

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Leadership Institute High School

09X276

**1701 Fulton Avenue
Bronx
NY 10457**

Principal: Marta J. Colon

**Date of review: December 17, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Hadiya J. Daniel-Wilkins**

The School Context

Leadership Institute is a high school with 218 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 33% Black, 65% Hispanic, 1% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 24% English language learners and 25% special education students. Boys account for 57% of the students enrolled and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 73%.

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	Celebration	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	Developing
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	Developing
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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure curricula are aligned with CCLS and content area standards. Curricula and academic tasks are refined using student work and data.

Impact

Teachers are utilizing CCLS aligned units and lesson plans to develop data-driven tasks, and refinements are made in order to cognitively engage a variety of learners

Supporting Evidence

- Across content areas unit plans are designed to include the following: Common Core Learning Standards, content standards, topics, titles, key academic vocabulary, learning goals, content knowledge, inter-disciplinary connections, scaffolding content and skills, learning activities, resources, timelines and assessment. For example, the unit plan for Algebra 2 had all aforementioned categories plus administrator's feedback of, "What happens if students do not finish the lesson?" to build coherence. School leaders purposefully use both Common Core Learning Standards and the City-wide Expectations (CIE) to ensure curricula alignment and integration of instructional shifts.
- Lesson plans included the following: Common Core Learning Standards, content standards, learning intention, success criteria, vocabulary, resources, application, independent and pair group work, student engagement, formative or summative assessment, summary: exit slip and differentiation category. In addition a specific number of English Language Learners (ELLs) and special education students for each class were noted on plans. For example, the lesson plan for Global History 4 included all of the above mentioned categories plus the notation of 15 students on register, 5 English Language Learners and none with an individual Education Plan.
- The lesson plan for Spanish1 included the following: "pair work: 20 minutes." Students identified as Spanish speaking beginners, in this Spanish 1 course, were purposely partnered with peers fluent in Spanish to complete the classroom tasks. Non-Spanish speaking students were seen listening to translations of the classroom assignment requiring learners to draw someone doing dishes, washing clothes and cleaning the bathroom.
- In Global History 4 the lesson plan identified five students with ELL status. Two of five ELLs were required to annotate Lexile specific text with English speaking peers. Two additional ELLs were identified as partners to work with each other to annotate a similar Lexile leveled text on the topic of "Imperialism."

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Classroom teaching practices are beginning to reveal alignment to curricula and show an emerging set of beliefs about how students learn best. Students' work products and discussions reflect inconsistent levels of thinking and participation.

Impact

Instruction, outcomes, strategies and learning activities are inconsistently aligned to standards, curricula and stated beliefs about how students learn best and student-centered discussions, rigorous thinking, or problem solving were uneven, thus limiting opportunities for high levels of engagement and student work.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher-directed instruction and teacher-to-student question patterns prevailed as the consistent teaching practice. In the majority of classrooms teachers were seen leading activities, and students were heard responding to teacher generated recall questions. For example, one teacher posed, "What is homeostasis?" Yet another teacher prompted students to identify, "Which picture helps you answer the question?" Opportunities to demonstrate that students learn best when teachers present high quality questions, as noted in the Danielson Framework for Teaching were missed.
- While lesson plans had "Learning Intentions," with Depth of Knowledge levels noted, and "Success Criteria" affixed, the tasks students were observed completing did not provide them with opportunities to reach the noted learning intentions of, "analyzing, assessing, interpreting, and creating. This prevalent disconnect between the lessons' intention and what students were actually doing, hampered possibilities for students to be engaged in cognitively demanding tasks.
- In the majority of classrooms students' shared that they were engaged in activities because the information was going to be on the "Regents." Teachers were also heard reminding students that the purpose for the learning was that the content was, "Going to be on the test." Test performance outcomes were often presented as the primary purpose for the learning and instruction, hence obscuring opportunities for engaging students in discourse, and creative and critical thinking.
- Across classrooms student work products displayed were often large chart paper sheets with pictures or one quote, or two to three sentences, completed by three or four students. While teachers' lesson plans included categories of Common Core Learning Standards and Content Standards, application and rigor, student work displayed in classrooms reflected a limited number of products resulting from rigorous standards-based instruction.
- In a majority of classrooms, a "Handout" proved to be the sole resource used for student learning. Resources such as informational texts, manipulatives, and technology programs, associated with rigorous instruction were also limited.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and teachers utilize common assessments, rubrics and grading policies providing actionable feedback to students and teachers. Data tools are used to track student progress toward goals and inform instructional decisions.

