



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

Automotive High School

High School K610

**50 Bedford Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11222**

Principal: Caterina Lafergola

**Date of review: April 6, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Claudette Essor**

The School Context

Automotive High School is a high school with 377 students from grade 9 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 3% Asian, 53% Black, 41% Hispanic, and 3% White students. The student body includes 8% English Language Learners and 29% students with disabilities. Boys account for 94% of the students enrolled and girls account for 6%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 80.5%.

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 <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , 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	Additional Findings	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	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

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

Weekly teacher team meetings allow all teachers across the school to regularly engage in collaborative planning, data analysis, and decision-making linked to school-wide goals and initiatives.

Impact

Teacher teams' use of protocols for investigation of strengths and needs in student work and data, along with teacher voice in school level decisions, contribute to improvement of teacher practice and student progress towards learning goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Minutes of team meetings indicate that staff members engage in the collection and analysis of data from varied sources, including standardized assessments, Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) performance tasks, end of unit assessments, and writing tasks linked to the Writing is Thinking through Strategic Inquiry (WITsi) strategy being taught across content areas. Teacher data analysis logs show the use of data to target specific students in grade 9 and 10 for inquiry work. In addition, teachers use Regents assessment data to group and assign students to interventions during the regular school day and as part of a mandatory Extended Learning Time (ELT) program designed to improve student outcomes, such as credit accumulation, through increased mastery of content and skills across grades and subjects.
- During a teacher team meeting, the teachers used a Learning from Student Work protocol and tally sheet to engage in an analysis of student work from a task linked to the application of a WITsi strategy. The work required students to use a guided writing template to expand sentences by adding details about “what, when, where, why and how” in explaining their solutions to quadratic equations. The teachers identified noticings and wonderings as they entered scores for each student on the tally sheet with criteria which are aligned to the expectations of the WITsi “sentence expansion” process. Then they identified instructional adjustments to be made based on the data gathered. Planned next steps included re-teaching to get students to pay more attention to all criteria of the task and extending future sentence expansion tasks to include the use of “because, but, so, however and therefore.”
- Teachers participate in school-level decision-making through their service on a variety of teams. Teacher leaders, including grade leaders, are members of the Instructional Cabinet, creating a link between cabinet-level inquiry work and inquiry activities across teacher teams. Members of teams such as the Automotive Faculty Senate, programming committee, youth development, Career and Technical Education (CTE), and High School Renewal Initiative (HSRI) team collaborate with school leaders to assess growth and gaps in teaching and learning and help identify next steps for improvement. Teachers credited the programming committee for a recent scheduling change that benefited both staff and students, and the principal used observation data in noting that teamwork continues to strengthen pedagogy.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Student engagement in learning was evident across classrooms. However, lessons did not consistently incorporate rigorous tasks and high-level peer-to-peer discussions.

