



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Claremont International High School

High School X564

**240 East 172nd Street
Bronx
NY 10457**

Principal: Elizabeth Demchak

**Date of review: April 15, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Claudy Makelele**

The School Context

Claremont International High School is a high school with 274 students from grade 8 through grade 12. The school population comprises 24% Black, 70% Hispanic, 1% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 82% English language learners and 0% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 89.3%.

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 | Well Developed |
| 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 | Additional Findings | Well Developed |
| 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 | Focus | 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 | Well Developed |
| 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 | Well Developed |

Area of Celebration

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|---------------------------|---|----------------|-----------------------|
| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development | Rating: | Well Developed |
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Findings

At every level, teachers are engaged in collaborative teams driving instruction based on reflective practices and inquiry-driven discussions to promote language acquisition while teaching the content area standards. Collaborative teams meet to make key decisions after analyzing and engaging in inquiry work.

Impact

The collaborative work of teacher teams is evident in the interdisciplinary approach to teaching. Partnerships between teachers allow for a greater investment in and development of instruction to meet the students' needs impacting student learning and advancing the growth and empowerment of teachers.

Supporting Evidence

- Claremont Team Formations are created based upon an elaborate questionnaire designed to foster partnerships between people based on strengths and knowledge levels. The teachers are asked to reflect on themselves and think candidly about their colleagues with whom they can best work. These teachers mentor each other, are critical friends and they work across grades and subjects to ensure that the Common Core Learning Standards are met across disciplines with an emphasis on college and career readiness. As a result of these teacher collaborations, there is a school-wide instructional coherence increasing achievement for all learners. For example, the Claremont Student Work Protocol allows the teachers to norm the expectations and grading of assigned tasks.
- The Steering Committee is composed of teacher leaders from every discipline and grade within the school. By developing teachers through the use of distributive leadership, the Steering Committee encourages increased ownership and accountability among the staff in regards to key decision-making. The committee meets to discuss all aspects of the school operations, curriculum and social emotional issues. A core practice of the Steering Committee is to analyze key elements of teacher work, assessment data of students which result in shared improvements in teacher practice for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. This committee is the structure for embedded leadership where the teachers play an integral role in the decision-making for the school.
- The interdisciplinary team structure further reflects a commitment towards distributive leadership through the inclusion of team leaders inclusive of all content areas and the school's social workers, guidance counselors and college counselors. The teams' structure ensures that teachers are consistently reflecting on their practice and the best techniques to support student learning. Teachers work together to ensure implementation of Common Core Learning Standards skills. Teachers meet weekly in content area teams to analyze and use data to support their vertical planning. For example, 11th grade interdisciplinary team explored layered curriculum through the support of one teacher, in order to further increase students' access to Common Core Learning Standards.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across the classrooms, the use of assessments, rubrics, and checklists provide constant feedback and drive the curriculum to meet all student learning needs.

Impact

Students receive ongoing feedback however the students are not yet regularly given clear next steps to increase their performance and fulfill the learning targets of assignments.

Supporting Evidence

- As a member of the International Network of Public Schools, the school's assessments practices are aligned to their graduation English Language Learner Waiver rubrics. Assessments are conducted utilizing an inquiry-based portfolio method. The school de-emphasizes traditional testing results in favor of focusing on process and preparation and the soft skills needed for college and career readiness. The students present their portfolios to both staff and students. Students are then given feedback in terms of next steps from both their peers and teacher leaders. This process takes place multiple times throughout the year, and is aligned to interim benchmarks. For instance, in the fall, during the months of September/October, teachers meet with students to discuss the baseline assessment results and co-create actionable next steps; however, they are not yet clearly aligned to the core curricula, such as science and history.
- Soft skills rubrics are developed by professional development and steering committees to normalize grading and provide clear expectations when designing projects required to meet those demands during interdisciplinary meetings. An example of normalizing grading was evident through the staff's use of the Formative Assessment: Individual Data Display and Analysis Protocol B. The teachers used that document to record, display and analyze students' performance on a formative assessment tool, noting who exceeded, met and did not meet the lesson objective. Other sample data for math showed a list of several learning goals for a math strand. As the students showed mastery of each step, it was checked off accordingly. Additional adjustments need to be made to reflect individualized needs of subgroups, such as students with disabilities and English language learners.
- Weekly interdisciplinary planning meetings and content team meetings are held to reflect on the student outcomes based on their semester roundtables, to revise units of study, and inform small group targeted instruction. Student input in the form of surveys or interview could be used to focus on providing feedback that is aligned to specific criteria aligned to the grading policy.
- Students undergo a roundtable process wherein they have the opportunity to sit in front of panelists and reflect upon their learning, the process, growth, description of activities and the nature of essential questions explored within the context of an academic discourse. In this manner, students partake in assessing their acquisition of knowledge and grounding new learning in conceptualized practice and the showcase of student-created product.

