expository Essay Task. They were analyzing students who scored a one of the accompanying rubric and went through a process of identifying student strengths and weakness in the work, understanding the process that the teacher engaged students in, and then began identifying strategies that might support students in improving the quality of their work.
- Teachers have been identified as Model Teachers and are receiving targeted professional development that they turnkey back to their departments. Teachers stated that they have input in their professional learning as well as provide support to each other and struggling colleagues. Teachers also highlighted the supports and strategies that were developed to support students with disabilities in order to improve their academic performance in global history.