



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Concord

High School R470

**109 Rhine Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10304**

Principal: Christopher Anzalone

**Date of review: April 27, 2015
Reviewer: Cynthia Dickman**

The School Context

Concord is a high school with 160 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 26% Black, 44% Hispanic, 24% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 30% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-14 was 73.4%.

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	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	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	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	Additional Findings	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	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Teacher collaborations result in improved teacher practice and progress towards goals for groups of students. Teachers have built leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers meet once a week with a focus on increasing and improving writing using the Common Core Learning Standards anchor standards for writing and the alignment to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. These professional collaborations also engage teachers in subject specific teams where they focus on creating writing tasks for their disciplines. Teacher team time is used for reviewing student work, the creation of monthly culminating assignments, and preparing materials and resources. Subject specific teams look for trends within the disciplines and discuss the specific scaffolds they will use in the classroom to meet students' needs. The impact of his work has been an increase in the teachers' skill in identifying and addressing student academic challenges quickly as well as identifying current trends and next steps for the school as a whole.
- The focus of the teacher team work has been connected to the school's comprehensive educational plan's goal to increase students' writing capacity. Teacher teams analyzed where their students were struggling the most with their writing. With those findings, teachers have been adjusting the instruction to improve student writing. The English language arts teacher team identified that, when teaching leads, the English language arts teachers need to continue to teach the use of the words but, because, and so. They also identified that teachers should model how to insert and edit for additional transitions. To support students, a resource list of transitions as part of writing across the curricula was developed to provide the students with phrases or words that they can use to connect one idea to another. Social studies teachers reviewed students' Regents exam and essay scores, samples of student work and the Regent's rubric for essays, and identified that students were having problems with their Regent's essay writing. To support students, they developed outlines to help scaffold essay writing and identified their next instructional steps of breaking down the tasks for the students.
- A combination literacy coach and technology coordinator position was created for this school year to help teachers increase their writing instruction and to support teacher teams with reviewing the students' writing. The school uses Schoology as their online student progress monitoring system, to increase engagement and provide instant feedback. Students are able to use Schoology to respond to the teacher and to provide feedback to other students. This increased use of technology in the classroom has impacted student thinking, learning, and participation through an increased level of student engagement.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching (DfT) and the instructional shifts. Teachers use questioning and discussion techniques, and provide supports and scaffolds to meet the needs of all students.

Impact

A shared set of beliefs regarding how students learn best ensures that all learners, including students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student discussions and work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The school utilizes double period classes for students taking specific New York State Regents Exams or requiring remediation. Algebra is taught for 93 minute sessions, and the teacher incorporates constructivist lessons in her planning, where the students are actively involved in the process of making meaning as opposed to passively receiving information. Teachers indicated that the lessons are helping keep the students more engaged for the longer period of instructional time.
- All students have access to a laptop computer to increase student engagement and allow for quick research within classes. The laptops allow for more variety in class activities, increasing differentiation, engagement, and rigor. In the Living Environment science class, students worked on their task of creating a DNA fingerprint in a virtual lab, in pairs and individually using their laptops.
- Teachers are creating interactive activities and lesson adaptations to provide multiple entry points. Questioning and discussion techniques are used to challenge and push the thinking of all students, including special needs students. Questioning and discussions within all classes require students to explain their response to make their thinking evident. For example, in a Global History class, students were seated in four teams working together on what led to the rise of fascism in Germany. They were asked to discuss the question, "How do fascist leaders take control?" As students discussed and responded, the teacher circulated around the room asking students to further support their answers and asked further probing questions such as, "What does it mean in terms of increasing their power?", and "What is a one party rule?"

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that the curricula across grade levels are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate content standards and the instructional shifts. Teachers refine the tasks for subsequent units based on the review of student work and data.

Impact

The school's curricula decisions build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all learners. A diversity of learners, including students with disabilities, have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- The school crafts their own curricula that are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards the Danielson Framework for Teaching (DfT) and the instructional shifts. This year, adjustments were made to increase writing across the curriculum. The curricula were all adjusted to increase both the frequency and depth of writing instruction in all subject areas. Students have a writing task once a week in most classes. Writing is incorporated into physical education instruction, where the students research and write about a sport and/or workout routine. In a mathematics lesson plan on multiplying rational numbers, students were expected to write a description of the steps used to solve the problem incorporating math vocabulary words such as factor, greatest common factor, product, trinomial, rational expression, and binomial.
- This year, writing instruction began with argumentative essay writing. Students had to write arguments to support their claims in an analysis of substantive topics or text, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. In Global History, students had to write an argumentative essay in response to the prompt, "Should child labor be banned?". The student had to base their argument on textual evidence from primary sources, to make a claim/take a position, defend the position/claim with facts and examples and then explain the counterclaim using facts and examples. Upon completing the task, a review of the work led to teacher planning for the use of a graphic organizer to promote thinking for all students across the grade levels. In addition, the argument writing checklist from *Writing Pathways, Performance Assessment and Learning Progressions* by Lucy Calkins would be utilized by students to determine the progression of their development, language conventions and structure of their writing.
- Within each unit of study, lesson plans and tasks are differentiated to meet the needs of all students. Lesson plans reviewed in English language arts, algebra and social studies included questions of higher level thinking, accommodations/modification strategies and checks for understanding. A consultant from Generation Ready was hired and supports the teachers with planning and sequencing their lessons within units. In addition, the consultant has helped staff members break their lessons into smaller chunks so students can understand and master what was being taught. Lessons are now more thorough, and include all components to ensure that all students, including students with disabilities have access to rigorous tasks while also receiving the support they require.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across the school, common assessments and checks for understanding are utilized to measure student progress and adjust instruction.

