



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

New Dorp High School

High School R440

**465 New Dorp Lane
Staten Island
NY 10306**

Principal: Deirdre DeAngelis

**Date of review: April 28, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Rosemary Stuart**

The School Context

New Dorp is a high school with 2,791 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 12% Black, 27% Hispanic, 51% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 88.4%.

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	Focus	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	Additional Findings	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	Additional Findings	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	Celebration	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

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

All teachers participate in structured collaborations that strengthen instructional practice and promote integration of the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams analyze instructional practices and student work and data across the school.

Impact

There is instructional coherence across all Small Learning Communities (SLCs) and student performance has improved.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers frequently meet in content level teams to review curricula, create common assessments, develop rubrics and review school wide pedagogical practices such as the annotation strategies used by all teachers. Teachers focus on reviewing curricula, planning lessons and reviewing student progress during their team meetings. The school has had a School Based Option for many years to allow additional time for teachers to meet after school. Teachers are also programmed for integrated co-teacher team meetings, guidance teams, attendance teams, and special education and English language learner (ELL) team meetings. These frequent and interconnected team meetings contribute to the coherence of curricula between all eight SLCs in the school.
- Every SLC has an inquiry team that meets weekly. An inquiry team meeting in one SLC was observed reviewing the transcripts and assessment results for the students they mentor. Each member of the team selects two students to mentor each semester. They were discussing the progress students were making in understanding and responding to higher level texts. One student, who was barely able to write a sentence in September, recently wrote a two page essay “with good structure.” The team members attributed much of the progress students are making to the annotation practices that have become a school-wide reading and writing strategy. The weighted English pass rate relative to the city rose from 39% in 2013 to 60% in 2014.
- Every SLC has a team that includes the teachers, guidance counselors, and school aides that meets weekly to discuss intervention plans to address the social and emotional issues of students who have been referred through the suspension process or from another inquiry team for academic reasons. Every SLC has an interdisciplinary team that meets weekly to plan for mentoring, tutoring and personalization of the high school experience.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Teachers provide multiple entry points, but do not always provide high quality supports and extensions, for learners to access the curricula and produce work that reflects higher-order skills.

Impact

Students are engaged in challenging tasks and demonstrate high levels of thinking and participation although not all demonstrate high levels of ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The instructional focus has been on developing high order questioning and discussion skills, engaging in high quality rigorous tasks emphasizing writing, and using assessment to inform lesson planning in alignment with the *Danielson Framework for Teaching*. Teachers in all content areas utilize the strategies of Judith Hochman to improve writing, annotation and note-taking skills. The use of teacher-created curricular materials, aligned to Hochman and bound in volumes by content area and course, increases the coherence of instructional practices across SLCs. Students indicate that using the bound books helps them to organize their work and shows them how much their writing has improved over time. A writing assignment in a physical education class requires students to use the conjunctions, “because,” “but,” and “so,” a Hochman strategy, to explain the best way to play volleyball.
- In one math class, in which ELL students were grouped to facilitate the use of online dictionaries, students were assigned a Do Now task to determine how many cylinders (pieces of sidewalk chalk) would fit standing on end in a container. Some students were still copying the aim and the task into their notebooks 10 minutes after the beginning of the period. A few of them did not actually begin to solving the problem until the teacher guided the class through the solution, which involved finding the area of the base of the chalk and the area of the base of the box. The lack of strategic supports for these few students and the loss of time in active engagement hinders them from producing the highest levels of student work.
- In many classes, students were facilitating their own learning. For example, in a forensic science class, students were independently reading and annotating a text and then listing reasons supporting both sides of an argument regarding methadone treatment policies in preparation for writing an argumentative essay. However, in a few classes, the conversation was teacher-centered and questioning did not foster deep discussion among the students thus limiting the opportunities for all students to demonstrate ownership of their learning.
- Students in many classes were observed annotating text and citing evidence from the text. Students use accountable talk stems to transition the discussion. In a small group discussion of an article dealing with the mercy killing, or murder, of a person stranded in a desert, the students justified their opinions by making connections between this news story and the plot of the novel, *Of Mice and Men*.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and teachers align the curricula to the Common Core, integrate the instructional shifts and emphasize the development of rigorous habits and higher order skills.

