



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Frederick Douglass Academy VI High School

High School Q260

**8-21 Bay 25 Street
Queens
NY 11691**

Principal: Charles Ogundimu

**Date of review: March 17, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Donald Conyers**

The School Context

Frederick Douglass Academy VI is a high school with 412 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 59% Black, 38% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 6% 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 75.8%.

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	Celebration	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 Findings	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	Developing

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across grades and subjects, the school uses common assessments to determine student progress and teachers assess student learning during lessons. Students receive feedback from teachers based on assignments and assessment results.

Impact

Assessment data results are used to adjust curricula and instruction to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has a new, sustainable system of checks and balances that allows students to make adjustments to their assignments and learning habits over the course of the marking period in order to maximize learning and academic results. This process involves teachers analyzing student data and conducting weekly one-to-one student conferences to provide feedback regarding their student work. Students reported that this is very helpful and makes them feel that teachers are supporting them. They are able to understand what they need to learn to improve and how to approach the assignments.
- The principal leads the effort of analyzing Regents results so that teachers can take action regarding gaps in student understanding. Regents data consistently identified student writing as an area of weakness. The school responded this spring with the new writing method to promote better writing across all classes and for all students.
- Teachers create midterm and final examinations, which after analysis they determine the best steps to take to ensure that students continue to advance in their learning. For example, when visiting a grade 9 Integrated Algebra class, the teacher, after analysis, noted that students were having difficulty with negative exponentiation. The teacher decided to reteach and slow the pace of the curriculum to ensure mastery of this pivotal algebraic skill. Similarly, this grade 9 class was working on the concept of sets and set building. The lesson viewed represented aspects of the previous lesson for the students that demonstrated difficulty, while providing other students who demonstrated understanding to solve problems using set builder notation.
- Principal holds one-to-one meetings with teachers focusing on student scholarship reports, formative assessment results, department common assessment results and works with teachers to create action plans that will support improvement in student learning. Teachers use their action plans to inform forthcoming lessons and adjustments to curricula.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

While teaching practices are beginning to align with the expectations of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the school's beliefs about how students learn best, teaching practices inconsistently engage all students, promote student thinking and generate meaningful discussions among students.

Impact

Across classrooms, there are uneven opportunities for all students to engage in high levels of thinking and participation through academic tasks and discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal states that students learn best when engaged in the lessons. There must be purposeful grouping, evidence of higher order questioning, multiple entry points for learners as well as teachers assessing the learning of students. In the majority of classes visited, teachers dominated the lessons while student voice was heard only to answer a question(s) posed by the teacher. When students were in groups, discussion was minimal. The principal reports that student-to-student discussion is still being developed among the students.
- During a visit to a grade 12 Economics class, students were supposed to present their group projects on marketing a product successfully. While the students were given rubrics to reveal the expectations for the oral presentation, technique and content, the students were reluctant to present. Some of them were unprepared and disconnected from the lesson. One group presented a product that was not realistic, not well thought out or researched and was incongruent with the expectations of a grade 12 class, thus there were missed opportunities for students to understand changes in the workforce, the impact of globalization, supply and demand and other challenging content.
- The school's instructional focus on writing is evident from class to class. Students report that teachers require them to write daily (usually at the start of the period). Students use the school's adopted graphic organizer across classrooms and they feel confident about using it. Yet this good start has yet to engender stronger and extensive student writing for a variety of purposes.
- The school has experienced an increase in the number of English language learners (ELLs) and has taken deliberate steps to provide translated information in Spanish for them to support discussions in and beyond the classroom. However, teachers have not yet demonstrated the ability to consistently provide opportunities for student discussions that support ELLs. As a result, not all students are challenged and instruction is unevenly aligned to the needs of all students.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and teachers ensure that academic tasks and curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, integrate the instructional shifts and emphasize rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills across grades and subjects.

