



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

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2014-2015**

**Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School**

**High School X473**

**701 St. Anns Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10455**

**Principal: Melanie Williams**

**Date of review: February 6, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Elaine Lindsey**

## The School Context

Mott Haven Village Preparatory is a high school with 344 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 23% Black, 76% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 84.0%.

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

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Teacher teams consistently engage in structured inquiry based collaborations to that promote the achievement of school goals. Leadership structures provide means for teachers to have input in key decisions about curricula and teaching practices.

### Impact

The work of teacher teams is strengthening teachers' instructional capacity, and distributed leadership structures build capacity to improve student learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers participate in daily structured professional collaborations for common planning time and inquiry. Vertical and horizontal teams use the tuning protocol to review curricula, student data and work products in order to strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers and align teacher practice to the school's goals and instructional shifts, as evident through an interdisciplinary social studies and English research project. All teams consist of a timer, facilitator and recorder who posts minutes on line. Presenters are responsible for posting information on a cloud-based, shared document website for feedback from administration.
- Teacher teams have contributed to the achievement of school goals focusing on the school's instructional vision around attendance, credit accumulation, Regents and their graduation rate. Because the school's focus is on the instructional vision, teacher teamwork is grounded in that vision. As a result, the school has seen incremental gains in graduation percentages, Regents pass rates and credit accumulation. School-wide goals are shared regularly during team meetings and across departments to inform next steps for upcoming student projects and to ensure alignment. The social studies team shares upcoming topics with the English and arts teams, allowing English teachers to select primary sources that support the social studies topics.
- During an observation of a teacher team meeting, a teacher shared a science class project with a rubric and task to refine. The team used the tuning protocol to provide warm and cool feedback. Suggestions for improvement from team members included in meeting minutes were: provide an exemplar essay and outline, include a short presentation about why literacy and writing are important in science, and have students write essays in a cloud-based, document-sharing platform to enable more immediate teacher feedback.
- Distributive leadership structures are in place through team leaders and certified lead teachers. Lead teachers work with teachers on lesson planning and classroom management, and they meet weekly with administration to discuss meeting outcomes and plan agendas. Additionally, the school's professional development committee allows teachers to have direct input in decisions around professional development topics for the school year. Shared leadership has resulted in a more collaborative environment and ownership of school wide initiatives where teachers use the recommended template for developing lesson and unit plans.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

Pedagogical practices inconsistently provide effective instructional supports, questioning and discussion techniques.

### Impact

Across classrooms, teaching strategies do not consistently lead to units and lessons that engage all learners in rigorously challenging tasks and higher order discussions that stretch student thinking or foster high levels of student participation.

### Supporting Evidence

- During a math class observed, students worked in groups of three to four students to select from a group of 12 equations they would cut and paste into the correct column, identifying whether they are sometimes, always or never true and why. In an advanced placement American History class students engaged in a “Speed Dating” task where students took on the character of a progressive reformer to answer a series of questions in preparation of a writing assignment.
- In classrooms visited, students did not consistently participate in rigorous discussion, and student work products did not always demonstrate high levels of thinking. Dialogue was often teacher-student-teacher with most full-class discussions being call and response, with a limited number of students responding to teacher-generated questions. In a history class visited, students read texts and answered fill in the blank questions. In a science class students were observed watching video clips and responding to teacher-generated questions that did not lead to student discussion.
- Across classrooms visited, students worked in flexible groups or independently; however extensions to lessons did not consistently challenge all learners. In a math class students were grouped to work together to answer a series of practice problems; however, students did not engage in discussion with their peers or rely upon each other for support with solving problems. As students worked on problems, the teacher was continuously called on to confirm correct answers and assisted students with problems with which they were struggling. Students did not discuss with their peers first but relied primarily on the teacher for assistance. During math class students did not engage in discussion although they had been grouped to work cooperatively with their peers.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

The school's use of Study Island and Engage NY tools in ongoing curricula development has not led to consistent emphasis of rigorous habits and higher order skills being planned and refined across grades and disciplines.

