



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

Rockaway Collegiate High School

High School Q351

**100-00 Beach Channel Drive
Queens
NY 11694**

Principal: Carol Ying

**Date of review: May 23, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Tracie Benjamin-Van Lierop**

The School Context

Rockaway Collegiate High School is a high school with 402 students from grade 9 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 5% Asian, 52% Black, 35% Hispanic, and 3% White students. The student body includes 4% English Language Learners and 21% students with disabilities. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 80.8%.

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	Additional Findings	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	Focus	Developing

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

A system of accountability is in place. Ongoing feedback is provided to families to help them understand student progress toward college and career expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Parents of incoming ninth graders who did not meet or exceed standards on their eighth grade New York State English Language Arts (ELA) assessments received a letter welcoming them to the school community. The letter informed them of the increased concentration on reading and writing that their children would be exposed to utilizing NewsELA, an online literacy website used to engage students in literacy based activities. It also included resources for parents to use at home with their children to further support their progress.
- During the parent interview, parents stated the school has hosted a series of workshops to engage and support them in supporting their children for all grades; however, attendance is low at times. A parent of a ninth grader who participated by phone commented, "I am aware of how my daughter is performing academically and I would like to attend meetings, but I just don't have the time." The school invited parents to informational sessions that included State course credit and Regents exam requirements by grade level and content area to ensure students were on a path to college and career. Parents stated they hope there will be increased consistency with the staff, which will in turn positively affect the school's graduation rate, which was at 52.5% for the 2014-15 school year.
- An instructional focus for teachers has included Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, component 1e, designing coherent instruction. Teachers have received training and support in planning and preparing for each week's lessons, factors considered when designing lessons and determining the resources needed to implement the lesson. The faculty has also received training in the Judith Hochman writing curriculum in order to increase the literacy levels of their students. A review of teacher reflection sheets of the professional development indicated that teachers across content areas agreed that the training was beneficial, needed, and would improve instructional coherence.
- The school's professional development plan is organized by date, topic and key content, Quality Review rubric alignment and rationale. It is also connected to the school's instructional focus, which states, "At RCHS [Rockaway Collegiate High School] we are committed to actively developing students' literacy skills through analytical research that cites evidence to support arguments in discussions and written tasks."

Area of Focus

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations on teams that may be loosely connected to school goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused.

Impact

The use of an inquiry approach is developing across the teams. The work does not yet typically result in improved teacher practice or progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams are working with district-level and consultant coaches in addition to the school leadership team to improve their instructional practices as they relate to student engagement and curricula revisions. A review of teacher team agendas highlights that teams are using protocols and including a meeting focus, summary, and next steps. For example, a math team meeting agenda indicated that Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) exams were used to assess student growth and teachers were to share one instructional strategy to be implemented to address student-learning gaps. The summary concluded, "Teachers discussed the data and identified how they will address the data.", and next steps included, "Based on analysis, teachers review curriculum and adjust instructional delivery." There was no supporting evidence to document new instructional strategies to be used to address the MOSL data nor were data findings included in the document.
- During an observation of the ELA team, teachers discussed their increased focus on students who needed to pass the June Regents exam and beginning and end of year MOSL results using a data analysis protocol. Based on a review of student data, teachers noted ninth grade students were improving in their use of claims and counterclaims, tenth grade students continued to struggle with counterclaims, even the higher achieving students, and eleventh grade students demonstrated inconsistency with their short answer responses. Next steps for the teachers included working with students to increase their usage of texts to support their answers.
- Teachers report they have seen an impact in their instructional practices becoming more student centered and less teacher centered and they are learning to step back and let their students do the work. While teacher curriculum planning that aligns lessons to the Common Core Learning Standards is evident, strengthened instructional capacity across all teams is still developing.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

