



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Francis Lewis**

**High School Q430**

**58-20 Utopia Parkway  
Queens  
NY 11365**

**Principal: David Marmor**

**Date of review: January 14, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Miatheresa Pate**

## The School Context

Francis Lewis is a high school with 4,170 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 7% Black, 23% Hispanic, 14% White, and 53% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92.0%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Developing</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff. Staff establishes a culture of learning and communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students.

### Impact

The communication of high expectations has resulted in a culture of mutual accountability, guidance, and advisement to ensure all students are prepared for the next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are held accountable through the observation process. Frequent classroom observations are conducted by supervisors. The school uses a collaborative structure where communication on expectations flows from the administrative cabinet via meetings and weekly newsletters to the instructional coaches to teachers. For instance, the output of the instructional cabinet meeting becomes a focus in the principal and assistant principal weekly which is shared with the staff. Each department has a collaborative space where exemplary documents are shared and posted publicly.
- Every student at Francis Lewis has access to Pupil Path via their home computers. Students revealed that they use this system to see their grades. As a result, students can determine if they should attend tutoring to work on a particular content area.
- The school provides well delineated verbal and written communication that ensures a culture of accountability for all stakeholders. The school has a website and created a handbook for students and parents that is translated into multiple languages. The handbook notes that students are expected to take advanced placement or International Baccalaureate courses and enroll in College Now or CUNY Early College courses.
- Students and parents stated in interviews that the school provides workshops specifically for articulating the high expectations of the school related to course selection and college and career readiness. The college center has two guidance counselors who provide a variety of services including hosting college workshops, arranging trips to colleges, assisting students in research, completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and advisement feedback. For example, as a result of attending a recent college center workshop, two students noted that the training assisted them in applying for financial aid.
- The school has a student lead broadcast network, FLNBC, used to communicate school wide expectations and also showcase student talents and extracurricular activities. For example the broadcasts provide updates to Regents exam tutoring schedules, and reminders about homework expectations.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of rubrics, ongoing checks for understanding, and student self-assessments for reflection.

### Impact

As a result of inconsistent assessment practices and missed opportunities in checking for understanding, feedback to students regarding performance and adjustments to instruction to meet learning needs are limited.

### Supporting Evidence

- Classrooms visits revealed an inconsistent use of rubrics as seen on class bulletin boards, student work folders, and in class work activities. For example, students were observed using rubrics as part of the school wide effort to reflect on their work in only three out of eight classrooms visited.
- During the observation of a READ180 class, self-reflection was evident via an exit slip. Ongoing checks for understanding with teacher adjustments were evident in one to one conferences, however this was observed only with one teacher. The inconsistency of teachers across classrooms engaging in ongoing checks for understanding has limited teacher's ability to elicit information about individual student learning and trends.
- While interviews with students indicated they receive verbal and written feedback in English language arts (ELA) classes, this same level of feedback was not evident across classrooms and subject areas. For instance, when observing math student work products during the student meeting feedback was limited to check marks or good job statements, but lacked actionable feedback.
- Teacher feedback has limited student's ability to self-assess and monitor their own progress. During the interview, when students were asked about self-assessment and feedback, they stated, "I can check Pupil path for updates on how I am doing but not for feedback", "feedback is written in ELA when the teacher can, but mostly peer support". Student responses revealed that there is an expectation from teachers that students independently infer their next step and determine if tutoring will support them in moving to the next level.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order-skills across grades and subjects.

### Impact

The school's curricula decisions promote college and career readiness for all learners. Across grades and content areas, academic tasks emphasize rigor to ensure student thinking.

### Supporting Evidence

- Curriculum writers meet at least four times a year to review and ensure alignment with the support of Learner-Centered Initiatives.. For instance, the school's teachers met during the summer months to work on aligning English, math, social studies and science curricula to the Common Core and other content standards. English as a second language (ESL) planning reflects Common Core alignment as well as ESL standards.
- The review of lesson plans in social studies and EELA revealed scaffolds built into the lesson for English language learners and students with disabilities. For instance, in global studies, at the end of each unit, they give a task such as an argumentative essay that compares Rome and the Han Dynasty, added modifications to help students deal with text complexity through the use of graphic organizers and sentence starters.
- In review of a science lesson plan which contained instruction on deposition, the task required students to provide the factors that affect deposition and then share their group answers with the whole class and challenge other group's responses if they disagreed or wanted to add to the response. This level of rigor was uneven across classrooms.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn. Across classrooms, student work products and discussion reflect uneven levels of rigor.