Impact

The coherence in instruction and focus on college and career readiness is sustained across the school and for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses EngageNY resources for English language arts and math to ensure alignment with Common Core Learning Standards. They adapt the materials and supplement them to meet the needs of the incoming students who are largely at Levels 1 and 2. The instructional focus has been on developing higher-order questioning and discussion skills, engaging in high quality rigorous tasks emphasizing writing, citing from the text, and using assessment to inform lesson planning. The school relies on primary and secondary sources for texts and plans for purposeful inclusion of text dependent questions as well as incorporating annotation strategies in all content areas.
- Teachers use Understanding by Design (UbD) strategies to create unit and lesson plans in the core content areas and follow the New York State scope and sequence for instruction in social studies and science courses. For example, teachers started with the question, “What does a student in our small learning community know when they graduate from high school?” and then determined what needed to be explicitly taught in each grade back to grade 9. In addition, a visual arts lesson plan referenced the Blueprint for the Arts and the New York State Learning Standards for the Arts.
- Teachers create curricula and units of study that align with the Judith Hochman writing program for general education, students with disabilities, and ELLs. The unit materials are bound in workbooks that students can purchase for English, social studies and science classes. Similar materials are created for all other content areas including those leading to Regents exams. The materials are always made available if the students are not able to purchase the books. Over the summer, teachers reflect on the assessment results from the prior year to revise these materials in preparation for the coming year.
- Lesson plans in all SLCs and across content areas include high level Depth of Knowledge questions designed to push students to demonstrate their thinking. For example, a lesson plan for an algebra class includes questions like, “Compare and contrast the box-and-whisker plot for high school girls’ vs. high school boys’ shoe sizes. What is affecting the size of the box-and whisker plot?” and “Can you predict how the graph will change?”

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

A clear picture of student progress emerges from the use of common assessments across the school. While teachers adjust curricula and instruction to meet their needs, students monitor their own progress toward mastering the material.

Impact

All students demonstrate increased mastery of the curricula and are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams administer common assessments in all content areas and for all types of learners and then conduct item analysis on the results to determine what needs to be retaught. The results of these assessments are entered into the Data Driven Classroom program which facilitates the analysis. Using a survey to collect responses, teachers identify patterns of topics that were difficult for students and suggest potential strategies to address the instructional implications. For example, one such analysis included the suggestion that teachers should brainstorm with students to identify possible topic sentences and transitions for every quick outline they do in order to move more students toward the school-wide writing goals.
- Students use the rubrics that are aligned to specific units of study to guide them as they engage in projects and tasks. One rubric for a presentation on the Cold War identifies the content and sequence of information that must be included in the oral presentation as well as the characteristics of accuracy and clarity. For this same project, students were given tips on how to assess their fellow students by providing warm and cool feedback, such as saying that the graphic they used in the presentation was helpful and why. One student stated that he thinks peer assessments help improve his writing because a fellow student is more apt to be brutally honest than a teacher would be.
- One assessment task in an environmental science class was modeled on the types of questions found on the Regents exam and required students to respond to multiple choice items and more complex short answer prompts that ask students to interpret a diagram of a food web to explain a predator-prey relationship. Teachers use these type of assessments to determine which students require additional support as they prepare for Regents exams. In 2013, 14% of all students taking the Living Environment Regents exam scored 85 or better. In 2014, that percentage rose to 20%. The percentage of ELLs that passed the same exams by scoring 85 or better rose from 2% to 10%.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders effectively communicate their expectations for college and career readiness to students and their families and provide support to meet those expectations.

Impact

The school partners with families to support students as they take responsibility for preparing for college and career.

Supporting Evidence

- The school consistently and constantly reinforces the message that students are expected to be college ready when they graduate after four years of high school. They use Naviance, an online program to promote college and career readiness, to facilitate the college application process. Students are supported as they make decisions about their own future. The program provides information to students and their parents on college choices and helps them track the testing, audition, application, and financial aid process from ninth grade through graduation.
- School leaders, teachers, staff, students and parents use the Skedula and PupilPath programs to communicate about and track student performance, attendance and homework assignments. Communications to parents are translated into home languages. Juniors and seniors receive alerts regarding upcoming College Board tests and Advanced Placement exams or reminding them of college application or financial aid deadlines. Over 97% of students use these tools to take responsibility for monitoring their own progress toward graduation. 100% of staff and 68% of parents are registered and use these programs regularly.
- Parents believe the work their children are doing is rigorous and is preparing them for college. One parent explained that her older son who graduated from this school is finding that he is well prepared to be successful with the work he is doing in college. Another parent said that she feels the school is clearly focused on preparing the students for college and added, “It used to be that you decided if you were going to go to college or not, now there isn’t a choice.”