Impact

Purposeful decisions build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students across grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses *EngageNY*, *Collections*, the New York State Scope and Sequence across content areas, and the Judith Hochman writing curriculum. A twelfth grade ELA lesson's essential question asked students, "How do I distinguish important information for my audience?", addressing instructional shift, speaking, reading, and writing grounded in evidence from the text. The lesson included higher-order thinking questions such as, "How do you synthesize all the evidence you used in your paper into one or two segments of your presentation?" Modifications and differentiated presentation choices were included along with exemplars for students to reference. A chemistry lesson plan on application of math to solve chemistry problems charged students with differentiating between different types of chemical formulas, finding percent composition by mass of each element in different compounds, and finding the empirical formula of a variety of compounds.
- A curriculum map for geometry included a unit focus that introduces students to the building blocks of geometry in which students are expected to learn definitions of essential geometric terms and use a variety of tools and techniques to construct geometric figures. The unit built in lesson titles, essential questions, instructional objectives, Common Core Learning Standards addressed, new vocabulary, real world applications, performance assessment with differentiation, and higher-order thinking activities.
- Teachers in the English as a Second Language (ESL) department design their curriculum maps to include content, State standards, language functions, academic benchmarks, reading and writing, and assessments. Culminating tasks comprised planning, outlining, drafting, revising, and publishing a personal essay on one aspect of the student's life in the United States that would be shared with classmates. Another task included writing a compare and contrast essay on the differences between student's lives in their home country and life in New York City.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts.

Impact

Across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- The school believes students learn best when they are doing the work and not being passive learners. “This is not a spectator sport. If they’re not participating in their learning, they’re not learning”, stated an assistant principal. In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) ELA class, students were engaged in their senior seminar project and took ownership of their learning while they developed their presentations. Students were designing PowerPoint presentations, collaborating with their peers for suggestions while the teachers circulated around the room and assisted students if necessary, whereas in a social studies class, students were in groups working on thematic essays in preparation for the US History Regents exam and not fully engaged or participating in the learning activity. Student work products varied as some students struggled with the task and waited for the teacher to assist them. All students were given graphic organizers and most were not using them to inform their writing.
- In most classrooms, the instruction centered on the teacher and did not involve students leading discussions or participating in the class. In some classes, a few students participated frequently, leaving limited opportunities for additional student voices. In an ICT class focused on *Romeo and Juliet*, the opportunity to capitalize on student participation was limited, with some students losing focus and not engaging in the lesson. There was an effort by the teachers to include a film clip of the text to increase access to the content for all learners; however, the teachers asked students questions while the video played for seven minutes, which did not allow sufficient time for students to process their thinking.
- During a math lesson on real-world applications of exponential functions, initially, student participation was limited and some were unclear of the purpose of the lesson. The teacher attempted to provide opportunities for students to have peer-to-peer discussion regarding the use of operations in math; however, the presented solution to the problem caused some student misconceptions. As the lesson progressed and students went to the interactive white board to explain their thinking, student participation and understanding of the task increased as evidenced by their work products.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are loosely aligned with the school's curricula. The school is developing in their use of common assessments to measure student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

Impact

Limited feedback is provided to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Results from common assessments are inconsistently used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- The school collects MOSL data to assess student performance; however, the evidence provided does not yet indicate coherent school-wide usage of the data to inform curricular adjustments and instructional practices. A 2015-16 school year needs assessment data chart of student performance for twelfth grade did not include baseline or mid-year assessments. The most recent data included August 2015 Regents exam results which were color coded green to indicate a passing score and red to indicate a failing score.
- Data for the approximately 180 ninth and tenth graders was collected to monitor credit accumulation across content areas. Approximately 50 target students who were at-risk of not being promoted were identified but there was no indication of next steps to address the potential student failures.
- Students are provided with rubrics in some classes. During the student meeting, they noted that literary response checklists and seminar exam checklists are used in ELA to inform them of their next steps. Additionally, students stated that some teachers usually give feedback after an exam or during one-to-one conferencing. A review of student work showed limited actionable feedback from teachers to students and some work did not include any feedback whereas work on bulletin boards included a variety of student work with glows and grows connected to the task's rubric along with next steps.