



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

William H. Maxwell Career and Technical Education

High School K660

**145 Pennsylvania Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11207**

Principal: Jocelyn Badette

**Date of review: November 6, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Claudette Essor**

The School Context

William H. Maxwell Career and Technical Education is a high school with 496 students from grade 9 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 68% Black, 28% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 6% English Language Learners and 31% students with disabilities. Boys account for 30% of the students enrolled and girls account for 70%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 73.4%.

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	Celebration	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	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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The school's assessment systems provide staff and students with feedback about students' progress towards learning goals. The school's assessment program yields data that drives adjustments in curricula and instruction across grades and content areas.

Impact

Assessment data provides ongoing and valuable feedback to staff and students regarding levels of student achievement and results in adjustments to curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Curriculum team members work collaboratively with other staff to create unit plans with embedded diagnostic, formative and summative assessments aligned to curricula. At the start of the school year, students received a diagnostic assessment to determine their reading levels and set learning goals. There are also common assessments across grade levels, including summative assessments in all core content areas, and skills-based item analyses that inform teaching points and lesson strategies. In addition, teachers gather data from ongoing diagnostic assessments linked to unit plans, to determine and make adjustments to curricula and instruction as needed to improve student performance. Adjustments include after school academic intervention programs, opportunities for re-taking exams towards a mastery level of at least 80%, and additional blocks of literacy and math for students who are programmed for a school day with nine periods.
- Led by teacher leaders and school leaders, teachers examine assessment data collaboratively twice per month. They look at scholarship reports and Regents Exam Data reports (REDS) to identify areas for intervention and enrichment across the curriculum and to support an increased rate of credit accumulation, as per school goals. The principal noted that as a result of a review of grade level assessment data, all teachers now engage in inquiry activities linked to students who are struggling the most and infuse more writing for all students across content areas and grades. Administrators use ongoing reviews of assessment data to support the placement of students in Advanced Placement (AP) and honors classes. They also analyze the data to identify students for inclusion in the school's fast track program designed to allow an increasing number of students to meet graduation requirements in three years.
- Teachers use a school-wide grading policy and rubrics aligned to curricula to provide feedback to students on their performance in all disciplines. Teachers also use task-specific rubrics to assess students' proficiency and content knowledge related to performance tasks, providing feedback to students regarding what they do well and what needs improvement. The principal meets with students individually and other staff members review grades and work with students who are not making satisfactory progress towards graduation or movement to the next grade. Rubrics aligned to selected content standards and past Regents exams help students develop proficiency in meeting requirements for Regents assessments and teachers reported that they design assessments to mirror Regents exam items.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

While there are some student-to-student discussions within the school, lessons do not typically facilitate discussion with all students demonstrating high levels of thinking. Teaching practices allow some but not all students to consistently engage in a productive struggle with challenging tasks.

Impact

Students have limited opportunities to participate actively in peer-to-peer discussions with thought-provoking questioning that deepens their thinking and learning across grades and content areas. Instructional practices do not consistently incorporate challenging tasks that result in all students demonstrating higher order thinking in their work products.

Supporting Evidence

- In some classrooms, teachers assign rigorous tasks requiring students to engage in activities such as reading texts to cite evidence for responses to tasks, examining primary sources to make inferences, and using academic vocabulary to explain solutions to problems. In a health occupations class, the teacher asked students to cite evidence from informational texts to support group presentations about medical professions and steps for gaining employment in that field as well as others. One group of students researched medical terms, a second group practiced interviewing skills, and a third used chart paper to list steps for finding jobs. All groups shared their work with the entire class. By contrast, tasks were of low demand in other classes visited, including a grade 9 math class where students worked in groups to answer a few true/false questions about compound sentences related to “inequalities”.
- Lessons in some classrooms offered students multiple points of entry to the task. For example, in a grade 10 Global History Integrated Co-teaching class about the Industrial Revolution, the teachers used video clips to display facts about the Agricultural Revolution in England and to illustrate its causes and some effects. After brief questioning to elicit information on what was presented, the teachers distributed color coded task sheets for students to respond to differentiated questions on the topic. After checking in on students at work the teachers invited some to share what they learned and then displayed a T-chart of information from the video. A similar differentiation of the task was not seen in a United States history class with grade 11 and 12 students who were all asked to use a post it to record facts from their reading of a handout about Federalists and Anti-Federalists.
- Discussions in a few classes engaged students in sharing ideas about how to complete tasks, with the teachers providing prompts to evoke discussions. In a class with both grade 11 and 12 students, including second language learners and students with disabilities, the teacher used words and sentences on handouts, along with pictures, to engage students in peer to peer questioning that supported the students in constructing meaning as they explored weather related words and sentences in Spanish. This immersion of students in peer-to-peer accountable talk was not noted across classrooms, as some lessons were so teacher dominated that most students sat quietly, listening to the teacher, with only a few responding when asked. In an English honors class where grade 10 students viewed a video clip illustrating commentary about interactions between police officers and young African American males, the discussion that followed emerged as a question-answer activity, with the same few students responding directly to the teacher’s questions.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

All staff members work collaboratively to further develop curricula across content areas in alignment to Common Core and related content standards. Using student work and data, teachers refine curricula aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts across all grades and content areas.