Impact

School leaders and teachers use item analysis data accounts to inform professional practices, determine students' needs and monitor progress toward writing and learning goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use the Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) baseline data for English Language Arts to identify writing skills in need of development for all students. The most recent MOSL data revealed student learning gaps in the writing of skill “counterpoint” in the argumentative baseline assessment. As a result, the developing of a counterpoint in writing became an instructional goal across disciplines for this school year.
- The New York City Schoolnet Student Performance benchmark data, for Integrated Algebra, highlighted multiple choice questions as one of the challenging areas for students. Teachers therefore, have designed lessons to provide students with increased opportunities at multiple choice experiences. In one Algebra class students were observed completing visual model multiple-choice questions.
- Members of one teacher team identified learning gaps and cited students' learning strengths as that of, “Citing evidence and annotating text.” They also added that the data revealed areas for student performance improvement as, “Interpretation of text and writing complex sentences.” Analysis of students' work led these teachers to then conclude that an increase in visual-aides in teaching practices was necessary to support learning needs of targeted students.
- New York State Regents item skills analysis data has been used to collect data. Findings uncovered reading comprehension as an area in need of increased direct instruction. As a result, the explicit teaching of academic vocabulary and the strategic planning to increase literacy across the disciplines also became an instructional focus for the current school year.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

School leaders and staff are developing strategies to communicate expectations connected to college and career readiness to families. Teachers and other staff members are beginning to cultivate structures for articulating clear guidance/ advisements.

Impact

Teacher teams and staff inconsistently communicate the school's expectations and specific higher education criteria to students and families, so that the entire school community is accountable for supporting students in meeting those expectations and successfully moving to the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- While parents were able to state the grade level of their youngster, they conveyed having little understanding of the academic credit accumulation necessary for their child's graduation. Parents also shared they had minimal information on methods for supporting their youngster track credits to graduation.
- Parents shared that guidance staff was available for consultation. However, support for navigating the Free Application for Federal Student Aid system (FAFSA) to help their teen with the college application process and advisories were limited.
- Parents acknowledged being familiar with Skedula, the on-line reporting system used at Leadership Institute to share academic performance of students. However, parents also reported a need for professional development opportunities on the use of the system, and a desire for increased information on how to access Skedula on various technology devices.
- Students expressed that they were learning the techniques of quick passage analysis, annotating and using context clues to support reading comprehension. They also shared samples of argumentative writing and one college essay. Yet, when asked to state the specific number of credits accumulated, as they progressed to graduation, 4 of 6 students interviewed reported that they had no knowledge, 2 students reporting credit and Regent examination counts, cited numbers that exceeded the academic policy requirements. Focused and effective feedback to students, on graduation requirements, is inconsistently communicated.
- The most recent High School Quality Snapshot shows that 3% of the senior class students graduated college ready. Teacher teams and staff advisement supports for communicating expectations for college and careers readiness lacked the detail and clarity necessary to assist students in preparing for their next level.

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

The majority of teachers consistently collaborate in professional teams using protocols to look at student work and analyze outcome data informing teacher practice.

Impact

Teacher teams meet regularly to assess students’ skill levels and make instructional decisions to meet school’s goals and share best teaching practices.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers reviewed the in-coming 9th grade reading assessment scores, concluding that a vast majority of students’ performance outcomes, on the English language arts (ELA) State examination, was that of levels 1 and 2. As a result, teachers decided on scaffolding texts, focusing on academic vocabulary and utilizing assessment-for-learning strategies as the best support for students’ academic skill development.
- Teachers reviewed samples of students’ work products using the facilitated process of the tuning protocol to provide feedback to a colleague. The presenting teacher, in the circle, requesting feedback grappled with, “How to get students to analyze character traits using evidence.” Colleagues, in the role of “critical friends,” were heard posing clarifying questions, to ascertain more information pertaining to the student work reviewed. One teacher was heard asking the presenter if a graphic organizer was used with the task. The teacher requesting the feedback was seen note taking and acknowledging clarifying questions.
- During a teacher team meeting, the analysis of MOSL data, Apex Progress Report, Schoolnet and Scantron data provided students’ performance results that led teachers to making appropriate instructional adjustments that include exit slips and assessment learning strategies as methods for checking for students’ understanding of content in their lesson plans.