Impact

There were missed opportunities to deepen learning by all students via challenging tasks and discussions that consistently demand higher order thinking across disciplines and result in high quality student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Some lessons observed demonstrated use of multiple entry points to meet the diverse needs of students. In a CTE class, students engaged in hands-on investigation of the components of a “Macpherson strut” and its relationship to “drivability” of an automobile. The teacher used an interactive white board to display a diagram of the components and assembly of the strut, handed out safety goggles and worksheets with directions and questions, and assigned students to group tasks. Some students used laptops to research parts, others selected the appropriate tools from a tool chest to support partners in assembly work, and some worked on repairs for one of three cars in the automobile shop. By contrast, in an algebra class about how to “write recursive and explicit formulas,” although the teacher used a document camera to display the worksheets and review instructions and key vocabulary, several students who were unable to do the task received little support from the teacher and had no manipulatives to support their learning.
- In a health class, the teacher distributed a packet with fact sheets about pathogens and asked students to work in groups on worksheets that required them to read and make connections between illnesses and symptoms and then diagnose a “mystery” illness by examining a patient profile with details about an illness. Students could be heard arguing as they cited details in determining the type of illness at issue based on clues presented in their reading packet. They questioned peers’ decisions and rationale using evidence to convince them to change their position. Similar opportunities for high-level peer-to-peer discussions were not evident in several other classrooms. For example, students in a grade 12 economics class were minimally engaged in discussion during the lesson. The teacher displayed lesson content on an interactive white board and spent most of the observed period talking about the lesson while students listened silently.
- Some tasks made few demands on students. Some listened to the teacher quietly or to responses from the few peers who were called upon; others read excerpts of texts to answer questions by filling in a graphic organizer or writing template that did not require much thinking. For example, in a grade 10 English class, the teacher presented students with an excerpt from *The Joy Luck Club* and asked them to make inferences about how one character makes judgments about herself. Students were directed to copy the sentences onto a graphic organizer and then return to their text to find similar sentences that further illustrate the character’s self-judgment. With the exception of an English as a New Language learner (ENL) who worked directly with a push-in ENL teacher on a related word and picture matching activity, most students spent the period highlighting chunks of the text and copying sentences to the chart, with little interaction with a peer or the teacher.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school uses student work and data to develop and revise curricula with a targeted focus on the alignment of units of study to Common Core and other relevant learning standards.

Impact

Across disciplines, curricula and tasks offer all students access to engaging tasks that build college and career readiness skills.

Supporting Evidence

- Through teamwork, all teachers engage in ongoing development and refinement of unit and lesson plans that show alignment to Common Core Learning Standards and applications of the instructional shifts. In addition, teams have created curriculum overviews and lesson plans that reflect applications of the *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) continuum and WITSi framework to tasks that offer students opportunities to engage in activities such as citing relevant evidence from texts to support responses to questions, describing steps for solving complex problems in math, and presenting opinions about and summaries of reading selections. For example, a task for grade 10 students required them to research and report on the economic impact of the Great Depression, and a task for grade 12 students asked them to explore college and career management tools through activities such as resume writing, online job searches, and research on colleges.
- Curricula across grades and subjects include *EngageNY* for English, Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry, and *New Visions for Public Schools* curricula for Living Environment, Global History, and US History. Teacher-developed and Regents-aligned curricula guide instruction in Chemistry and Advanced Placement courses. In addition, there are units of curricula designed to support instruction in a CTE program, an ELT program, and afterschool programs that provide all students with additional exposure to standards-based learning activities across content areas and grades. For example, the CTE program uses curricula aligned to National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation and Automotive Service Excellence standards, offering students access to work-based learning experiences in areas such as bicycle repair and recycling and automotive technology. A visit to a CTE class showed teams of students working on the task of diagnosing and repairing defects on several automobiles.
- The school's curricula incorporate specific instructional materials for ENLs and students with disabilities. These include manipulatives, technology based learning, interactive white board activities, and the use of resources such as *Brain Pop*, *Ready Start* and *Rosetta Stone* as tools for intervention and language acquisition activities. Teachers at team meetings described adjustments in curricula and instruction to increase student learning based on their ongoing analysis of student work and data. For example, one teacher noted that a team analysis of student writing samples resulted in the inclusion of WITSi-aligned guided writing stems to improve sentence structure in student writing across content areas.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Analysis of student assessment data highlights student progress towards learning goals and informs student self-assessment and staff adjustments to address student needs.

Impact

Teachers and students have data with which to implement next steps for improving student achievement including teacher interventions and curricula adjustments that target individual student needs.

