



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Law Enforcement and Public Safety**

**High School Q690**

**116-25 Guy R Brewer Boulevard  
Queens,  
NY 11434**

**Principal: Laura Van Deren**

**Date of review: April 23, 2015**

**Lead Reviewer: Juan Mendez**

## The School Context

High School for Law Enforcement and Public Safety is a high school with 590 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 66% Black, 18% Hispanic, 2% White, and 9% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92.7%.

## 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>Focus</b>	<b>Developing</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>Proficient</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>Additional Findings</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>Proficient</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>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders consistently convey high expectations to staff via the Danielson Framework for Teaching (DfT) in trainings and teacher feedback on observations. Multiple delivery methods keep families abreast of student academic and social progress.

### Impact

Structures that support the school's high expectations create a culture of collaboration and accountability amongst the staff, students and their families, thus providing a path to college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- As an example of high expectations for students, the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan states, "During the 2014-2015 school year, we will continue to implement mentoring programs with socio-economic and youth development counseling (i.e. Hip Hop 4 Life, ELITE, intermediaries) which will result in a 5% reduction in Level 3 and 4 infractions." The school received an award from the 113<sup>th</sup> Police Precinct, High School with lowest crime in the district. The school is partnered with the New York City Police Department and students are involved in a range of activities sponsored by the NYPD,
- The school provides parent workshops on the college application process, SATs, new student orientations, and weekend Zumba classes. Parents assert that the school is "well structured" and "the principal is very hands on with an open door policy." Students declare, "Teachers are supportive and help guide you," students also praise Hip Hop for Life as helping to forge a path to college.
- Communication methods to partner with families include letters, phone calls, parent conferences, school messenger, Parent Teacher Association meetings and School Leadership Team meetings. Teachers have adopted a uniform grading system, EndGrade, which allows parents and students to view student progress at home.
- The school supports the progress toward college and career expectations with the Advanced Placement expansion program, offering additional college level courses and college and career fairs and tours. Students are exposed to college classes through the Syracuse University Project Advance. The school was one of 40 high schools selected to offer the SAT exam for free to juniors.
- Classroom observations are anchored around the Danielson Framework for Teaching, with school leaders sharing and collaborating on the observation and feedback cycle to ensure coherence. Fifty-eight percent of teachers are rated effective in classroom observations. Teachers focus on elements of the framework such as 3b, Questioning and Discussion, during professional development in order to ensure accountability and high expectations.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

The school is in the process of aligning curricula to Common Core Learning Standards in all subject areas so that all students may have access to cognitively engaging, rigorous academic tasks.

### Impact

Access to engaging, rigorous, Common Core aligned tasks is inconsistent across classrooms. Across grades and subject areas high level critical thinking is varied.

### Supporting Evidence

- Review of curriculum documents across content areas reflects inconsistent culminating tasks reflecting varying levels of cognitive engagement aligned to expectations on formative and summative assessments. The school is working toward improving Regents pass rates and to promote a clear path to college and career readiness for all students.
- Curricula maps in some content areas provide evidence that the school develops tasks through the adaptation of instructional materials from Engage NY. For example, in a 10<sup>th</sup> grade English language arts curriculum map, essential questions include close reading of an informational text for detail culminating in an analytical essay using three complex texts. However, all grade levels and content areas do not mirror this practice thus far.
- The degree of curricular coherence varies in subject areas. Although the school's instructional focus states, "Students will develop rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills by engaging in learning experiences that support college and career readiness," the school wide Drop Everything and Write argumentative essay assignment in various content areas employed inconsistent rubrics and criteria, with some misalignment to the Common Core Standards. For example, students in an English class were not asked to insert counterclaims into argument essays.
- Unit plans in mathematics reflect essential questions, standards and resources. Examples of essential questions include, "How do the properties of real numbers impact the manipulation of polynomials and other expressions?" "In what ways are expressions and equations related?" However, in an ICT Math class, there was no evidence of differentiation or scaffolding to engage a diversity of learners in answering these questions.
- Lesson plans in some content areas emphasize higher order thinking, but few offer elements of student choice and access for a diverse group of learners. For example, in an Algebra lesson on transformations of functions, students had to graph a parabola, write an algebraic equation and explain how the graph changed the axis of symmetry and the vertex using a Common Core aligned rubric. However, in a United States History class containing students with disabilities, students' focused on answering, "Who was to blame for the Cold War?" in preparation for an argument essay, but there was no evidence of scaffolding for a special population.

