



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

Manhattan School For Career Development

High School M751

**113 East 4th Street
Manhattan
NY 10003**

Principal: Ewa Asterita

**Date of review: November 24-25, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Robin Cohen**

The School Context

The Manhattan School for Career Development is a high school with 200 students from grade 9 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 45% Black, 50% Hispanic, and 4% White students. The student body includes 28% English Language Learners and 98% students with disabilities. Boys account for 70% of the students enrolled and girls account for 30%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 71.0%.

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	Well Developed
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	Additional Findings	Well Developed
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	Focus	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders have created a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for instruction and creates opportunities for professional learning and support. The school partners with families to support student progress towards college and career readiness.

Impact

There is mutual accountability of student success by all stakeholders. The best practices have resulted in high levels of professionalism, quality instruction, and effective communication around academic, social, and behavioral expectations resulting in improved student outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- High expectations are consistently communicated to all constituents through a variety of means such as the staff and student handbooks and *The Bridge*, a weekly newsletter produced by students and staff. The *Bridge* informs the entire school community and families of instructional and behavioral expectations with regard to college and career readiness skills. Parents stated their input in requesting and designing specific workshops such as training on communication devices, Medicaid, and guardianship, has led to an increase in parent involvement. Another parent stated that the school's homework policy is an integral part of the children's learning experience, thereby increasing parental involvement utilizing the school's homework blog. In addition, teachers stated, "school leaders articulate high expectations during post-observations, monthly faculty meetings and emails." The monthly "Coffee Time with the Principal" provides a platform for instructional and curricula discussions and fosters a feeling of shared responsibility.
- The school is committed to providing challenging educational and community-based work experiences to their students, enabling them to become productive and independent members of society. The school also provides a range of learning experiences from the main campus to the seventeen Community-Based Vocational Internship (CBVI) off-site locations. Data shows that 99% of eligible graduates are placed directly into gainful employment or agency linkages. In addition, the school has formed a relationship with the Best Buddies program. This program apprises students of community service opportunities, thereby engaging students with real-life solutions to build and strengthen communities. Students stated, "My worksite helps me to know what real work looks like."
- Rigorous assessments allow the school to identify students who would benefit from a least restrictive environment (LRE). Upon graduation, students receive either a Regents diploma or transition into post-secondary education or full time employment. The New York City School Survey shows 92% of parents, 95% of teachers, and 90% of students had positive responses in the area of rigorous instruction, supportive environment, collaborative teachers, effective leadership, strong family ties, and trust.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The school uses common assessments and rubrics aligned to its curricula to analyze student work, make adjustments to curricula at the team and classroom levels, and provide actionable and meaningful feedback so students are aware of their next learning steps.

Impact

The strategic creation and varied use of assessments by teachers allow for ongoing analysis of performance and adjustments to classroom practices that increase student achievement. However, student self-assessment varies, and is not evidenced across all classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's curriculum map contains formative and summative assessments that inform instruction. Teachers stated that they use formative assessments such as chapter tests, teacher made materials, performance tasks, and *Webb's Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) leveled questions. The results of these assessments are used to track student progress towards goals and help make instructional decisions.
- Across all classroom, teachers use data to identify students' area of need, establish class-wide instructional foci, and form flexible reading and math groups. The school created a data collection form which addresses four specific domains: Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals, group and independent work, DOK questioning, and task completion and work habits. Assessment results and student work samples are reviewed weekly as seen during a collaborative inquiry team meeting.
- Across all classrooms ongoing checks for understanding, as seen during classroom visits, included one to one conferencing with classroom teachers and paraprofessionals, exit slips, checklists and rubrics that meet the cognitive level of students. In addition, all students complete a culminating project so that both teachers and students are able to assess their understanding of the monthly unit of study. For example, a middle school class was studying the Great Depression and created a timeline for the 1930s. Another group of students was creating a graphic poster called "YOU! Can Help the Homeless". Students evaluated their own work and their partner's work based on the assessment rubric. After students shared their work with the class, some students were able to tell me what their next step would be.
- The instructional focus for the school staff is Danielson's competency 1F, Designing Student Assessments, and 3D, Using Assessment in Instruction. School leaders and teachers stated they wanted to take student assessment to the next level. One of the school's goals is to design an online data collection system so that teachers can share data across grades and content areas. The school's intent is to specifically create formative assessments that are designed to inform minute-to-minute decisions by teachers during instruction. This would promote real-time informed decisions regarding adjusting the curriculum in the classroom.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

All curricula are aligned to the Common Core and tactically integrate the instructional shifts. The school continues to deepen, expand, and refine their curriculum to ensure a range of learning experiences engage all students in academics, social/emotional learning and life skills.

