



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Monroe Academy for Visual Arts & Design**

**12X692**

**1300 Boynton Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10472**

**Principal: Richard Massel**

**Date of review: October 30, 2014  
Lead Reviewer: Elaine Lindsey**

## The School Context

Monroe Academy for Visual Arts & Design is a high school with 460 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 22% Black, 75% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 22% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 76.40%.

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

## Area of Celebration

<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 communicated to staff, students, and their families, and the school leadership provides systems and supports to ensure all learners progress towards goals.

### Impact

Structures that support the school's high expectations contribute to mutual accountability for staff, students, and families, providing students with a clear path towards college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- Frequent classroom observations, feedback from classroom visits, reviews of lesson plans, a staff handbook, and regular emails reinforce school-wide professional expectations for the instructional team.
- Parents participate in workshops providing guidance to them on the college search process, financial aid planning, and post-secondary preparation. For example, parents attend *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)* workshops. In addition, parents shared that they receive updates concerning their child's progress via progress reports, phone calls and text messages in addition to having access to the school's on-line grading portal.
- An English teacher, serving as the school's college advisor, works with students on the college search and application process. The English 7 curriculum has a college and career readiness component that includes college essay writing, and the English teacher works directly with students to ensure on time submission of essays.
- The Creative Connections program is continuing last year's work with juniors by pushing into English classes twice per week to work with them as seniors. Through this program, students in their junior year are exposed to lessons that prepare them for the educational and career challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Lessons include *Skills, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)*, and provide project based activities and real world experiences. This year's juniors will begin working with Creative Connections in February, and will continue to work with them into the following school year. Additionally, the school participates in New York University's (NYU) College Connection program, where freshmen students visit NYU campus to experience college life.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

Pedagogical strategies do not consistently include targeted instructional supports, scaffolded questioning and discussion techniques, or learning extensions to engage all learners in rigorous tasks and high-level discussions.

### Impact

Across classrooms, students are not consistently engaged in appropriately challenging tasks or rich classroom discussions that might lead to high levels of thinking or meaningful work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- During an earth science lesson observed, students were directed to work together in groups to complete a task. However, all students were assigned the identical worksheet with eight multiple choice, and one fill-in-the blank question.
- Across classrooms visited, the majority of lessons were teacher-centered, with dialogue typically being teacher-student-teacher. In most classrooms, students were not observed engaged in peer-to-peer or full-class discussion, and students were not observed generating their own questions or responding directly to their peers. For example, in an English class observed, students were asked to complete the writing prompt and discuss their work with their partner. In this task, students were observed exchanging papers and reading what their partner had written. However, students were not engaged in peer-to-peer discussion regarding the written work products.
- In a global history class, students' ancient civilization essays reflected most students' understanding of the assigned topic. However, the task did not challenge all students to make a deeper connection between the topic and the real world.

## Additional Findings

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

The school is in the process of developing systems to use common assessments, bench mark exams, and classroom checks for understanding to track student progress and adjust curricula and instruction to meet student learning needs.

### Impact

The school does not yet consistently use data analysis to guide adjustments in units and lessons to meet the learning needs of all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and Students with Disabilities (SWDs), hindering student progress.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school is in the process of identifying common assessments to measure student progress. Midterms and finals will be used as common assessments in addition to assessments from Engage New York. English teachers use Engage NY assessments, and have refined these assessments for the 11<sup>th</sup> grade to align with the Common Core Regents examinations.
- The math and social studies teams have a newly implemented meeting schedule in which they are expected to meet on a regular basis to analyze student assessment data and work products, and make effective curricula adjustments to meet students' learning needs. This team was observed analyzing student work and beginning to plan for instructional adjustments.
- Across classrooms, teachers' checks for understanding and assessments varied. For example, in English classes, teachers used an exit slip to assess student mastery of the learning objective. In remaining classes observed, 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.

**Findings**

The instructional team is in the process of aligning curricula to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in order to ensure that engaging and rigorous tasks and higher-order skills are accessible for all learners across grades and content areas.

**Impact**

Although teachers are revising curricula, the school's curricula decisions do not ensure coherence across content areas and grade levels, and teachers do not yet consistently provide access to rigorous curricula or high level tasks that might push student thinking and promote college and career readiness for all learners.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers use Engage NY curricula in English language arts and math. Curricula have been downloaded, and teachers are in the process of refining curricula to meet the needs of all students. However, teachers have not yet submitted curricula maps or unit plans to demonstrate how the school might adapt instructional materials from Engage NY to develop rigorous academic tasks that are accessible to all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and Students with Disabilities (SWDs).
- The English department is in the process of completing unit plans for the text *St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves*. Teachers are currently implementing unit one. However, they have not yet submitted unit plans for round one revisions, and are currently expected to submit revised unit plans for round two.
- The instructional team has developed a lesson plan template that incorporates differentiation for English language learners and special education students. However, teachers do not yet consistently plan for modifications to meet the needs of all learners, and lesson plans in all content areas do not consistently emphasize higher order thinking or include a menu of strategies that students might choose from in completing rigorous academic tasks. In a math class all students work on the same problems, additionally the teacher's lesson plan does not reflect modifications to support all learners including ELLs and SWDs.

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

Teacher teams are in the beginning stages of engaging in structured, inquiry based collaborations to examine student data and work products that result in improved teacher practice and student achievement.

### **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 weekly structured professional collaborations, however inquiry meetings are at beginning stages and teacher teams are just starting to review student data and work products to strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers and align teacher practice to the school's goals and the instructional shifts.
- Teacher team inquiry work is in the emerging stages of implementation. For example, the English team is beginning discussions around adjustments to the Engage NY curriculum, and the social studies team is reviewing Regents data to develop a plan of action to support improved student readiness and achievement.
- Teacher team meetings to analyze data and examine student work products have not yet resulted in improved teacher practice or student achievement. For example, the math department has analyzed limited samples of student work, and is beginning to analyze Regents data using samples from three different populations to adjust practice to meet identified student needs.