



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

Leadership and Public Service High School

High School M425

**90 Trinity Place
Manhattan
NY 10006**

Principal: Philip Santos

**Date of review: December 22, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Debra Freeman**

The School Context

Leadership and Public Service High School is a high school with 686 students from grade 9 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 5% Asian, 27% Black, 62% Hispanic, and 3% White students. The student body includes 6% English Language Learners and 19% students with disabilities. Boys account for 42% of the students enrolled and girls account for 58%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 79.2%.

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	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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to all families to prepare their children for college and career. Teacher teams and staff create a culture for learning that communicates high expectations for all students.

Impact

Parents receive ongoing feedback so that they understand how their children make progress toward academic expectations. Students receive ongoing feedback and advisement supports that prepare them for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- The school communicates with families via emails, and a phone messaging system wherein teachers make ten successful contacts a week to communicate student progress, and areas of accomplishment or concern. Additionally, the principal sends out a “principal’s weekly” that includes screenshots from the online grading platform to all families. Families have been trained in its use, and all staff share that it has proven to be an effective means for communicating progress. As one student shared, “I go on it at least twice a day.”
- The school added an advisory class to support students in academic and emotional need. During this time, students study current events with texts aligned to grade level. Advisors work one-on-one with students to help them meet academic goals, communicate with teachers, and reflect on progress. Advisors and advisees review progress by looking at transcripts at the end of each semester, and by reviewing student’s Advisory self-assessments and grade reflections wherein students set goals each marking period.
- Last year, 142 students took college-level courses through Touro, Syracuse University, and Borough of Manhattan Community College. This year, 150 students are already enrolled. Additionally, the school offers nine advanced placement courses (AP), and this, the principal shared, has had a direct impact on the level of rigor in all classes. For example, during unit planning in history, teachers looked at the AP components to “raise the bar.” One student shared that she took pre-calculus specifically to prepare her for college, and even after she failed the midterm, her teacher supported her and “now I understand.”
- One parent shared that given her daughter’s homework inconsistency she is “in contact with the teacher constantly.” Teachers, she noted, are always available to help and provide online support and tutoring. Another parent shared that her child was part of a program that involved her in the community. She conducted research in order to write an improvement proposal. One student offered that in her business class, she learned about the stock market, and another that the notes he took in Living Environment prepared him for “science-based careers.” Another parent offered that she always knows what her child is working on through the online platform. The advisory teachers stay with a student for four years and track their progress. “I can call anytime and feel welcomed. Everyone knows my son.”

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across most classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into curricula. Student work products and discussions reflect uneven opportunities for students to demonstrate high levels of participation.

Impact

As a result, students have fewer opportunities to engage in challenging tasks, or to demonstrate higher-order thinking in discussions and work products.

Supporting Evidence

- In a ninth grade math class, students readied for participation in a station activity to derive slope and y intercept in real world word problems such as: heart rates; cost of renting a car; and an hourly salary rate. The teacher posed questions to students to push their thinking regarding the mathematical concept they would be applying at stations. The teacher circulated to check in with students as they worked, and at one point stopped, “something just came up with one or two people;” he clarified the misconception.
- Physics students were in the third day of planning the design of a straw structure that could survive the impact of an egg dropped into it. Models of final products were on display. One student shared, “we have to learn how to turn the formula into measurements and judge a scale model” before beginning. When the teacher posed the question, “How much force do you think an egg can withstand?”, students considered how to situate the egg. In one group, a student thought that standing the egg up would create the most force, another in his group disagreed and shared his reasoning. This led to group consensus. However, such collaboration was not consistent across most classrooms where students, though seated in groups, worked independently on the same tasks.
- In a class for English Language Learners, students were required to respond to a cartoon depiction of the protagonist in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. When students participated, their voices were too soft to be heard, and one student was called on three times. In the AP English class, the teacher recorded student responses to symbols, text evidence, and relevance to character and conflict on the white board. The teacher summarized or expanded upon each student’s response. However, the lesson plan indicated that students were to pair up to discuss a set of questions collaboratively after the whole group discussion. Most questions during whole group discussions across classrooms were generated by teachers, and students responded directly to their teacher leaving fewer opportunities for students to respond to or challenge each other’s thinking. When students raised their own questions, in most cases, the teacher answered.
- In a history class, students took ownership of their class work presenting what they researched, wrote essays about, and prepared for oral presentations. Not one student read from his or her paper; each spoke with full knowledge of what they had researched, evident by their responses to peer questions.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Developing

Findings

The school is beginning to use common assessments and rubrics to measure student progress toward goals across content areas and grades. Across most classrooms, teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect checks for understanding.

