



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Hostos - Lincoln Academy of Science

Middle - High School X500

**600 Saint Ann's Avenue
Bronx
NY 10455**

Principal: Nicholas Paarlberg

**Date of review: May 15, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Elaine Lindsey**

The School Context

Hostos - Lincoln Academy of Science is a middle – high school with 544 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 21% Black, 73% Hispanic, 1% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92.3%.

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	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	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 communicates high expectations to all members of the school community through a variety of structures for teaching and learning connected to a path for college and career readiness.

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

- Students and families state that the school's overall goal is for them to finish high school and graduate with an associate degree. The school's partnership with Hostos Community College (HCC) through the Early College Initiative has enabled 83% of the graduating class to receive college credits and nearly 40% of the graduating seniors earned an associate's degree.
- Students prepare for college through portfolio presentations, project based learning and blackboard assignments that expose them to on line forums. The early college model is communicated starting in middle school. Parents meet with college counselors and liaisons from Hostos Community College to participate in grade meetings and college workshops. Additionally, grade 6 students participate in an intensive at HCC for one week in January. During the intensive, these students learn about the criteria to graduate with an associate degree and are exposed to mock college lectures from professors. Alumni who have graduated with an associate degree from Hostos Lincoln Academy return to have a panel discussion with grade 7 and grade 8 students to inform and encourage middle school students to take advantage of the early college model.
- Parents shared that they receive regular updates on their child's progress and expectations from teachers that are communicated through access to Jupiter Grades, an online student information system. Parents also receive ongoing feedback via progress reports and text messages from teachers and guidance counselors. Parents accompany students on college trips so they can evaluate the school's program and become empowered to make an informed decision around their child's college selection.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Pedagogical practices inconsistently provide effective instructional supports, extensions and questioning and discussion techniques to engage all learners in rigorous tasks and high-level discussions that foster deep reasoning in student work products.

Impact

Teacher use of group work and questioning and discussion strategies do not consistently extend student thinking nor promote participation across classrooms. As a result, some lessons do not provide opportunities for all students to think critically or complete challenging tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's belief that students learn best when there's real world application, productive struggle and high expectations has informed their instructional focus for the school year. Across classrooms, teachers are beginning to develop structures and routines to include real world applications in lessons and structures and routines to ensure students work cooperatively and engage in higher order discussion. These practices are emerging, but are not consistent across most classrooms. For instance, in an ICT Living Environment class, the teacher had students watch a video about biotechnology and how livestock farmers were working with scientists to create transgenic goats to produce the silk protein in their milk. Then, students were given key words to help them recreate the process. However, evidence of planning does not include essential questions or opportunities for students to work together on higher-order learning activities or participate in high-level discussions.
- Across classrooms visited, the majority of lessons were teacher-centered, with dialogue typically being teacher-student-teacher. Students were not observed generating their own questions or responding directly to their peers. For example, in a high school social studies class, students listened and read off of a Power Point without any one taking notes or engaging in higher order discussion. In a middle school reading class, students were provided with limited resources to use when supporting evidence for their claim; therefore, both the level of writing and discussion was limited. Conversely, in an ICT geometry class students engaged in collaborative learning and higher-order discussions as they worked at math stations to solve a variety of problems involving multiple skills. Student work products and discourse reflected high levels of thinking and participation.
- Across classrooms, teaching techniques do not regularly incorporate questioning and discussion techniques and scaffolds to provide diverse students with multiple entry points into the curricula. In a 6th grade ICT science class, students presented their information using self-made Power Point slides. The presenters read directly from the slides. During the presentations, it was unclear as to whether students in the audience and the presenters understood all of the information on the slides. The teacher asked one presenter, "Can you tell us more about trees and plants?" The student responded by reading the same information she had already read on the slide. When the teacher asked students in the audience to ask questions, they asked low level questions such as, "Why don't you have pictures?" The teacher's questions were not sequenced to build students' capacity to engage in higher-order thinking skills. The students' Power Point presentations did not consistently reflect work products that illustrated successful cognitive engagement in a rigorous academic task.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across grades and subjects, curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and include instructional shifts. Academic tasks and units are adjusted based on analysis of student data.

