



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

**Fordham Leadership Academy for Business and
Technology**

High School X438

**500 East Fordham Road
Bronx
NY 10458**

Principal: Mary Ann Tucker

**Date of review: March 25, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Cyndi Kerr**

The School Context

Fordham Leadership Academy for Business and Technology is a high school with 438 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 30% Black, 66% Hispanic, 2% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 27% special education students. Boys account for 61% of the students enrolled and girls account for 39%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 82.7%.

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	Developing
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	Developing
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	Celebration	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	Additional Findings	Developing

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training to support those expectations. The school consistently communicates the pathways to college and career with ongoing feedback to students and families.

Impact

The entire staff is held accountable for communicating the school's expectations for college and career readiness and for helping families to understand the progress their children make toward meeting those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal communicates high expectations for effective instruction to school staff through professional development on the school's instructional focus and the Danielson Framework while providing support through content coaching, teacher team supports and teacher observations. Professional development and observation feedback specifically focus on the design and rigor of classroom tasks and higher order questioning and discussion as aligned to the schools instructional focus and other elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching.
- The principal has purposefully organized resources to promote college and career readiness, including assigning a guidance counselor to each grade team, and provided professional development to teachers in the use of the Naviance program, an online system to track progress towards students path to graduation and beyond beginning in grade 9. Parents and students have access to this program, which includes an interest inventory, goal setting activities, virtual campus tours and career exploration.
- Parents have access to information about their child's performance in Skedula, a web-based management system for teachers and staff to input and track student performance and attendance. So far this year 296 parents have registered to use the Skedula system, which provides students and families data about student learning and grades, to promote timely feedback. Parents report that the school keeps them informed of student progress through progress reports that are also mailed home quarterly and the school also provides additional support afterschool and during Saturday school for specific classwork and Regents examinations preparation.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms teaching practices are becoming aligned to curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about the importance of providing students with challenging tasks with multiple entry points.

Impact

Curricular tasks are beginning to be student-centered and challenging, however students are not yet consistently engaged in producing work that demonstrates higher-order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal has been working with the teachers to move instruction toward a workshop model where there is a short, focused period of direct instruction followed by student-centered work time. The teachers receive support on this work through weekly content coaching, teacher team meetings, and observation feedback process. In most of the nine classes visited, teachers were beginning to implement a variation of this workshop model.
- A 9th grade English class lesson observed on determining if an online source is reliable or not included a checklist for students to evaluate websites in pairs, with multiple texts assigned according to students' reading levels.
- In one class, students were participating in a gallery walk in which they were reading text and answering questions at each station. However, the task did not require them to annotate the text, nor were they asked to do more than copy the text or recite the answer the teacher gave them.
- Some teachers are beginning to differentiate instruction through grouping students. However, there is uneven use of scaffolds to meet the needs of all learners. For example, in a 12th grade English class, students we asked to use textual evidence from *Othello* to write a journal entry. The confusing directions asked all students to choose option 1, 2, or 3 from the board and on another board match the options to a 2nd part labeled 1, 2, and 3. Little support was provided to the diverse learners in the class.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Curricula and academic tasks are beginning to emphasize rigorous habits, higher-order skills and planning for a variety of ways to access to the curricula and tasks.

Impact

Tasks to cognitively engage a diversity of learners are starting to be embedded in curriculum maps, units of study and lesson plans.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers in English classes use State-provided curricular materials called EngageNY, Math, social studies and science teachers are using Atlas Rubicon, a platform for curriculum mapping, to plan units of study. A curriculum map was developed to support interdisciplinary connections in the ninth grade curriculum. Cross-curricular connections were done between social studies and a literacy class using text from Achieve3000, a supplemental, technology-based differentiated reading tool.
- Development of clear learning objectives is prioritized in content coaching, so that the student activity is aligned and related to the essential questions in all lessons. For example, in one lesson the essential question was “How do heredity and the environment interact to influence organism’s characteristics?”
- In the 9th grade academy and in the English department, teachers are designing tasks using a task rigor checklist that has components of the Common Core Learning Standards.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Teachers are using some common assessments to measure student progress and are developing assessment practices across the classrooms to check for students' understanding and to track student progress.

Impact

The school's systems for tracking progress by grade and content are not used consistently to guide school-wide adjustments in units and instruction in order to meet school goals of increased credit accumulation and graduation rates.

Supporting Evidence

- The school administers NYC baseline assessments and teachers within grades create common mid-term and final assessments. Several examples of common assessments were reviewed; however the review did not reveal any analysis of the results of these assessments.
- Lesson plans include Do Now's and exit slips that are based on Regents exam type questions. For example, in Living Environment the lab class has an exit ticket that asked "Information in segments of human DNA can be expressed by a bacteria cell as a result of: 1) sexual reproduction, 2) random mutation, 3) genetic variability, 4) genetic engineering." However, the use of checks for understanding was not evident across most classrooms.
- A review of student work and discussions with students reveal that there is opportunity for students to self-assess through the use of checklists and rubrics. In addition, students sometimes have peers review their work and provide rubric-based feedback.
- There is a school-wide grading policy that is included in the teacher handbook. The grading policy does not yet reflect the school's focus on increasing student engagement and ownership of learning, as the majority of the grade is comprised of the scores on tests and quizzes.

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations on teams focused on meeting school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. The 9th grade teacher team and the English department team are beginning to use student work for students they are focused on or share.

Impact

As a result of the collaborative work occurring between the 9th grade and the English department teams, teachers across the school are beginning to use the inquiry approach to refine their practice and develop strategies to address the needs of their students.

Supporting Evidence

- The new 9th grade academy team meets with coaches from the Renewal Program to develop instructional strategies and curricula. This team uses the Writing is Thinking through Strategic Inquiry (WITsi) protocols to look at student work, identify gaps in learning and plan instruction to close those gaps. The work of the WITsi team is beginning to be adopted by other teams. One of the assistant principals is a member of this team. During an observation of the 9th grade team meeting, teachers were using a tool called a tennis chart, with skills down the left side of the page and students names across the top, to discuss and evaluate student writing skills.
- All teachers meet in grade teams once a week and on content teams twice a week. Each teacher is assigned to a grade team by the administration. In addition, teachers of integrated co-teaching classes meet for common planning two times per week.
- Teams provide minutes and agendas to the principal after each meeting to guide leaders' strategic decision-making, next steps and planning for coaching of teachers. Members of the cabinet occasionally attend these meetings.
- Professional development is being provided to develop teacher leaders. Sessions were held in how to use inquiry protocols and how to track progress using teacher and student work.
- The teams are focusing on increasing credit accumulation and improving the passing rate on Regents exams. The school reported that in January 2014, 11% of students taking the English Regents exam passed. In January 2015, 27% of the students taking the same exam passed. In January 2014 the passing rate for the Global History exam was 3%, in 2015 it was 39%.