Impact

Curricula and academic tasks build coherence, promote college and career readiness, and are accessible to all students, including students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- To support writing as the school's instructional focus, the school utilizes an adopted writing method across all classes to organize and promote more elaborate and detailed writing. The school developed a rubric to assess student writing in the areas of content, textual evidence, development of evidence and conventions. The students use a graphic organizer that ensures that they identify topic focus, explain the topic focus, and provide evidence or data to support the topic focus and then a stated conclusion. In the plans of a grade ten Geometry class, the assignment required students to use this method to demonstrate understanding of trigonometric ratios and how to simplify them. A grade eleven English lesson plan asks students to take a position concerning who is the most jealous character in Shakespeare's Othello. Students had to organize and present their perspectives and finally write their responses in a short essay.
- Most learners have exposure to academic tasks that promote rigorous habits. Review of science plans in a multi-grade physics class indicated that students would read about Newton's laws of motion, express the laws in their own words and provide examples of each law while using the lesson's vocabulary: force, acceleration, inertia and mass. Teacher plans from a grade nine Living Environment lab highlights diffusion of water across a membrane. The student group assignment included student predictions about how different solutions would affect cells, performing the experiments in order to describe the permeability of a model membrane for glucose, starch and starch indicator solution.
- To promote more group activity, improve consistency in the planning of rigorous lessons that promote the instructional shifts, school lesson plans are written within a workshop model template that calls out reading assignments, vocabulary development, tiered levels of academic tasks for different learning levels and a writing task as part of the lesson summary.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The principal regularly communicates high expectations to the entire staff that are consistent with the Danielson Framework. The principal and staff communicate high expectations to families regarding a successful path to college and career readiness.

Impact

The principal has a system of accountability for the staff to achieve high expectations connected to meeting student learning needs and college readiness and for staff regularly offering feedback to help families understand student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- Families and students agree that the principal maintains an open door policy so that he is available to all members of the school community. During visits to the principal's office, the principal generally checks on scholarship, social emotional wellness, and thoughts about a path to college. He publishes a bi-monthly newsletter for the staff highlighting expectations, commendations, and positive developments within the community.
- The school leaders provide feedback and professional development supports based on teacher needs and student learning goals. Teachers are held accountable for the expectations expressed through observations and meetings with school leaders. For example, writing across all classrooms and the citing of evidence in text is a major action item for the school that is monitored and developed for improvement through observations, feedback, and professional development.
- Parents report that guidance counselors and the dean of culture play critical roles in helping them understand student progress and the expected journey toward college, one level after the next. This includes meetings about financial planning, the value of advanced placement courses, planned visits to colleges like Molloy College, Nassau Community College, Howard University along with representative from City University of New York and State University of New York visiting the school. Many parents access Skedula to check on student progress and to communicate with teachers about student progress and social emotional needs.

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in professional collaborations on teams that are focused on the school’s instructional writing focus along with an emphasis on examining some student work and discussing instructional strategies.

Impact

The work of teacher teams is beginning to develop the use of the inquiry approach to inform teacher practice and the measured progress of students toward its writing goal for students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school recently organized a common assessment teacher team comprised of teachers from each of the core subjects. Recognizing the need to strengthen student writing, the team members implemented a writing method across classes to support students. They suggested providing good models of topic sentences and working with the student on explanation. However, the team missed the meaningful chance of elaboration, content, and conventions. When meeting with them, this team looked at one student’s writing product from science. The teachers helped the science teacher to study various groups of students and their writing development.
- The principal states that the newly revised approach to teacher team meetings is a result of his monitoring and the adjusting of practice early in spring 2015. Previously, team meetings focused more on supporting students with disabilities without the benefit and consistent use of the inquiry approach to inform teachers and school leaders.
- The department teams meet weekly to discuss the progress students are making within the respective departments. They examine student work and speak about the student(s) difficulties and/or challenges in order to prescribe viable solutions for student improvement. However, this team work still show signs of early development and the measured progress of students is not yet evident. For example, the school has not moved beyond the general focus on writing to understanding how select subgroups of students or students at varied levels of proficiency perform in writing. Secondly, the increase of English language learners has not been met with the professional development and support for students or teachers that will ensure that student learning needs are addressed consistently and effectively in team work.