### Impact

Although the school has a set beliefs about how students learn best, the implementation of this belief is inconsistent across classrooms resulting in missed opportunities to engage student thinking and participation at high levels.

### Supporting Evidence

- During the observation of a science class students were engaged in an academic task that promoted higher order thinking. For instance, students were grouped and when asked what they were discussing, responded “how best to design a controlled experiment to measure photosynthesis.” During this same observation, students were expected to develop their own rubric by inserting the various requirements needed to achieve a level 1-4. This level of student thinking and participation was observed at uneven levels across the 14 classrooms observed.
- Low level teacher directed questioning was prevalent across classrooms. Observations of student to student discussion was limited to some turn and talk opportunities and low level questioning of students. For example, in one English class, students were asked to choose four topics and write a 5Ws (who, what, when, where, and why) paragraph and discuss how they were different. Student responses ranged from recall to low level responses such as, “I wrote about my last birthday as it was fun and memorable.” Other responses included, “I wrote about Francis Lewis cause I’m glad I came here. I made friends and cool people here.”
- The administration revealed that students learn best when they are “engaged, collaborating, having discussions with each other, and answering rigorous questions.” During a general education trigonometry lesson, when asked to discuss whether the answers on the board provided by their classmates would receive full or partial Regents exam credit as written, students struggled to provide a response. The teachers did not engage students in a supportive manner via questioning nor did the teacher make an adjustment to the lesson to support student learning.
- Although the practice of students answering rigorous questions during collaborative discussion was observed in some classrooms it was not evident across classrooms. For instance, during an integrated collaborative teaching government lesson the teachers took turns asking questions such as: “Marbury v. Madison what is he arguing?”, “Why are you arguing a specific point-right to privacy?” During a science lesson, students were asked to explain “if NADPH increases, then photosynthesis occurs more rapidly, explain why?” Yet, in another class, students were given an opportunity to engage in a digital discussion using a class blog. However, only two students were able to engage in a conversation. Furthermore, the teacher did not engage with students to encourage the class discussion.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

The majority of teachers are beginning to engage in professional collaborations to analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or are focused on.

### Impact

The school's use of an inquiry approach is developing which has limited the improvement of instructional practices and the progress towards goals for groups of students based on teacher team practices.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use a reflection sheet to hone in on their instructional practices. For instance, teachers revealed during their interview that adopting a reflective mindset has led to many structural changes and academic initiatives including the creation of double period global history classes and multiple arrangements of algebra along with the creation of the academy sequences. Additionally, the literacy coach provides professional development for teachers based on *Danielson Framework for Teaching* observations and reflection sheets.
- The review of team meeting binders revealed that teams are established; instructional coaches support the teams and look at student work to inform practice. However, the documents in binders did not reveal evidence of teachers using an inquiry approach to set student goals as a result of the meetings. For example, in reviewing several team binders, notes reflect that as of January 14, teacher teams have only met once or twice thus far this year. Binders provided only some evidence of instructional or curricula changes, and student progress as a result of these meetings. For instance, in review of agendas of team meetings, the teachers used a tuning protocol to revise a task yet evidence of changes to the curricula or how this review influenced student progress was not indicated.
- During professional collaborations teachers analyze assessment data from Castle Learning, departmental common mid-year exams, PSAT, PLATO learning system, Read 180, Achieve 3000, System 44, CPS, benchmarking exams and classroom performance tasks. During the observation of a teacher team meeting, teachers were observed reviewing the Castle Learning program. The teacher leader shared with the teachers via a demonstration of the system how to generate assessments using Common Core aligned questions; use the pre-tests and post-tests to assess student growth; and analyze data to differentiate instruction for students. Students also revealed during the interview that they use Castle Learning for homework, quizzes, and some test. However, the meeting observed did not provide evidence of teachers using an inquiry based approach nor was there a focus on creating goals for students.