



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2015-2016

**High School for Health Careers and Sciences**

**High School M468**

**549 Audubon Avenue  
Manhattan  
NY 10040**

**Principal: Javier Trejo**

**Date of review: March 18, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Tracie Benjamin-Van Lierop**

## The School Context

High School for Health Careers and Sciences is a high school with 528 students from grade 9 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 2% Asian, 13% Black, 83% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 34% English Language Learners and 16% students with disabilities. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 85.7%.

## 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>Proficient</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 <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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Proficient</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>Additional Findings</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

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

Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share. The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards.

### Impact

Improved teacher practice and strengthened instructional capacity result in progress toward goals for groups of students.

### Supporting Evidence

- The Writing Is Thinking through Strategic Inquiry (WITsi) team's commitment to supporting a targeted group of 15 students who were experiencing challenges with organizing their thoughts in complete, detailed and well-organized compound and varied sentences has resulted in students making progress in their sentence and paragraph writing skills. An analysis of baseline and interim baseline data indicate 27% of targeted students improved and no longer need support with sentence fragments and compound sentences. The WITsi team and literacy coach also engage in professional collaborations with other schools involved in the program and share best practices via Google Drive. As teachers and school leaders are expanding this work, some teachers' implementation of the program has varied.
- Teacher teams, led by instructional coaches, focus on inquiry questions, enduring understandings and established goals in six to eight week cycles. For example, a review of teacher team agendas revealed a focus on "How might we build student facility to express their concept and content understanding in both discussions and writing, using textual evidence?" Additionally, essential questions guided teacher team conversations, which included, "How might we utilize a common annotation process as a way to deepen student learning?" and "How might we capture students' responses to their reading at the level of comprehension as well as at a higher, more analytical level?"
- Teachers engage in cycles of feedback that include research and exploration, consensus and experimentation, analysis and implementation, and celebration and communication. Feedback incorporates positive and constructive commentary, as well as key reflections and takeaways. Reflections include statements such as, "Creating a team and having to upload work together helped create the collaborative culture." and "The department team collaborative rubric creation really brought the team together and helped us create, share, and implement an objective that prepared us for the department presentation."

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

### Impact

Instruction is informed by the instructional shifts; however, class work that reveals high levels of student ownership varies across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school's instructional core is grounded in "engaging students in high quality discussions, exemplified by responding to and extending each other's thinking and crafting questions to help each other deepen and elaborate upon their [student's] thinking because students learn best when learning is socialized, collaborative, and relevant to their lives", as reported by school leaders and teachers. In an English Language Arts (ELA) class, students engaged in a Socratic Seminar discussion using inner and outer group rubrics and protocols to guide the discussion on whether juveniles who commit crimes should be judged as adults while connecting their responses to any of four articles previously read. A student prompted her peer with a question to push her thinking by asking, "Can you provide an example to what happened in the video and connect it to one of the articles?" Most students were engaged in the discussion in both inner and outer circles while a student captured student responses on the class laptop, however, when the reviewer asked a student, "What happens to the comments being recorded?" the student stated, "I don't know. I think the teacher keeps them." Lack of access to the comments captured during the lesson limited the depth of engagement and for students and their understanding of the lesson's purpose.
- Students in a literacy class, reading *Fahrenheit 451*, by Ray Bradbury, concentrated on essential questions, such as, "What are the potential dangers of technological advancement in regards to our society?" and "How does the author's use of figurative language enhance the quality of literature and the author's message?" The class was given choice in selection of quotes taken from the book, which they used to create images to inform their understanding of the text. Students participated in group work using an imagery graphic organizer and reviewed examples of student created sculptures to help them connect the imagery and their selected text. Although students were fully engaged and all students participated in the group work, the pacing of the lesson varied as more time than was needed was spent on procedural tasks, which this group of students did not appear to need to move forward in their assigned work.
- "How do we use domain and range values to graph and translate absolute value functions?" was the aim in a math class. The teacher circulated the room to check-in with groups and encouraged one student to go the board to demonstrate his thinking focused on absolute values. Students supported each other in their groups. In particular one of the high performing students was observed explaining the process of finding the x and y value. The greater share of the class was able to explain their thought process verbally and in written form, however, a student with disabilities who experienced challenges was not provided support and his worksheet was left blank.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards, integrate the instructional shifts, and make purposeful decisions to build coherence. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