Additional Findings

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| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Well Developed |
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training and accountability systems linked to the attainment of the expectations. Students receive ongoing feedback from teachers to further their understanding of their progress towards expectations set for them.

Impact

Teachers are aware of the administration's expectations for performance as aligned to the Danielson Framework. Teacher feedback supports students in succeeding in school and students own their educational experience.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has created The Claremont Exemplars, based on the school's mission, inviting students that have demonstrated collaboration, citizenship, intellectual curiosity or empathy to be awarded and invited to a celebratory luncheon with their parent. Students are rated daily on a rubric aligned to the exemplars, providing them with clear expectations and goals for both academics and citizenship in meeting their graduation goals.
- Students are recognized for attendance and academics. A great part of the academic success has been founded through their portfolio-driven culture. Students not only present their own work, but actively sit on peer panels, reinforcing an ethic of accountability and an ability to articulate.
- The school has created a College Now partnership with Hostos College, taking courses and English as second language classes. A majority of the 11th grade class participates in a twelve week internship program, allowing the students to develop their English skills in a professional setting while exploring potential career paths. They have established the College Access: Research and Action program for 9th and 10th grade students for college and career advisory.
- School leaders communicate with their staff via email and Google Docs. Administrators attend meetings as both participants and instructional leaders. Weekly there is a communication with teachers via memos and newsletters.

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| Quality Indicator: | 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: | Well Developed |
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Findings

Curricula are aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts and provide multiple entry points for learning with high levels of rigor, engagement and curricula specific to English language learners through all content area subjects.

Impact

As a result, all students are engaged in a coherent curriculum that promotes college and career readiness and consistently pushes them to demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Curriculum maps are teacher-created with feedback from a reviewer that ensures the curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and /or content strands. Teacher teams meet to review student work and data in order to refine unit and lesson plans, to evaluate assessment tasks and to review individual lesson plans.
- The HELLO Approach (Introduction to International Principals) integrates the teaching of English with the subject’s content. Adopting the HELLO Approach in conjunction with the Danielson Framework has been the instructional core of this school.
- The curricula and academic tasks are prepared with language acquisition in mind and with targeted scaffolds. For example, in writing a literary essay about Antigone, students were given multiple sheets guiding their writing, with a guided outline, guided questions, extensive teacher feedback and developed drafts.
- Understanding the linguistics of complex text through making meaning of linguistic frames has been embedded into all content areas in order to increase text complexity and provide grade level access to English language learners throughout the school.
- The curriculum promotes college and career readiness through internship placement sites with student internship reflections as a requirement and College Now midterm reports for students enrolled in college courses.

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| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Well Developed |
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Findings

Teachers in all classrooms, engage the students utilizing teaching practices that are aligned with the curriculum and inclusive of multiple entry points, scaffolded learning, language supports and challenging tasks that reflect high levels of student thinking.

Impact

Practices across all grades and classrooms are informed by school-wide discussions and consistently and strategically push all students to demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's instructional focus is the development and facilitation of inquiry-based tasks. To that end, teachers actively include elements of inquiry in daily lessons, expect students to engage in classroom discussions daily, highlight academic language and include language supports daily, and engage students in problem-solving on a regular basis.
- Emphasis is placed on language demands in texts and teachers prepare scaffolds for students to access various levels of text complexity, with a number of teachers providing multiple texts on the same topics at various reading levels.
- Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points for learners and promote rigorous thinking. For example, teachers provided opportunities for students to access their native language to deepen comprehension. Across classrooms, teachers implement inquiry activities ranging from think-pair shares to more detailed group projects with clearly defined roles and responsibilities that promote peer to peer discussion.
- Student work portfolios, notebooks, and bulletin boards showed tasks that provide students with an opportunity to engage in cognitively challenging lab activities that developed critical thinking skills. In a science classroom, students were conducting a lab experiment on the properties of ethanol where they had to engage in group work and meaningful discussion and productive struggle as they attempted to provide the answer to their agreed upon hypothesis. One group, while discussing what their hypothesis would be, ultimately realized that they would have to rework their experiment as they analyzed their results.