



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

Health Opportunities High School

High School X670

**350 Gerard Avenue
Bronx
NY 10451**

Principal: Julie Mchedlishvili

**Date of review: April 15, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Daisy Concepcion**

The School Context

Health Opportunities High School is a high school with 556 students from grade 9 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 3% Asian, 34% Black, 60% Hispanic, and 2% White students. The student body includes 9% English Language Learners and 21% students with disabilities. Boys account for 39% of the students enrolled and girls account for 61%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 79.0%.

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	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	Focus	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 staff including elements of Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students.

Impact

The clear understanding of the expectations by staff and students results in students being prepared for academic success and ready for college. Student internships ensure that students are career ready.

Supporting Evidence

- Providing students with the opportunity to engage in discussion incorporating academic vocabulary is the instructional focus for this year. To that end, school leaders have provided teachers professional development on lesson planning, accountable talk practices and the use of the lesson plan template. The principal shared that observational data revealed a need to focus on formative assessment practices, as well. She stated, "Teachers need to understand that assessment is not an event, but a process." A review of recent observations reveals that the administrators have prioritized assessment and student engagement in their teacher feedback. For example, feedback to one teacher stated, "Students do not appear to be aware of the assessment criteria, and there is little or no monitoring of student learning."
- One of the major school goals is to prepare students for college and career. Teachers shared that this involved ensuring that students understood the connection between the work they receive in class and their post-secondary life. 95% of the students were accepted to college. Students spoke about the school internships in the medical fields giving many students the ability to be employed after high school. Through a partnership with Hostos Community College students leave the school as certified nursing assistants. In another partnership, students take 16 credits in fitness training and aerobic instruction and receive certification in personal training from the American Academy of Personal Training. Additionally, in a student meeting, several students shared that they do not wish to attend college immediately after graduation. The school offered various career-focused options such as Job Core, as well as classes and internships in health fields, such as, phlebotomy and radiology. Students receive state licensing and can be immediately hired at hospitals and begin their careers.
- Students shared that both teachers and guidance counselors regularly make explicit connection between what they are learning in class and post secondary life. Students are provided with transcript reviews and a one-on-one mentor to help them with academics and provide encouragement and support. Students shared they are prepared for college through their course work as well as through participation in Advance Placement courses providing them opportunities to earn college credits.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics loosely aligned with the school's curricula. Assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding.

Impact

School-wide use of a rubric based on student effort provides limited feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Inconsistent checks for understanding hinder effective adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Rubrics used across the school vary in criteria and are not always aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. Many of the rubrics either focus on providing a score or the criteria is vague. For example, the effort rubric focuses on perseverance and on classroom citizenship. The rubric for class work focuses on students completing the task accurately, displaying understanding and having minimal spelling errors. While students receive a grade, in most cases teachers provide little to no feedback. For example, a rubric used in marketing class lists criteria such as "grasps concepts" without specifying what concept it is referencing. The New York State Regents Examination in English Language Arts Part 2 Rubric was observed stapled to student essays with some of the criteria circled, however there was no evidence of teacher feedback. Thus, this lack of teacher feedback providing clear next steps hinders student progress towards mastery of goals related to the learning objectives.
- A review of student work products reveals that teachers provide a check or a simple score with little to no feedback to the student. For example, in a science class, student work was stamped with the word "Approved" and offered no additional comments. Student portfolios revealed essays with comments such as, "Nice Work" or "What is the conflict here?", thus limiting the ability of the student to understand how to improve his work or what next steps should be taken.
- Checks for understanding are used inconsistently across classrooms. For example, in an English Language Arts class, the teacher checked for comprehension by asking students if they felt that Romeo and Juliet's parents loved their children despite their disagreement with their relationship. Students shared their opinions and the teacher made an adjustment by asking students to return to the text to support their opinion. Similarly, in a Socratic seminar session where students were debating women's rights, students began to debate whether women were stronger than men. The teacher asked for text based evidence to support this claim. Students changed their claim and began addressing the limited opportunities for women. In one math class, checks for understanding were based on agreement with the teacher through a show of hands. This practice limited the assessment of student misconceptions and limited the opportunity for students to demonstrate understanding. Similarly, in a lesson on Fascism, the teacher provided students with the answers and asked "Does everyone have the same answer?" with only some students raising their hands as the teacher moved on to the next question without making an adjustment to the lesson.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Scaffolds are not consistently planned and implemented.