Impact

Teachers use summative and formative assessment analysis to determine student progress and make adjustments to the curricula and instruction. Checks for understanding and student self-assessments enable teachers to make effective changes to meet all students learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The assessment data from English language arts predictive assessment given in October, Regent's results on essays and document based questions in January, and work products in each class revealed that the students needed support in strengthening writing expertise. This information led to an instructional focus on increasing writing skills. Teachers shared with students that writing is connected to everything they do in each of the subjects, and that the instructional focus would be to incorporate writing into all disciplines.
- This year, the school selected School Net to provide various writing assessments. There was a beginning of the year benchmark and a mid-year assessment administered in January, and they will administer an end of the year in May to determine student progress toward the school goal. The common assessment is the writing tasks created through the Department of Education, which the school implemented this year so more data would be available to analyze and inform appropriate adjustments to the curricula and instruction.
- The school's curricula maps incorporate assessments at key points throughout the curricula. These maps allow for prior knowledge checks, checks for understanding during units, and end of unit assessments to check for understanding of key concepts before they are expanded upon in future units. The information gathered allows teachers to make adjustment in their presentations. To meet all students' learning needs, teachers focus on discussions, and increase the use of visuals. They also adjust lesson to incorporate various styles of learners based on class by class basis, and use small group instruction as a strategy. Classes are small, with four students in an Integrated Algebra class, six students in a United States History class, and eight students in a Living Environment class. Teachers conference with students to assess their level of understanding and allow for continuous check-in to ensure each student is on task. Teachers circulate throughout the room during lessons, and check-in through questioning as students respond with thumbs up, down and sideways and/or complete exit tickets. Teachers also use formative assessment such as classroom exams, quizzes, projects and questions to adjust lessons as needed. Written outputs in the form of class work, do-now activities, writing activities and exit slips all provide teachers with the data needed to make effective adjustments.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations, provide training to the entire staff and have a system of accountability for the expectations. The school communicates these expectations and progress to the students and families to ensure college and career readiness.

Impact

The school establishes a culture that communicates high expectations for learning and success to the teachers, students and families, and provides support to ensure progress towards the expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Expectations are communicated with teachers during their initial planning conferences with the administrators, during the distribution of schedules, and during team meetings and professional development sessions. They are also discussed during pre- and post-observation conferences, during unwritten pop-ins, at end of each marking period, and frequently throughout the term. The principal's observation reports demonstrate evidence of actionable, time-bound feedback to teachers. An example of this feedback in an observation report indicated that the teacher must purposefully plan questions to increase higher order thinking, to further students' thought and insight. The scripted questions would be discussed during a scheduled follow-up meeting. The administration also creates a weekly newsletter, *The Concord Weekly*, which is displayed throughout the school each week.
- The school has developed the adopted parent program so all students always have someone to check-in with on a day-to-day basis. Staff members are encouraged to have frequent check-in meetings with students to support them in the same manner as a parent might. High standards are set and clearly explained to students at the beginning of each term. These expectations are continually restated by the faculty and conveyed in all feedback to students. Working with their Concord adopted parent and guidance counselor, students outline their transition plans and the next steps they must take to reach it. A student who has been in the school for a year stated, "The staff is very friendly and my adopted parent encourages me to work better and reach for my goals!" A student who has been in the school for six months stated, "It is a small environment so it is much easier for the teachers to help you. It is more of a one-on-one. Everyone knows each other like a family."
- Parents stated that the school has high expectations and regularly communicates with them regarding their children's progress through the use of the online student monitoring system, automated phone system, text messages, emails, the school's website, and through conversations both in person and on the phone. A parent affirmed the type of encouragement the school provides, indicating the school provides incentives for honor roll, attendance and overall improvement. She elaborated that the two awards ceremonies held each year for attendance and achievement create incentives for her child to succeed. Another parent indicated her child is doing much better since starting at Concord because the teachers stay on top of things and as a result, her son's grades have improved. Another parent indicated that the school's guidance counselor keeps her informed, and has really helped her daughter to research potential colleges and complete applications.