



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

**World Journalism Preparatory:
A College Board School**

25Q285

**34-65 192 Street
Queens
NY 11358**

Principal: Cynthia Schneider

Date of review: November 12, 2014

Reviewer: Juan Mendez

The School Context

World Journalism Preparatory is a secondary school with 611 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 6% Black, 25% Hispanic, 51% White, and 17% Asian students. The student body includes 0.6% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 40% of the students enrolled and girls account for 60%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.95%.

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	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Focus	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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Assessments are aligned to curricula and are consistent across classrooms and grade levels. Teacher teams and individual teachers analyze information on student learning to adjust instruction effectively to attain high levels of student performance.

Impact

Students create digital portfolios reflective of high levels of college and career readiness and teachers make timely adjustments to ready instruction to meet the needs of all learners ensuring student mastery and awareness of next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders establish fixed classroom routines that utilize Assessment for Learning (AFL) strategies to drive teachers to elicit student checks for understanding through both self and peer assessment. On the process of checking for understanding, the principal notes, “Students are not only offered best-shot instruction, but also multiple opportunities to grow their learning through revision and test correction.”
- Vertical and horizontal teams meet to assess student progress on a weekly basis and frequently use student data from Datacation software to track student achievement while conducting item analyses around common assessments.
- A combination of college level practices, including high-level feedback relevant to the reading of complex texts, and careful editing for publication has helped to bolster the four year graduation rate by 4% over the past year.
- Student work products are showcased on ePortfolio that highlight the use of both common written assessments and rubrics and these products capture the essence of student learning through journalistic approaches that culminate in vibrant publications.
- Across classrooms, students edited essays using common rubrics and guidelines. These activities were highlighted by self-reflection exercises that promoted awareness of critical thinking skills as well as mastery based learning. For example, in Advanced Placement English Language and Composition, students edited rhetorical essays, reflected and set goal in response to a John F. Kennedy essay prompt.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

**3.4 High
Expectations**

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The school leader has established a culture for learning and is in the process of strengthening the means of conveyance to students and families that establishes high expectations to support learning and achievement of individual student college and career goals.

Impact

Even though teacher teams and staff have built a culture for learning and offer feedback to families on how to support students, fewer students are graduating with a Regents Diploma and scores on the Global History Regents have decreased.

Supporting Evidence

- The use of Datacation and Pupil Path across all grade levels ensures that key information is available to all constituencies. However, the New York City School Survey indicates fewer students feel teachers make them excited about the learning process.
- Although parents point out the caring nature of teachers as well as teacher responsiveness to email inquiries, several students commented that “We don’t know about tutoring. It used to be on Wednesdays.”
- New college readiness courses and senior college application protocols help to heighten expectations linked to a college and career path; however, both the College and Career Preparatory Course Index and SAT College Readiness rates have decreased over the past year.
- School leaders establish early warning systems that address attendance as well as academic and behavior monitoring to help families understand student progress, with special attention to at-risk students. However, teacher efforts to prepare students for the next level are undermined by an overemphasis on passing percentages. Upon being asked “Do you share a common means to elevate student scores on key assessments?” teachers stated that their “present challenge identified on Google Docs is the 3% of students who have not passed the English Regents.”

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Curricular efforts have resulted in rich and rigorous, Common Core Learning Standards-based curricula with a heavy writing emphasis that allows for frequent monitoring checkpoints and high levels of student performance for all learners connected to college and career readiness.

Impact

Across classrooms, year-over-year growth among students with disabilities parallels growth among non-Individual Education Plan (IEP) students as evidenced by sharp increases among the percentage of students in the school's lowest third earning ten or more credits.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers use Atlas Curriculum Mapping, a web-based curriculum management tool that tracks curricular gaps and provides a unit-based model for mapping Common Core State Standards in instruction.
- Teachers ensure that all lessons are differentiated accordingly to provide multiple points of entry that allow all students to achieve at comparable levels. For example, in a geometry class, students were assigned different levels of questions to solve based on geometric concepts using parallel and perpendicular lines; after completing questions, students chose an independent menu of work to complete based on skill level.
- The school has integrated SAT preparatory curriculum into 9th grade math and English language arts classes to prepare students with rigorous activities, such as practice of The Test of Standard Written English that elicits higher-order skills aligned to college writing.
- Curricular coherence permeates across grade levels by embedded critical tasks such as student self-assessment, reflections, and daily logs. Students with disabilities are mainstreamed into Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classes to meet Common Core Learning Standards, and supplementary material from Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) helps these students demonstrate their thinking and meet demanding writing goals.

