



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

Jill Chaifetz Transfer High School

High School X379

**778 Forest Avenue
Bronx
NY 10456**

Principal: Anne Fennelly

**Date of review: March 29, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Rosemary Stuart**

The School Context

Jill Chaifetz Transfer High School is a high school with 199 students from grade 9 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 36% Black, 62% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 6% English Language Learners and 26% students with disabilities. Boys account for 41% of the students enrolled and girls account for 59%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 59.5%.

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	Proficient
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	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	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 and staff consistently communicate expectations of college and career readiness and provide feedback and guidance supports to students and families.

Impact

Families understand the progress students make toward meeting expectations for college and career. Students are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- Parents said they receive regular reports about the progress their young-adult children are making toward graduation. Teachers upload information about student performance into an online platform that students and parents access. Parents also expressed satisfaction with this school because it meets the individual needs of students who have struggled in the past. A parent noted that her son is preparing to take tests required for college applications which she believes is an indication of how serious he is about college now. One parent explained that her son had not been successful at other schools but that teachers here helped him build his confidence so that now he has a leadership role with students. Another parent noted that her son no longer “feels like a number in a seat” and said that he “won’t get stuck in tenth grade again.”
- The school has a full-time college advisor who arranges college tours and helps students identify post-graduation opportunities. Parents and students receive help in completing financial aid applications. A guidance counselor and social worker provide additional support to high-risk students and their families in the transition to college or career.
- The school program allows for intensive support to each student through the primary person model. Staff members interact with a small number of students to reinforce expectations for attendance, academic engagement, and performance. The Learning to Work program is integral to the school’s programs that are designed to provide young adults with skill development and authentic career experiences through paid internships.
- School leaders track individual student progress toward meeting graduation requirements. Every student, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, has a checklist of the credits and Regents exams they still need to take and pass in order to graduate. Using information from the end of the second cycle of instruction, school leaders programmed 57 students for the credits and Regents exams they needed to graduate in June 2016, and provided Regents preparation classes as well. One student explained that because the school pushes students to go to college, “I will be the first to go in my family.” Another student explained that she has learned how to convert her thoughts into writing on paper “as well as they sound in my head.”

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Although teachers use and create rubrics and assessments that are aligned with the school's curricula, the assessments and analysis do not always offer a clear picture of student mastery. Teachers consistently utilize ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Teachers and students have actionable feedback and teachers make adjustments to meet all students' needs but that feedback does not always make students aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Student work is assessed using rubrics and includes individualized feedback. For example, feedback on one piece of writing on the Reconstruction indicates that the student is skilled in the areas of focus, presentation of concrete details, and standard English conventions. It further notes that the student should emphasize how drastic the changes were for society and specifically directs the student to explain why having the right to vote was so important. While feedback to students provides information that indicates how to improve their work, teachers' analysis of student work does not always investigate root causes of students not meeting mastery.
- Teachers created a paragraph-writing rubric that includes criteria for stating a claim and supporting it with evidence and analysis, as well as for organization and conventions. Before introducing this rubric, teachers discussed and reached a consensus on what qualities of student writing to include. Teachers also examine student work to norm how feedback is given to students. For example, feedback to a student using this rubric includes a notation indicating how the student could get a higher score if he were to use more transitional words such as, "additionally or furthermore." A comparison of baseline data with a subsequent assessment shows that students improved in all areas measured by the paragraph-writing rubric. For example, the average score on the baseline for stating a claim was 72% and on the post-assessment the average was over 85%.
- Most, but not all, teachers track student performance during lessons by noting if students demonstrate a conceptual understanding of the content. One teacher made notations on a chart with the names of each student to indicate grouping for follow-up instruction while tallying the number of times individual students participated in discussion. Teachers use information from these ongoing checks for understanding to determine the participation portion of their grading policy and to adapt future lessons. For example, based on the work produced in the first four days of a unit of study, one teacher assigned each student to use a specific literacy strategy to help their groups analyze texts on mandatory sentencing guidelines.
- Students also use a paragraph-writing rubric to conduct peer-to-peer assessments of writing. They provide written feedback to each other while they reflect and self-assess on their own learning. One student reflected that a diary entry could be improved by providing more personal details in order to "give the reader an image in their head."