Impact

Teachers administer common assessments and have some strategies for checking student understanding. However, the results are not consistently used to adjust curricula and instruction to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- After the school leaders reviewed Regents scores and credit accumulation, the principal rescheduled the entire school for a three-hour midterm in November. This is currently a first step toward a common assessment across grades and subject areas intended to prepare students for upcoming state exams. The school will administer the exam again in April to determine endurance, and if this is the appropriate means for assessing student growth. In order to ensure that content and skills taught across classrooms are completely aligned, the principal asked teachers to predict how their students would fare on the new midterm. One teacher thought that 70% of his student would pass, but 45% did, another thought 60% would pass, and 80% did. This, the principal noted, put pressure on departments to analyze midterm data to determine skills to reteach. For example, ninth grade Global History teachers realized that they would need to “step back and cover less” in order to focus on skills such as: close reading and annotation to get students to use textual evidence in essays.
- In the math team meeting, several teachers shared how they use assessment data to make adjustments to their practice. One teacher gives short-answer do now assignments to assess learning, and another shared that when he breaks down problems, he sees an increase in correct answers. An Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) team shared that when they review their data, if a student gets a one or a two, they can resubmit their work. A fourth teacher poses a problem with an error for students to correct. “We also group a higher student with two mediums, or with a struggling student to help each other.” All teachers agreed that their assessment data informs student groupings and differentiated tasks, however this was not evident in the classrooms observed.
- A history teacher stated that “assessments are integral to lessons.” Students respond to mid- and end- of lesson summary questions, and teachers use this information to determine student's skill level and “how our instruction is going.” For example, when the team saw that students were getting Level 3 on the thematic essay, but 1.5 on the document-based essay, they realized that students were running out of time. The team agreed to focus on timed writing pieces. Such practices, the teachers shared, support purposeful student groupings and tiered tasks based on skill level. However, there were few instances in classrooms visited, where students were grouped based on data, or that checks for understanding were an ongoing practice.

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and teachers align all curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula emphasize rigorous habits and higher order thinking.

Impact

The school's focus on standards-based tasks, creates instructional coherence and readies students for college and career. Most students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, have opportunities to engage in higher order skills across grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal and the staff came to consensus on what students need to be academically successful: cognitively engaging tasks and authentic literacy. The process to design coherent, Common Core-aligned curricula began with revamping curricula maps to include close reading, student-centered tasks, and opportunities for students to formulate evidence-based arguments is in place. The principal provided uniform protocols so that teachers and teams continue to revise curricula to ensure alignment. The principal attributes this work to the rise in the school's graduation rate up from 56% to 66%, and in college and career readiness numbers from 16.2% to 56% over two years.
- Two new staff members focus on supporting English Language Learners by working with departments to look at units and lessons. Additionally, they push into classrooms to ensure that students have access to the same materials with, for example, text modifications or graphic organizers with visuals. The school leaders recognize that greater consistency is needed to ensure that all learners, including students with disabilities and high performers, are cognitively engaged.
- Common Core-aligned curricula maps and lesson plans followed a common template and were evident in all documents reviewed. Tasks are designed to engage all learners in higher order-thinking. For example, in history, students engaged in research, produced essays from which they made oral presentations of their new learning, and fielded and responded to peer's questions. A Physics task required students to design, build, and test a safety device to protect an egg in a collision with a hard surface. This would require students to understand a collision's changing momentum, impulse, and impact in order to test Newton's law and discover the physics underlying safety devices in cars.
- All curricula maps include content and skill learning targets For example, in an eighth-grade English Language Arts (ELA) map, the essay task was grounded in a social justice issue. The suggested areas of focus were: exploring both sides of a controversial argument; how a thesis statement expresses a position; "how bias impacts our version of the truth." A Global History task required students to analyze primary documents for evidence of how the diverse values of a civilization impact individuals in society. One learning target in an Earth Science map indicated that students will learn how to apply the gradient formula in real life situations.

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

All teachers participate in structures to engage in professional learning and collaboration that promote school goals. Teachers are provided with many opportunities to build their leadership.

Impact

Team collaborations support implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and strengthen teacher practice. Teachers are empowered to make decisions that impact student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Last year all department leads looked at best practices in research committees and determined the four components to focus on this year: questioning and discussion; coherent instruction; engagement; and assessments. Teachers presented this focus to the entire faculty that jumpstarted team work for the year. Additionally, this year, department teams analyze all Regents data to identify the skills that students need to master.
- The school's action plan and instructional focus came from teacher leaders; the principal shared that he has moved from two to twenty-three teacher leaders this year. They form the LEAD team who, the principal stated, "function as a cabinet who are a part of school-wide decision-making." Among these, thirteen are striving to become administrators, and others take on roles such as: managing the online grading platform and coordinating the STEM, Special Education, or advisory programs. This, the principal shared, helps teachers "understand the big picture" and that a lot happens outside the classroom. Learning about students' home lives was the impetus for starting the advisory program, hiring an additional guidance counselor and social worker, and enlisting interns. The decisions were driven by the LEAD team, armed with new insights, who wanted to deepen student engagement across the school.
- During the math team meeting observed, the focus was on resequencing math units to build student mastery in a more fluid way, "If students struggle with inequalities there is no break. We should do graphing in between, then come back to inequalities." In this way, the teacher stated, the focus is on students who struggle, "it is a disservice to just reteach." There was less focus on Common Core alignment, or how the standards would drive the team's decisions, although the team leader noted that they would have to reconsider such alignment after the sequencing decisions were set.
- According to the principal, grade teams work on how content is taught, and department teams work on what will be taught. For example, the ninth grade team is working to develop interdisciplinary lessons with uniform standards, performance objectives and rubrics for the current marking period, and the science department is focused on peer tutoring. Both the ELA and the history teams follow protocols for providing feedback on unit and lesson plans, and the history team shares practices to strengthen student performance on the thematic essay. Additionally, one teacher shared that hearing what other content teachers are doing, or how a student works in a given class helps her to better meet individual student's needs. Another noted that "we read a lot together, look at our numbers, and determine how our curricula aligns to the standards."