Findings

School leaders and faculty share firm beliefs about how students learn best shaped around the Danielson Framework for Teaching, student needs and driven through higher order thinking skills and rigorous written assessments as demonstrated by meaningful student work products.

Impact

Across classrooms, teacher practices reflect a coherent set of beliefs that has ensured student work products and discussions reflect high levels of engagement, participation and ownership of learning. The school has enjoyed elevated passing percentages on both the English Language Arts and United States History Regents examinations.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers believe in the use of standards-based grading to ensure that activities are not only inclusive of high level questioning approaches that reflect key instructional shifts but also high-quality supports, such as rubrics, that delineate measurable aspects of student learning. For example, students complete a legal research based essay on John Steinbeck's novel *Of Mice and Men* with specific traits identified which they must meet mastery on according to set standards; students are provided step by step guides, technology enhancement tools and integrate shifts such as academic vocabulary and writing from sources into the work product.
- Several parents who have children with IEP note that, their children have made substantial progress and are appropriately challenged and engaged. One parent states: "This school keeps the kids in mind first. My son is blessed to be in this school."
- Envisionment-building discussions, student-guided peer editing and the Socratic Method are techniques teachers have implemented to engage students in think aloud exercises during lessons while participating in work that culminates in research papers, portfolio artifacts and exhibitions.
- The majority of classes implement the Teachers College Writing Workshop model to ensure students have multiple entry points. A mini-lesson at the start of the lesson introduces the concept and process. Teachers consistently collect data on which to base grouping of students. The work period allows for teacher-guided groups for struggling students and those who require extensions. Students collect and showcase their work in electronic portfolios.
- An ICT math class involved both teachers and students using the interactive SMARTboard to set up proportions aligned to authentic math problems involving discounts and sale prices of miscellaneous retail items. Students were active with their learning and demonstrated high-level calculations and thinking shared through written and verbal responses.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Teachers benefit from participating in professional collaborations and distributed leadership structures that foster reflection as well as provide opportunities for researching effective instructional techniques that focus on improved student achievement.

Impact

The school's professional learning community thrives at integrating Common Core Learning Standards aligned student work with digital and online platforms that allows the school's efforts to become more transparent to ensure mastery of goals by all groups of learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams build a repository of documents to chronologically sequence and memorialize team efforts. This includes building instructional capacity in the Common Core shifts. For example, minutes from the English vertical team meetings reflect unified attempts to address approaches toward helping students establish claims and counterclaims in argumentative writing.
- Across classrooms there has been increased student achievement as apparent from the increases in average scores and passing percentages by all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners, on the Comprehensive English Regents Exam.
- Lead teachers have been sent to professional development sessions on aligning to the Common Core Learning Standards and turn-key all session material to their respective grade level and content teams.
- Vertical teams meet every Tuesday to analyze project-based learning that builds scaffolds across grade levels and subject areas. For instance, a satire project goal was aligned to Advanced Placement English classes. Students were immersed in the art of cartography. Maps were then created to focus on the satirical play in focus.
- Lead teachers are part of cabinet meetings and have requested study lab periods to provide student support. This method of distributed leadership has helped to establish substantial steps necessary to ensure that teachers and administrators have the time to strategize productive approaches to student learning. One teacher shared that, "We have instituted regular Vertical Team Meetings to address the refinement and sophistication of skills taught year-over-year." As a result, students are building upon prior knowledge and skills gained as well as experiencing an appropriate level of rigor to challenge them in their ongoing academic coursework.