Impact

Instruction is teacher directed and focuses on completion of tasks with limited cognitive engagement and student discussion. Student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- In a forensic science class students were engaged in coloring a chart representing DNA markers in gel electrophoresis. The teacher stated that students were strategically grouped yet; they were all working on exactly the same activity with no evidence of additional scaffolds for those students who may need them. While the teacher did ask students to predict if identical twins would provide the same DNA markers on the electrophoresis exam, students merely responded that there are two different types of twins. The teacher reminded students that there would be a question on the Regents about twins.
- In a social studies class where students were collecting information to compare Communism and Fascism, students copied the definition onto a graphic organizer. While the English as a second language teacher was in the room working with English Language Learners and provided them with a word bank of political terms in Spanish, the teacher focused on students completing the organizer. There was little evidence of cognitive engagement by the students and use of the word bank that they were provided. Samples of student work revealed student understanding was limited to the Fascists wanting control of everything and under Communism everyone is given the same amount of goods.
- In a math class where the teaching point related to regressions and predictions, students worked quietly on their calculator with little opportunity to discuss strategies or answers. In a class on marketing and entrepreneurship, the arrow of recitation was between the teacher and student with the teacher asking a question and one student providing an answer. For example, the teacher asked "What is a niche?" A student replied, "Something created that is new."
- Student discussion was observed in an English class. Students used graphic organizers to collect textual evidence and prepare for class discussions. In a social studies class students were engaged in a Socratic Seminar. Students used graphic organizers to collect textual evidence and prepare for class discussions. In the social studies class, students were able to reference class charts that contained summaries of the texts being debated.

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and content standards. Curricula and academic tasks are refined using student work and data.

Impact

All students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities benefit from this common core aligned curricula that is refined and results in providing access to all students and promotes career and college readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses the New York City Scope and Sequence for Regents science, math and history. The *Collections Program* is implemented for English Language Arts. These programs are common core aligned and include the instructional shifts. A review of lesson plans across the content areas revealed the school's focus on academic vocabulary and the requirement that students annotate the text and engage in close reading and use of primary and secondary sources. This was seen in a unit focusing on World War II that required students to read various texts, including excerpts from *The Jewish Victims of the Holocaust* and *Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg*. Vocabulary, such as indoctrination and anti-Semitic, pertinent to this unit was stressed, as well as the content-concept that it described.
- The mathematical practices stress mathematical language and details are included in lesson. For example, one math lesson focused on solving linear equations and inequalities with one variable including an equation with coefficients. The unit stated that attention will be given to ensuring that students pay close attention to labeling the axis, and clearly identifying the units of the quantities in use. In addition, students must show ability to examine claims and defend their answers using the appropriate math terms and definitions.
- The school uses the Tri-State rubric, which is used by the New York State Department of Education for curriculum reviews to examine their English Language Arts and math lessons to ensure that they are aligned to the standards, and reflect the instructional shifts.
- Curricula show that lessons are modified to reach a diversity of learners. For example, a lesson in Global History includes the use of Venn diagrams, the pre-teaching of vocabulary and the use of a word bank along with bilingual glossaries and dictionaries, thus ensuring all students have access to the content.

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused.

Impact

Teacher collaborations result in promoting school goals, strengthening teacher practices and increase student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- In a teacher team meeting, teachers used a protocol specific for looking at student work. The team asked the presenting teacher a series of clarifying questions about the demands of the literary task and the directions provided by the teacher. During this meeting, teachers gave the presenter warm feedback regarding how successfully students used the sentence starters they had been given. However, the teachers noticed that students in this class still had difficulty providing analysis. While the team initially considered adding sentence starters as their next steps, they decided against them, as they were concerned that this might not support the task students had to perform.
- A review of teacher team notes revealed that teachers regularly analyze student work from common assessments, such as, practice Regents. For example, a document used for analysis of student work showed that one of the findings in the Living Environment assessment was that students had difficulty answering the extended response question, related to differentiating between mitosis and meiosis. Teachers planned to revisit this content by using prior Regents questions on the topic as the “Do Now” and collecting exit slips to ensure student progress. Similarly, results from a practice Algebra Regents showed that students were struggling with calculating and interpreting the average rate of change as well as subtracting and multiplying polynomials. The teachers decided to spiral these lessons into their current units. Teachers shared they learned to be more responsive to student needs as a result of their collaborating. Data for the second semester practice Regents exam in Algebra shows that there has been an improvement in student performance when compared to the baseline. General education students have shown a 13% improvement in the pass rate and there has been a 20% improvement in the pass rate for students with individualized educational plans. In the Living Environment course, general education students had a baseline pass rate of 19.5% and in January, the pass rate had reached 66%.
- Teachers meet regularly to participate in a Japanese lesson study to identify gaps in student understanding. Teachers in the Growth Mindset Inquiry team meet to discuss personal and academic behaviors such as, effort and perseverance, as well as, to identify students who need academic intervention and at risk supports. Recent data indicate positive growth for students resulting from this practice.