## Additional Findings

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

Pedagogical approaches are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching while student work products and student discussions reflect high levels of participation.

### Impact

Across classrooms, questioning and discussion techniques push student thinking and support most students to produce meaningful work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- In a Global History class, peer-to-peer discussions and feedback centered on the Cold War with students sharing textual citations they found to be most valuable. The teacher's summary question included, "Did their evidence lead you to change your thinking? Explain."
- In all classrooms visited, the interactive board was used to display instructional information. In a few classrooms, students used the interactive board to show work. For example in mathematics, students wrote responses to algebraic equations on the board, followed by the teacher explaining reasoning to the whole class.
- In a global integrated co-teaching class, students discussed the quality of evidence regarding racial discrimination in South Africa. Digital rubrics guided student conversations as well as quality of claims in the text.
- In most classes visited, elements of collaborative structures for learning were present. In an English class, students worked cooperatively to provide feedback on argumentative essays with literary elements. Students gave each other feedback, for example, "Your controlling idea was strong, but you need work on your run-on sentences."
- In a science class, students worked on a hands-on activity using tweezers, varying colors of colored paper, sunglasses and other resources to determine how the environment and evolution impact organism survival.

**Findings**

Although common assessments are used to measure student progress, the monitoring of student progress through tracking is inconsistent. Consistent checks for understanding coupled with high quality feedback are varied across classrooms.

**Impact**

The school's system of using assessment results to monitor student progress does not consistently inform instructional adjustments to meet the needs of all learners. Additionally, there are missed opportunities for student self-assessment with checks for understanding across classrooms.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Student-written assessments on bulletin boards in classrooms and in hallways reflect multiple content areas with some tasks and rubrics aligned to Common Core Learning Standards. For example, argument essays on whether GMO foods should be allowed in the United States, essays on rhetorical device analysis of Elie Wiesel's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech and thematic essays on the progressive era and its impact on the United States.
- Although teacher teams utilize student work in inquiry, tracking of outcomes across grades and subjects is not consistently evidenced across the school. The school's outcomes on benchmark assessments are not consistently monitored in every content area so as to be accurate predictors of student performance on state exams, for example in mathematics and global history.
- Teachers are provided with item analysis results in content area departments, analyze them in class and have one on one discussions with students; yet, there is no clear system of tracking the outcomes of the results in connection to curricular or pedagogical adjustments.
- Checks for understanding vary across classrooms. In science, teachers use clickers. In other areas teachers use exit tickets, polling and questions to gauge understanding. For example, in a Global History self-contained class, the teacher keeps track of student responses on a clipboard based on the rubric for discussion, but practices such as this are inconsistent.
- There are missed opportunities for students to self assess in classroom instruction. For example, students in English Language Arts did not have an exemplar to use to guide their peer feedback; students in mathematics did not have a model of techniques to solve word problems using the quadratic equation.

<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 engaged in structured professional development connected to school-wide goals. Teams analyze student work, but it results in inconsistent adjustments to curricula and teacher practice.

### **Impact**

The work of teacher teams has resulted in some improvement in pedagogical strategies, curricula modifications and student progress in some content areas.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The school's Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) states, "During the 2014-2015 school year, teacher teams will continue to work together to support the instructional focus: to increase rigor by engaging students in Common Core aligned learning experiences that require higher order thinking and support college and career readiness so that there is a 5% increase on the Global Regents Examination."
- Through a grant, the English Language Arts teacher team was trained on the Consultancy Protocol, a method of looking at student work. The team turn-keyed the protocol to other teams in the school. Some guiding questions include, "Did the teacher expectations for the assignment match what the students produced?"
- Teacher teams are organized by content and grade level, teacher leaders rotate weekly to lead sessions. Although teachers meet to discuss student work, the school is developing towards clear systems to document adjustments and align to student performance data through the use of Google Drive.
- Teacher teams do not consistently analyze student assessment data nor make strategic use of benchmark assessments as evidenced by the weighted Regents pass rate that is lower than some citywide averages.
- Teachers articulate that teacher teams encourage the use of Google Drive, which results in transparency, though the school is still moving toward concrete expectations for all teachers using the tool.