Supporting Evidence

- An assessment calendar and school leaders' assessment records indicate that teachers implement Common Core-aligned assessments, including common pre- and post-unit assessments and MOSL baseline assessments, to evaluate student proficiency on performance tasks across grades and subjects. Student portfolios show assessments of their proficiency in using the "But, Because, So" WITsi sentence frame to create sentences that illustrate evidence-based claims and counter-claims as they engage in sentence expansion. Mock Regents exams and ongoing unit assessments continue to add data for teachers to use in determining areas of proficiency as well as gaps in student learning across content areas and grades.
- Teachers at a team meeting presented notes to illustrate that they re-teach specific concepts to improve student mastery of targeted skills based on data from end-of-unit assessments. For example, one teacher explained that after noting "weak sentences" in student writing, teachers brainstormed to identify and incorporate new strategies in re-teaching for mastery of this skill area. A second teacher presented a Mastery Tracking tool that showed progress monitoring in science. Other teachers described the use of data from a "Data Driven Classroom" portal and *New Visions Student Sorter* to identify and assign struggling students to interventions such as additional tutoring in Regents preparation and remediation classes. However, in-depth data analysis that results in targeted adjustments to curricula and instruction that meet student needs is not yet evident across content areas.
- During the student meeting, students reported that they use rubrics and checklists to assess their work and plan how to get "a top score." Further, during classroom visits, most teachers were observed engaging in ongoing assessment of learning via activities such as discussions of Do Nows, exit tickets, direct questioning, check-ins via group or one-to-one conferencing, and reviews of classwork. In a science class that involved students in a hands-on investigation of whether a substance is acidic or basic, the teacher engaged individual students in a think-aloud about how they completed the experiment, checked on all students' responses by asking students to simultaneously hold up individual whiteboards with their findings, and then re-stated concepts to clarify responses. Similar checks for understanding, with follow-up on findings from checks for understanding during instruction, were not noted in several of the classrooms visited.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for learning to families and staff and support them towards helping students to meet the expectations. School leaders consistently hold all staff accountable for meeting high expectations for teaching and learning.

Impact

School-wide communication of and targeted supports for high expectations related to teaching and learning contribute to staff and student progress towards meeting all expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Various memoranda, data collection and reporting sheets, and templates for analyzing student work communicate high expectations for teaching and learning across the school. Instructional memoranda explicitly state expectations linked to targeted components of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. The school's professional development plan indicates that all teachers receive ongoing training in areas such as planning and delivering rigorous instruction, effective questioning and discussion, using assessment in instruction and application of WITsi strategies to improve student writing across content areas. Teachers also receive support in social-emotional learning via weekly "Care for the Caregiver" learning sessions; these sessions aim help to build teacher capacity to meet student academic and social-emotional needs by coaching the teachers in effective classroom management strategies, including the use of restorative practices to increase student engagement.
- Administrators use conference notes, reviews of unit and lesson plans, feedback from observations, and analyses of student work and data to hold staff accountable for meeting instructional expectations. Teachers reported that administrators visit their classroom regularly and follow-up with support and feedback. Professional learning records indicate that teachers are supported via opportunities for lunch and learns and peer inter-visitations, through which they, in turn, support each other towards improving instructional practices across grades and content areas. Members of the HSRI team, coaches, an ENL specialist, and staff from an onsite Teacher Center team up with peers and school leaders to differentiate professional learning, especially for the many new teachers on staff. The school leader pointed to *Advance* data and referenced anecdotal evidence in highlighting improved instructional practice for several teachers.
- Parents praised the school for high expectations and noted that they are kept abreast of their children's progress toward those expectations via phone calls, emails, and conferences with teachers, both during parent teacher conference times and on Tuesdays during the weekly parent outreach period. They added that newsletters, bulletins, meetings with guidance counselors and other staff, and workshops provide information about college fairs, graduation requirements, college application and admission steps and requirements, and tips to help families support their children in meeting all expectations. Regular progress reports, reviews of scholarship reports and transcripts in meetings with counselors or teachers, along with messages and data from Skedula, an online student information system, provide updated information on student progress towards readiness for their next level. One parent praised the school for hosting a "Financial Aid Night" that helped her to understand the challenge of getting her child to meet graduation requirements and be ready for college life and expenses.