Impact

The school's curricula decisions ensure coherence across content areas and grade levels, and provide access to high level tasks that push student thinking and promote college and career readiness for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricula from Engage New York, Prentice Hall, Pearson, and Expeditionary Learning have been adapted to ensure Common Core alignment. Units in United States history classes have been adapted to include more primary sources and English language arts has been modified to include more novels and non-fiction texts. High school math units were modified to include more word problems. Additionally, modifications to the 9th grade algebra curriculum include more project based learning to see math in action.
- The school's focus around students' social emotional growth prompted revisions to the humanities curriculum. In high school, grade 9 students read *Perks of a Wall Flower* and *Catcher in the Rye* to support units of study around self-realization. In an examination of data over seven years, the data revealed that students who do well on Global Studies Regents Examination with a score of 80% or higher have strong outcomes in college classes. Students who were level 3 or higher in math, but level 2 in ELA were also more successful in college classes and had a better chance of graduating with an associate's degree. Therefore, in grade 6 the school has started to use Delta Math and Khan Academy to support students in developing stronger numeracy skills to prepare them for high school and college mathematics courses.
- Curriculum from Teacher's College was refined to include whole class novels to support rigorous student discussions. Additionally, novels to support the school's focus on social and emotional development informed decisions around text selections. New texts were added to the curriculum such as *Drums*, *Girls & Dangerous Pie*, *Tangerine*, and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* to address social and emotional maturation issues pertinent in the middle school years.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers utilize assessments, rubrics, and a grading system aligned to the school's curricula to provide feedback to students. Common assessments are used to monitor student progress and revise curricula and teacher practice.

Impact

Through the use of various assessment tools, rubrics, and Jupiter Ed, teachers assess student progress and provide students with actionable feedback. Ongoing analysis of common assessments enables teachers across grades and content areas to modify curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers create authentic rubrics by using RubiStar, an online rubric maker or adapt rubrics from Engage New York. In reviewing examples of eight rubrics across grades and subject areas the rubrics were aligned with the school's curricula and the Common Core Learning Standards. Rubrics were used to give actionable feedback to students on a wide range of assessments such as oral presentations in social studies, argumentative writing in English classes, and informational writing in science.
- By utilizing Jupiter Ed, a learning management system, teachers can utilize Juno Docs to provide students with actionable feedback online after students have uploaded their work. This was evident in a review of grade 10 literary analysis essays that had been uploaded onto Juno Docs. For instance, in the margin of students' essays the teacher offered students feedback such as, "Rewrite the last sentence to show how Beowulf might have inspired a young man in high school. Make an inference about the allusion." Use of rubrics across grades and Juno Docs reveals that students are receiving actionable feedback to inform them of their next learning steps.
- In grade 8, students take the United States History and Government, Living Environment, and Algebra Regents examinations. Data from these exams are analyzed to determine curricular and instructional adjustments in both the middle school and the high school. Additionally, the New York State 6-8 English Language Arts and Mathematics exams results are utilized to modify curricula and instruction in the middle school. Across grades, Read Theory, an online reading program, is used to target specific students who have been identified as needing support in developing their literacy skills. The reading program adapts to students' individual ability levels and presents them with a variety of skill building exercises. Through the use of this online reading program teachers can monitor and track students' progress. Delta Math, an online math program, is also used across grades to assist targeted students in developing numeracy skills; math teachers can track student progress through the use of this program. Across grades, the school is also using Performance Series, computer adaptive tests that allow teachers to identify the proficiency levels of their students.

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

Teachers engage in structured, inquiry based collaborations that are loosely connected to school goals leading to the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams utilize an inquiry approach to examine student data and work products that result in limited improvements in teacher practice.

Impact

Although teacher teams are engaged in professional collaboration, the work of teacher teams has not yet strengthened the instructional capacity of teachers to align with the school’s goals and the instructional shifts, thus hindering improved progress towards goals for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers have been scheduled to engage in bi-weekly structured professional collaborations; however inquiry cycles are developing across the teams. During a meeting with teacher teams, teachers stated that they haven’t consistently engaged in an inquiry cycle since the fall semester. A professional development plan guiding the work of teacher teams was implemented for the fall semester. Teachers met and regularly engaged in collaborative learning. However, teacher teams were not given a professional development plan to guide the work of teacher teams in the spring; teams did not consistently participate in structured, inquiry based collaborations throughout the second half of the school year.
- Teacher teams meet to analyze data and student work products; however, teachers have not developed a formal system for monitoring and tracking inquiry work. During a teacher team meeting when asked why a particular student’s work was selected, the teacher stated that the principal selected the student and the work. Minutes and agendas for team meetings were not available at the time of the observation; a formal system for memorializing meetings has not been developed yet.
- During a meeting with teachers, teachers from several departments described some of the work they have done with their teams. For example, the science team’s use of tactile learning in lessons and grade 6 teachers’ use of a graphic organizer to assist students in developing a topic sentence in their writing were developed as a result of examining student work at team meetings. However, the impact of this work on teaching and learning cannot be accurately measured due to the fact that cycles of inquiry are not focused nor are they complete.