Impact

The school's curricular decisions, with input from staff, build coherence across all sites and foster student independence, academic and social/emotional growth, while promoting college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's belief of assuring access for all learners is embedded in all lesson planning. Entry points for all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs), is a collaborative decision-making approach that strategically focuses on the individual elements of a lesson, while considering the learning styles of all students, their learning modalities, interests and readiness skills. The curriculum team created the school-wide curriculum maps fully aligned to the Common Core and the Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) standards. All lessons have an embedded writing element and are designed to provide multiple entry points. The instructional focus of the school is to increase communication skills and the entire school engages in vocabulary instruction based on core words drawn from the texts and literature students are reading. In a high school social studies class, students were reading *The Outsiders*. The primary objective of the lesson was the definition of "social divide" and the concept of human differences, commonalities, and inequality. The story was presented many different ways: reading, being read to, and through a video clip about bringing home girls who were kidnapped. In addition, the ESL teacher provided language support to students in the classroom.
- There is a school-wide commitment placing emphasis on the importance of supporting all students in developing increased independence as they prepare for transition to post-secondary goals. Students are provided with skills in their academic classes and work-site settings. For example, in one class, students were learning what "appropriate interaction" among people look like. In another class, students were learning how to shop for groceries, and in another class, students were filling out job applications. As a result of this focus, 100% of students participating in New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) achieved Level 4 in both ELA and math.
- Throughout all classrooms visited, rigorous habits are embedded into daily routines and emphasis was noted in making content relevant to real life situations. Lesson plans in all content areas emphasize higher order thinking skills. The school's transition curricula ensure the progression of skills. For example, in a Career and Technical Education (CTE) class, students were also reading *The Outsiders*. The lesson addressed CDOS Standard 2- "students will demonstrate how academic knowledge and skills are applied in the workplace and other settings." Student groups were directed to "create a golden color" to paint a shelter, like the Bowery Mission or the Maryhouse, for the Chibok girls. Student discussion within each group formed different hypotheses.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Teaching practices across a preponderance of classrooms consistently reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best. Lesson plans are well designed with individual pacing, questioning, and supports to ensure all learners have opportunities to produce cognitively appropriate and meaningful work products.

Impact

Discussions at the team and school levels formed the school's belief system, aligned with the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts, in how students learn best. Teaching practices support students to produce cognitively appropriate work products and improve student outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- Classroom instruction and lesson planning includes differentiated activities and multiple entry points through leveled texts, graphic organizers, visual aids, and interactive assistive technology. The school community believes students learn best by being engaged in purposeful lessons that directly relate to their lives and include embedded opportunities to engage in conversations with peers and adults. Students use their preferred mode of communication and are consistently exposed to more challenging levels of questioning based on Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK). Teachers consistently emphasize this belief during classroom visitations and teacher team meetings.
- Extensive professional development on DOK leveled questions is apparent in lesson planning and actual instruction across all content area subjects. Across all classrooms, teachers monitor student progress through DOK leveled question stems, both teacher-to-student and student-to-student, where cognitively appropriate. During classroom visits, teachers provide time for students to self-assess using rubrics and checklists constructed by teacher teams, which are aligned to their curricula, and are student friendly for both standard and alternate assessment students.
- Student datafolios, classrooms, and hallway bulletin boards show tasks that provide multiple entry points that offer students opportunities to engage in cognitively challenging activities that develop critical thinking skills. Clear scaffolds, such as teacher modeling, purposeful groupings, adaptive communication devices, and visual cues, allows all learners a variety of pathways to complete tasks and demonstrate their thinking. Students from this school participate in the District 75 Debate Team Challenge and scored 72 out of 100 points in "using facts and evidence to support their claims." Teachers and students believe this is a direct result of the work that emphasized using evidence from texts in their classroom writing and thinking. In addition, two students graduated with Regents diplomas.
- All teachers use Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. As a direct result of this practice, 95% of teachers increased their performance in Danielson's Component 3C, engaging students in learning. In addition, all teachers at the school are rated effective or highly effective. This demonstrates progress from the 2012-2013 school year when six of the teachers received "U" ratings. In addition, teacher ratings demonstrate an increase in Danielson's Domain 3 - Instruction.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

All teachers participate in highly developed collaborative inquiry-based teacher teams that have provided opportunities to collaborate on planning instruction and curriculum development. Embedded leadership structures ensure teachers have input on key decisions about curricula and teaching practices.

Impact

The work of professional collaborations, the use of cohesive curricula, and sharing best classroom practices result in a collective commitment to increase student achievement and strengthen instructional capacity.

Supporting Evidence

- The school is fully committed to the Framework for Great Schools that emphasize student achievement and ensure students are ready for the next stage of their lives. All teachers participate in one of five collaborative teacher teams that meet five times weekly. Teachers participate either in person or via Google Hangout. Unique to the school, is the inclusion of related service providers and paraprofessionals participating on a scheduled rotating basis.
- To promote the consistent implementation of the Common Core and CDOS into instruction, teachers utilize the *Lesson Study Method* to share lesson plans. Teachers stated they conduct intervisitations to create opportunities for cross content instruction. The teams use their *Lesson Walk-Through Checklist*, created by the teams, to provide each other with consistent, cohesive, and targeted feedback. School leaders stated there is a stronger sense of collaboration within the school community and the use of common language among staff members.
- Assessment results and student work samples are reviewed weekly as seen during a collaborative inquiry team meeting. Teacher teams consistently examine and review their curriculum maps and units of study ensuring the instructional shifts are embedded into their lessons. For the 2015-2016 school year, emphasis was placed on Shift 4 (Text-based Answers), Shift 5 (Writing from Sources), Shift 6 (Academic Vocabulary), and Shift 5 in math (Application). Student work samples were used to provide the focus on the rigor of the tasks presented and to demonstrate how lessons are differentiated to include all learners and the levels of questioning used by teachers. The use of the looking at student work protocol guided teachers' conversation in discovering what students understood and how they were thinking.
- To actively facilitate distributed leadership, specific structures were designed to provide clear examples of teacher leaders. For example, collaborative team leaders oversee team meetings and inquiry presentations. The school has established an ongoing partnership with the College of St. Rose Leadership program and currently has two staff members enrolled. Teacher mentors and coaches support new teachers with best practices as per Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. In addition, members of the curriculum team stated they felt empowered and valued in their role in creating, adapting and modifying lessons to further enhance the curriculum.