



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

**Academy of Medical Technology:
A College Board School**

Secondary School Q309

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

Principal: Jose Merced

**Date of review: April 1, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Renee Peart-Zachary**

The School Context

Academy of Medical Technology: A College Board School is a secondary school with 632 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 48% Black, 39% Hispanic, 3% White, 8% Asian, and 2% American Indian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 38% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 88.0%.

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	Additional Findings	Proficient
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	Focus	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	Well Developed
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:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire faculty and have a system of shared accountability. The staff systematically communicates high expectations to scholars and provides guidance supports through an advisory program.

Impact

The culture of mutual accountability results in staff awareness of school-wide instructional expectations. All students, including low-, mid- and high-level achievers, own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate school-wide instructional expectations through weekly staff meetings, a staff handbook that outlines the school's instructional focus of Rigor, Engagement, and Differentiation (RED), orientation meetings for new teachers, tenure meetings for non-tenure teachers to review teacher goals aligned to the Danielson Framework, and post observation conferences where the principal reviews data.
- Teachers hold each other accountable for instructional expectations through inter-visitations where they provide their colleagues feedback on their pedagogical practices. Teachers in teams visit their colleagues' classrooms to observe lessons. When teachers visit the peers' classrooms, they give suggestions of how to improve the lesson and answer the following questions: What element of the class activity was rigorous? What element of the class activity was engaging? How was the lesson differentiated? The glow and grow feedback is reviewed at teacher team meetings.
- Students are prepared for the next level through advisory sessions where they review transcripts and Rx for Success prescriptions, which is an academic action plan for students who may be in danger of failing a course. In addition to planning college trips, college night, monitoring students who are taking college classes at Mercy and Plaza Colleges, and tracking college applications, the college advisor meets with each student weekly to review all steps needed to apply for college. One student said, "I know the courses and Regents needed to graduate because my advisor reviews it with me all the time." A second student said, "I like that I can take college classes at Plaza College because I feel like I am already in college."
- In addition to preparing students for college, middle school students are getting prepared for high school. There is a peer-mentoring program where high school students mentor middle school students on high school and college expectations. A student said, "This school is always giving us advice about college, I have been hearing about college since I was in sixth grade and now I am a senior."
- All students take ownership of their educational experience by reviewing their grades through Skedula, an online grading system, and providing feedback to their teachers on their projects, homework assignments, and Rx for Success prescriptions. Students create their own academic action plans as well as monitor how to improve to succeed towards graduation. Action plans are reviewed with the guidance counselor or their advisors.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments, rubrics and provide actionable feedback to learners. Teacher assessment practices constantly include checks for understanding and opportunities for students to self-assess their own work.

Impact

The school assessment practices are emerging so that all students receiving meaningful feedback, teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students learning needs, and learners are aware of their next steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers create assessments aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and some students receive meaningful feedback that gives them clear next steps. A review of student work products on hallway and classroom bulletin boards revealed that some students receive meaningful feedback such as, "This is a Level 2 response on this essay; you need to give context to your quote, explain how the quotes relate to you claim, and fully state your claim. Please use the rubric to support you in evaluating your essay. I look forward to seeing the progress in your next essay". Other students receive less effective feedback such as, "Nice introduction, you have great writing style and you made sure your first sentence in your intro got my attention."
- In a grade 11 United States History class, students were evaluating their peers essay by using a rubric aligned to the task. In a grade 9 -12 Spanish class, students conducted a gallery walk to evaluate their peers' group work. In these classes, the teachers circulated the classroom, conducted midpoint checks through questions, and adjusted the lesson based on their findings. Based on the teachers reporting out their findings in the midpoint check and giving students clear guidance on how to complete the task, students understood their next steps in the task. This practice of teachers making effective adjustments and students' awareness of their next steps was observed in 4 out of 8 classrooms visited, and it is evolving school-wide.
- In a grade 11 Advance Placement Biology class, students conducted a presentation of their projects on the different parts of the human body. As students presented, their peers and teacher evaluated the work by using a rubric aligned to the task. The teacher recorded her findings and conducted a midpoint check where learners received information on their next steps. The school is working on developing school-wide assessment system so that all students understand their next learning steps.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty have made purposeful decisions to ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently accentuate rigorous habits.