Impact

Students have access to curricula and tasks designed to cognitively engage them in learning at all grades levels and in all content areas. Coherently sequenced curricula, aligned to relevant content standards and instructional shifts across disciplines, contribute to college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- A schoolwide instructional focus on literacy across the curriculum drives the design of tasks that are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts and expose students to college and career readiness skills. The Department of Education's *Collections* curriculum drives instruction in English Language Arts and content and skills from *EngageNY* curricula supplement math instruction, including units of instruction for Common Core algebra and geometry. New York State scope and sequence are infused in units of instruction in science and history as applicable, with Next Generation Science Standards integrated into science unit plans. Curricula include courses for students in the school's honors classes, four AP courses and a college and career course that includes research projects, essays and resume writing tasks. Curricula also include tasks to prepare targeted students for National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) exams that assess their readiness for employment upon graduation.
- The principal prioritizes literacy-based tasks across content areas to deepen students' capacity to draw inferences from texts and engage in problem solving. Unit plans show tasks that require students to read source documents, analyze pictorial statements and diagrams, and interpret data on maps and charts. There are course descriptions and pacing guides that show a focus on tasks that require close reading of complex texts to support writing activities aligned to Common Core and Regents standards. A task for students in a grade 9 AP class showed that students would read literary selections to analyze how the theme of "duality of mankind" is illustrated in each. Student portfolios show responses to argumentative and informational writing tasks, including explanations of problem solving steps in math and narrative descriptions of processes in science and other courses.
- Administrators and teacher leaders collaborate with all staff to use student work and data to craft tasks that address students' learning needs across classes. The principal indicated that selected teacher teams meet twice per month to look at student work, especially in English Language Arts and math, to further refine instruction and curricula and incorporate content for preparing students for Regents assessments. School leaders and other staff indicated that analysis of data and samples of student work informed teachers of needed adjustments to the curricula. Adjustments include targeted focus on the use of *Achieve 3000* resources and audio / video supports in instruction for all learners, particularly students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Administrators communicate high expectations for learning to all families and school staff, and implement varied support systems to help them work with students to meet the expectations. School leaders hold all staff accountable for meeting high expectations for teaching and learning across the school.

Impact

Communication of and support for high expectations for all staff promote accountability for staff and student learning. Communication and collaboration with families foster an understanding of high expectations for all students and support families in helping their children meet the expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Through discussions at faculty conferences, grade and department meetings, bulletins, memos and individual and team conversations, school leaders outline expectations related to instruction, professional development and other areas of school operations. During the teacher team meetings several teachers stated that the principal sets clear expectations for teaching and learning through an explicit schoolwide instructional focus on literacy across the curriculum and reminders about learning targets and expectations for each week. Teachers also reported that administrators hold them accountable for high quality instruction aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, by conferencing with them and visiting their classrooms to observe instructional components such as questioning and discussion techniques and use of assessments to inform instruction.
- All teachers receive ongoing professional development from school-based staff, including 01teacher leaders and administrators who help them meet expectations. Professional development records show that school leaders provide all staff with professional development on gathering and analyzing data, using assessment in instruction, improving questioning and discussion practices, and differentiating and scaffolding instruction. Several teachers spoke of training linked to the recent adoption of the new *Collections* literacy curricula, while two noted that they participated in off-site training about “Designing Coherent Instruction,” which they turn-keyed to peers. Another teacher referenced off-site learning activities related to the school’s plan to add the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program to the curricula for some students.
- Parents reported that staff members conference with them about topics such as graduation requirements, career and technical education courses, paid internships, service learning projects, career options, AP courses, tutoring for Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), and other initiatives that prepare their children for the next grade. The *Jupiter Ed* online data portal keeps all families informed about their children’s progress and families stated that they receive information regularly via calls, texts, flyers and visits to the school. One parent noted that she learned about colleges and college admissions steps from a packet about the “Shawn Carter College Tour” which allows students to visit several colleges. Others spoke of their learning from science and math projects during the school’s “Halloween Sci-Fi” event, while a parent of an English Language Learner shared her appreciation for letters and workshops that informed her about learning goals for her child.

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

The majority of teachers engage in structured professional collaborations that are focused on school goals, including ongoing implementation of Common Core-aligned instruction in all content areas and grades. Distributed leadership structures are present and actively utilized throughout the school.

Impact

The inclusion of all staff in a variety of teams empowers teachers to work collaboratively towards the attainment of school-wide goals, including Common Core-aligned instruction for all students. Distributed leadership practices result in staff members having a voice in high level decisions about teaching and learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Grade level teachers are programmed for weekly common planning period and minutes of team meetings show a variety of professional development activities that occur on Mondays, allowing teachers to collaborate regularly on improvements to their practice. The minutes of meetings also show that common planning cycles allow for targeted focus on lesson and unit planning and involve teachers in exploring content-specific strategies to improve instruction and student performance on tasks. During a teacher team meeting teachers reported that, with school-wide trend analyses identifying students' weaknesses in answering multiple choice questions and in constructing effective paragraphs in essay writing, teachers collaborated to incorporate new strategies and scaffold learning in re-teaching to improve students' mastery of these skill areas.
- During the inquiry team meeting observed, teachers reflected on students' performance on a Global History task and determined the extent to which the work met the expectations of the applicable Common Core and Regents Standards. The task required students to respond to multiple choice items and a document based question, by producing a thematic essay. Team members shared ideas about how to improve students' work. Teachers took turns recommending next steps, such as re-framing the task into small steps by using a graphic organizer for main idea and details and using Regents-aligned question stems to craft and re-teach content and strategies for determining the correct response to multiple choice items.
- Teachers identified for high levels of expertise or recognized as instructional leaders by peers, serve as grade leaders, peer mentors, and/or members of a schoolwide Case Conferencing team. Other staff members serve on teams such as the Measures of Student Learning (MOSL), school leadership, and professional learning team, which allows them to work with all staff on initiatives to improve teacher pedagogy and support the school's focus on improving graduation rates, attendance and levels of scholarship (GAS) across all subgroups of students. Teacher leaders noted that they provide input in the selection of instructional resources for all grades and content areas, such as the recent selection of the new literacy curriculum. They also select their own professional learning activities, create agendas for weekly team meetings and lead professional learning sessions for peers.