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all students and are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

All students have access to curricula and are cognitively engaged in Common Core Learning Standards-aligned lessons.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers use Hess' *Cognitive Rigor Matrix* and Webb's *Depth of Knowledge* to evaluate the rigor of tasks. A teacher team determined that a task dealing with graphing a linear equation from an incomplete table of values was a level three. One lesson plan outlines how students will use gel electrophoresis test results to determine the father of a baby. Another lesson requires students to differentiate between fact and claim referencing the short story, "Thank You M'am" by Langston Hughes. Lesson plans include modifications for students with varying learning styles or for those who need texts in Spanish translation. Teachers also plan to provide additional support for students who are struggling with the content or were absent for a previous lesson.
- The teen leadership curriculum emphasizes the importance of adult responsibilities. This curriculum is taught during the first cycle of instruction to address the needs of transfer students. The curriculum emphasizes the development of rigorous habits and skills such as public speaking and listening, managing money and budgets, accepting responsibility for choices, and being proactive.
- Teachers participate in the Literacy Design Collaborative to create, refine, and adapt resources to support the school wide writing initiative and ensure high levels of cognitive engagement. Teachers examined student work for a unit on the philosophy of education and noted that Common Core standards require students in grades 11 and 12 to interpret multiple texts. They determined they would add additional texts to the unit of study. They also noted that the needs of their over-age, under-credited students are not always accurately described by referencing their grade level, and that it would be more accurate to define them by what they need in order to graduate.
- To encourage greater student involvement in rigorous tasks, teachers plan lessons that allow students, including ELLS and students with disabilities, to engage in tasks of their own choosing. For example, students stated that they created a video, which included an interview to report the perspective of a student whose native language is not English, to illustrate the political rhetoric of the current presidential election. They also stated that their teacher gives them the freedom to be creative in completing their assignments.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teaching practices aligned to the curricula incorporate the instructional shifts and reflect articulated common beliefs about how students learn best.

Impact

Students produce meaningful work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- There is a well-articulated belief that students must speak and write frequently in every content area. Teachers move from prompting and modeling how to engage with content to having students discuss among themselves and demonstrate understanding individually. Following a whole class discussion about what skills are the most important to success in life, students moved into groups according to their responses to continue the discussion and plan for their argumentative essay responses.
- Students in an English class cited text evidence to support a claim using a guide to distinguish between strong arguments and “lame claims.” Academic vocabulary is emphasized across all content areas. In a science lesson, students described the process of using DNA fragments to establish paternal genetic relationships. In a classroom that included students with disabilities from a District 75 program in the building, students were tasked with demonstrating a deep understanding of equivalent expressions by writing a paragraph outlining their problem solving procedure.
- Teachers use topics, such as the current presidential campaign or social justice, to engage students in high-level discourse. During a student-led discussion of a short story by Langston Hughes, a student discussed characters in the story and said, “She killed his ambition with kindness.” A display of work in the room on the topic of aphorisms showed that students were working on interpreting each other’s astute observations. In a literacy elective, students reviewed a video that they had watched in a previous lesson and discussed the arguments made against federal mandatory minimum sentencing laws. One student recalled that one of the people interviewed in the video joked that “you could get life for jaywalking.” Students expressed disagreement with policies that have led to harsh consequences for non-violent minor drug possession charges.

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

All teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based collaborations that promote achievement of school goals and implementation of Common Core standards. Teachers consistently analyze assessment data and student work for groups of students.

Impact

Teacher practices improve and students make progress toward learning goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet regularly in an inquiry team to share strategies across content areas and to build a cohesive common language about instruction and assessment. Teachers meet on additional teams, such as the Literacy Design Collaborative, to incorporate writing cohesively in all content areas. Teachers in each department meet weekly to focus on lesson planning and writing modules in their content areas. The Common Core Accelerated Team focuses on increasing the use and effectiveness of individual student conferencing. One teacher stated, and others agreed, “We practice a strategy we can turnkey with a larger group of students.”
- Teachers strengthen their instructional capacity by collaboratively observing strategies for increasing student engagement. Teachers visit the classrooms of colleagues twice per instructional cycle and provide feedback to each other. Some teachers use survey information from their students to gather information that they use to reflect on their practice and to determine if curricula needs refinement. On one survey, students suggested that it would be helpful to have them present and explain their answers more often.
- Teachers look at student work and assessment data to identify which students are meeting standards. They also look at pre- and post-assessment data in the English Language Arts, math, history, and science departments to determine if students are improving their writing skills. These teams developed and refined graphic organizers that were then incorporated into lessons school wide as well as implementing teacher-created pilot writing activities. Analysis of data from baseline and post-instructional writing assessments show that in the area of writing conventions, students scoring between 85 and 100 rose from 69% to 81%.
- During one inquiry team meeting, the math and science teachers looked at a piece of student work and used Hess’ *Cognitive Rigor Matrix* to determine that one way to increase the rigor of the task would be to have students create their own equation given two random points. Another group of teachers worked on a unit on the philosophy of education and noted that students in grades 11 and 12 are required to interpret multiple texts. They determined they would add additional texts to the unit of study.