### Impact

Instructional coherence is building across content areas to promote college and career readiness for all students. A diversity of learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, has access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaging.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers utilize curriculum development and design criteria reference sheets to guide their work as they design curricula that incorporate unit title, length, dates, Common Core Learning Standards being addressed, big ideas, and essential questions. Furthermore, units include assessments, resources, accommodations, interventions, scaffolds and supports for ELLs and students with disabilities. A review of curricular documents, for example, a unit titled, "Shots Fired: Major Conflicts in Global History," focused on the relationship between conflict and progress and how conflict has impacted societies and cultures in significant ways, included all of the essential elements teachers are tasked to include, with an emphasis on ELLs and students with disabilities. As the school's student academic performance gains improve, and for the higher achieving students currently attending the school, evidence of tasks to support extension activities in the curricula were limited.
- The curriculum team and instructional leads participate in weekly meetings using Google Drive to upload, design, and draft curricula materials including maps, unit plans, performance tasks, and learning calendars. Their goal is to assess the effectiveness of various curricular resources and utilize those that are most appropriate and relevant to their students. Teachers maintain a curriculum folder where they house templates for curricula maps, performance tasks, and documents from the previous year as a reference resource.
- The science department has incorporated the Predict Locate Add Note Essential (P.L.A.N.E.) question strategy to support students connecting their writing to textual evidence. "Because this strategy has been included in our curricular planning documents, our students are better able to use evidence that is relevant and connected to their claims," reported a teacher. Another faculty member stated, "We realized some of our students who previously needed scaffolds to support their thoughts, no longer need them which informs our planning and revision process." Faculty members also noted the use of graphic organizers across content areas is providing consistency for their students. "Students were just writing sentences at the beginning of the year and now they're writing full paragraphs and we attribute some of this progress to WITSi."

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

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. Teachers use common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

### **Impact**

Actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement results in adjustments to curricula and instruction that meets students' learning needs.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The school's assessment team has used and analyzed interim assessment and Measure of Student Learning (MOSL) baseline data to identify areas of focus in ELA for cycle one. The data revealed students needed targeted supports in traits one and four of the New York City ELA performance assessment task, specifically, citing textual evidence and analyzing counterclaims. As a result of these gaps, observation data was also targeted to identify areas that would improve teacher practice to address student needs. The data indicated students were not provided enough meaningful opportunities to understand and participate in tasks associated with reading closely to make meaning and synthesize text and develop inference skills. Cycle two's focus is on formative assessment and feedback which is based on the WITsi team's success in using data analysis to develop differentiated next steps to support a targeted group of students.
- Based on a data study for the 2014-15 school-year that indicated 45% of students in cohort Q passed the Global and US History Regents exams, school leaders focused on the priority question, "Why are potential graduates in cohort Q not meeting with success on the Global and US History Regents exams?" Teacher teams analyzed MOSL and interim assessment data and learned that students were experiencing gaps in informational text comprehension. Based on their learning, the school put an action plan in place which focused on a five-week implementation cycle of strategy, curriculum adjustments, and double literacy blocks for ELA in grades 9-11 and a double social studies block for grade 10 students. This action plan has resulted in an increase in pass rates for the Global History and US History Regents exams, 80% and 78%, respectively, based on data from August and January.
- Students reported during their interview, "We're receiving feedback on how to make improvements. We receive a glow and grow and we have an opportunity to revise our work through peer editing when we are in groups." A review of a student's college essay included feedback which stated, "Glow – when you write, use a few words to get your idea across. You have good structure and your evidence aligns to your topic sentence. Grow – Your analysis needs to be more detailed and remember to use transition words. Next steps – Make the revisions indicated and hand in for draft #2."

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness and offer ongoing feedback to help families understand student progress toward those expectations. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students.

### Impact

Students receive detailed feedback, guidance, and advisement supports to prepare them for the next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- Students commented, “The principal gives us opportunities to pass classes and work in subjects that will prepare us for college. Last year we only had Advanced Placement (AP) classes in ELA and Spanish, and now we have AP Biology which is accessible on-line.” According to the New York City Department of Education’s School Quality Snapshot, the school helps students improve from their incoming proficiency levels and pass Regents exams in science with a rating of good. The Snapshot also indicates the school received rating of good in closing the achievement gap in the four-year graduation rate for English Language Learners and the city’s lowest performing students.
- College trips are included in the student experience, as students have been exposed to visits at City College of New York, Purchase, Colgate, Binghamton, and Stony Brook. Students were able to make connections with the schoolwide focus on textual evidence to what they learned during their college trips and learning about academic expectations. In addition, students concurred, the Town Hall monthly meetings also contribute to ensuring they stay focused on their college and career goals.
- Parents are provided with information through the family handbook, a monthly newsletter, and PupilPath, the parent portal in Skedula. As a vehicle for college and career preparation, parents of senior students are invited to participate in two meetings per semester. Eighty-nine percent of families responded positively to questions regarding strong family-community ties when asked how parents say that school staff regularly communicates with them about how the staff can help their children learn, and 98% of parents say that school staff works hard to build trusting relationships with them according to the 2014-15 School Survey. The school leadership team and parents will be conducting collaborative learning walks to strengthen this partnership.