### Impact

The school's curricula decisions do not yet ensure coherence across content areas and grade levels, and do not consistently provide access to rigorous tasks that push student thinking, engage all learners and promote college and career readiness for all.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use Engage NY and curricula from Study Island for ongoing curricula development across grades and disciplines. Study Island curriculum can be used as the road map for teachers to refine curricula to meet the needs of all students. Teachers have the ability to create their own plans or refine the ones that have been provided, using them as templates to support instruction. However, a review of curriculum maps, unit and lesson plans did not consistently demonstrate how the school adapts instructional materials to develop rigorous academic tasks to engage all learners including students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs).
- Although teachers have copies of Bloom's Matrix aligned with Depth of Knowledge (DOK), as well as resources to assist with preparing students to engage in meaningful conversations and each week a different presenter presents to the team around curriculum and unit plans for feedback, curricula and academic tasks do not consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades, and disciplines for all learners including ELLs and students with disabilities. A review of a Living Environment curriculum map outlined a brief overview for both spring and fall semesters with no standards identified and the corresponding unit calendar merely reflecting a list of daily topics. A Global history lesson plan reflected all students engaging in a task that requires filling in the blank. However, a review of an integrated algebra curriculum map and lesson plan reflects modifications for both delayed and advanced learners.
- Although social studies and English teachers have created coherent research papers with an aligned rubric, tasks do not emphasize rigorous habits for a variety of learners. All 9<sup>th</sup> graders learn about literary elements, theme and symbolism and how to construct a well-organized paragraph incorporating evidence from text. Each 9<sup>th</sup> grader student writes a short essay and learns about the pieces of a research paper, 10<sup>th</sup> graders synthesize arguments, creating writing that uses more figurative language like similes and metaphors, conduct self & peer assessments, analyze more non-fiction text and write more persuasive arguments. Eleventh graders focus on Frederick Douglas, social issues, slavery, its impact on America, developing claims and counter claims, citing evidence, and starting to think about the impact of author's choice with all students using the same articles and materials.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### **Findings**

Across classrooms, teachers inconsistently use formative and summative assessment data and ongoing checks for understanding.

### **Impact**

The school's systems to monitor progress through data analysis as well as during instruction are not yet consistently used to guide adjustments in units and lessons to ensure that students are progressing towards mastery of learning objectives and that instruction meets the learning needs of all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The school utilizes Study Island unit assessments and rubrics to ascertain student mastery. However, feedback is not consistently actionable and does not offer a clear picture of student mastery. Feedback on one student's essay tells the student that he needs to improve his assertions. On a senior essay a student was told that two of the thesis topics were identical and the student repeated himself where he should not have.
- Teacher lesson plans indicate inconsistent use of formative assessments. A review of global history and geometry lesson plans revealed consistent use of exit slips and checks for understanding questions while a science and an advanced placement literature class did not incorporate any formative assessments.
- Across classrooms, teachers' checks for understanding and assessments varied. For example, in a global history and a geometry class, an exit ticket was used or included in lesson plans to assess student mastery of the learning objective. In remaining classes observed, however, teachers conducted whole class or on the spot checks without follow-up questions to check for understanding or adjustments to meet the needs of all learners. Additionally, students are not provided with opportunities for self-assessment that might lead to improved awareness of their next learning steps.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

High expectations are consistently messaged to staff, students and families. Workshops and frequent updates keep families apprised on student progress towards college and careers.

**Impact**

Structures that support the school’s high expectations provide staff, parents and students with a clear path towards college and career readiness.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School-wide goals and expectations are shared with teachers at the beginning of the school year and reinforced during weekly staff meetings and professional development sessions. Frequent observations using the Danielson Framework and feedback hold staff accountable for expectations for teaching and learning. Additionally, the school’s bi-monthly Golden Apple presentation from one staff member to another for colleagues identified for something exemplary promotes a culture of high expectations through peers and colleagues.
- The school’s ongoing partnership with East Side House Settlement and College Prep and Leadership Prep continues to promote the school’s expectations around students being college and career ready. Though these partnerships, students have access to a fully-staffed college office that provides a series of college and career readiness workshops, college trips and personalized college counseling in addition to a college counselor that continues to promote the school’s emphasis on college readiness scores for both English and math Regents exams.
- Access to the school’s on-line grading system, Jupiter Grade, provides students and families with ongoing feedback concerning their child’s attendance and academic progress, enabling parents to make ongoing early interventions. Parents participate in Free Application for Federal Student Aid workshops (FAFSA) in addition to workshops on how to access the system and interpret the information, empowering parents to support the school’s expectations for students to be college and career ready.