Impact

The school's curricular decisions promote college and career readiness and strengthens higher-order skills for all students including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has made purposeful decisions to select curricula that incorporate Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. In English Language Arts (ELA), the school is focusing on the instructional shifts of text-based answers, writing from sources, and a math focus of application and deep understanding. A review of curricula maps across grades and subjects revealed all maps include the instructional shifts and promote college readiness skills. For example, the grade 10 Geometry curriculum map includes the instructional shifts of fluency, application, and deep understanding. The grade 9 English curriculum map includes the instructional shifts of academic vocabulary, text-based answers, and writing from sources.
- Tasks for all learners, including ELLs and special education students, enhance students' critical thinking skills. For example, in a grade 11 Algebra II and Trigonometry task, students are asked to solve multiple-step log equations and understand their relationship to exponentials and solve verbal problems using logs. In a grade 10 English task, students are asked to write an essay in which they make inferences on the pros and cons of totalitarian government, using evidence from the text. In a grade 9 Global Studies task, students are asked to compare and contrast the empires of Mesoamerica with the empires of Afro-Eurasia by researching various resources and writing an essay that include their source of information.
- Across grades and subjects, unit plans include tasks that promote college and career readiness. For example, in grade 11 US History course, students study the causes of the Great Depression by analyzing political cartoons, completing a research paper, and graphing their analysis. In an Economic course, students are asked to research the international trade, understand free trade, and explain the importance of macroeconomic policy by conducting an analysis of secondary sources.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Pedagogical practices reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Across classrooms, teaching strategies offer multiple entry points into the curricula and student discussions echo high levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Coherent teaching practices result in all students engaging in challenging tasks and demonstrating higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal reported that the school has an instructional focus that aligns to Rigor, Engagement, and Differentiation (RED). The staff refers to this instructional focus as the RED zone. The school's shared belief of the RED zone was observed in 6 out of 8 classes visited. For example, in a grade 8 science class, students worked in groups and were engaged in a rigorous differentiated task of identifying and explaining different parts of the human system by reviewing and providing feedback on their peers' project on the human system. Each group has a different system to analyze and critique.
- Teachers provide diverse learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, multiple entry points into lessons. For example, in a grade 7 ELA Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, the teacher provided some students with prompts to answer questions on Cesar Chavez. The teacher also used visual aids as well as frontloading vocabulary to help students answer the questions. In a grade 7 ELA general education class, students were asked to draw from their personal experiences as a way to understand the concept of direct and indirect characterization. The teacher provided some students with models to support their writing. Additionally, some students were given graphic organizers to help them organize their thoughts.
- Across classrooms visited, students were engaged in high-level discussions. For example, in a grade 10 Global Studies class, students worked with a partner to analyze their argumentative essay. Students were observed questioning their peers and discussing counterclaims. A student said, "I don't understand your counterclaim, please explain and give details." In a grade 11 US History class, students worked on an argumentative essay on the Progressive Movement of 1890 - 1920. Students used a color-coded system with highlighters to identify key components in their peers' essays. Students were observed discussing their claims with their partners.

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

The vast majority of teacher teams engage in inquiry-based collaborations that promote the school's instructional focus and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have a voice in key instructional decisions.

Impact

Teacher teams bolster pedagogical capacity of teachers and promote school-wide instructional coherence. Teacher leaders' instructional input affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Grade-level and department level teacher teams meet once a week formally and 1 - 2 times week informally to review low-, mid-, and high-level student work products. The teachers, across grades and content teams, reviewed ELA data and selected students for inquiry based-work. These professional collaborations strengthen school-wide instructional consistency. For example, all teachers use Norman Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) to ensure students are asked DOK Level 3 and 4 questions. In teacher teams, teachers review student work products and discuss different strategies to use in forthcoming lessons. Teachers discuss the type of questions to ask in future lessons. These high-level questions have led to increased student discussions for all learners.
- During a grade 9 teacher team meeting observed, the teachers started the meeting by using a protocol to provide their colleague with feedback from an inter-visitation. Then the teachers reviewed low-, mid- and high-level student essays and used a rubric to assess the student work products. The teachers shared out how students supported their claims and counterclaims. They also discussed how they saw improvement in students writing from implementing the school's instructional focus of the RED Zone. Teachers discussed their next steps of re-teaching skills and reviewing a model essay to help students organize their thoughts.
- Teachers reported that they feel they have a vital role in making important academic and enrichment decisions. Teachers also reported that instructional decisions are not made until administration hears their feedback. The United Federation of Teachers representative said, "We have a strong voice in the school and the principal is always open to hearing our ideas. For example, I had an idea to bring an art mural program into the school. It is now being implemented school-wide." One teacher said, "We are always sharing ideas with school administrators. For example, team leaders discussed how teachers could use guided notes across the content areas and now every teacher includes guided notes into the lessons." A second teacher said, "We know our instructional opinion matters because our school leaders will always share their instructional ideas with us in team meetings or in one-to-one conversations."