



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

New Design High School

High School M543

**350 Grand St
Manhattan
NY 10002**

Principal: Scott Conti

**Date of review: April, 16, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Mark Ossenheimer**

The School Context

New Design High School is a high school with 428 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 31% Black, 58% Hispanic, 4% White, 1% multi-racial, 1% Asian students and 5% other/non-reported. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 25% special education students. Boys account for 34% of the students enrolled and girls account for 66%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 84.0%.

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 Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	Focus	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	Additional Findings	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 consistently communicate high expectations of professionalism and instruction to the entire staff and provide training. Staff communicate a unified set of high expectations for all students, and provide focused and effective feedback through advisement and guidance supports.

Impact

There is a culture for learning based on mutual accountability among staff. The system of feedback and support creates student ownership of their educational experience and prepares them for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- The essential question for staff connected to the expectations of the Danielson Framework for Teaching is “How can we help students to take ownership of their learning?” Teachers engaged in a *21 Jump Street* professional development experience where they shadowed a student for an entire day, reflected on their experiences, and used the design model to develop a “student-centered prototype” of instructional practices to improve their practice.
- Principal communicates expectations through “Doctor Notes” weekly emails that contain information on school data, performance, and school expectations. Teachers also receive “Charlotte’s Shout-outs,” which is a newsletter highlighting instructional practices from across the school and encourages teachers to share promising strategies.
- Specific training was delivered to teachers on how to use the Danielson Framework to provide feedback to peers during inter-visitations and when analyzing student work products during team meetings. The school has a higher than citywide average of students with disabilities. Leadership has ensured that all teachers received training to access and understand individual educational plans (IEPs) in order for teachers to be able to provide entry points into curricula and tasks.
- College and career readiness expectations are communicated to students through several course and instructional experiences. The school has a sequence of design classes at every grade level to provide students design thinking problem-solving skills through different design fields such as fashion, graphic, and industrial. The school has a Design for Life course across grades that provides students with study skills, time management, and goal setting.
- Every student in grades 10 through 12 receive personal one on one coaching from adult mentors, who are teachers and guidance staff. The coaching experience creates student ownership of their education by facilitating goal setting, developing possible solutions, reflecting and determining next steps to reach those goals. Students receive individualized and differentiated support and guidance based on their individual goals and needs.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices align with the curricula and reflect the Common Core Standards instructional shifts. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points into the curricula across classrooms engaging students in challenging work products and discussions.

Impact

Student centered instructional strategies provide access for students including those with disabilities so that across most classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect high levels of thinking and participation. However, some classrooms have yet to develop high quality supports and extensions to ensure all learners demonstrate higher order thinking skills while engaged with tasks creating greater student ownership during discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- An English language arts class lesson on *Othello* had students in groups engaged in “Squad Reading” of Act 2, paraphrasing assigned sections of text and identifying the central idea of the passage, as well as the literary element within the passage. Students were to assign each other roles within the play, read aloud, and analyze the passage through discussion in order to deepen their thinking and create a common response. The *No Fear Shakespeare* text provided students with a choice based on reading level of reading the text in modern English or Shakespearian English so that all students could engage with the themes and literary elements. All students participated in the group reading of the text, however, without roles and structures, groups struggled to engage in an active discussion of the text working independently until prompted by the teacher with specific questions.
- Students in an algebra class engaged in a group performance based task determining the economic value of joining a movie club. The structures for group work were displayed in the class and students collaborated using prior knowledge on linear equations to construct meaning on systems of equations. Group work rule number five requires that all group members be able “to explain how they arrived at an answer” and groups were observed reviewing this process before work transitioned back to whole class discussion. However, in a different algebra class while this same group process was displayed, it was not referred to during the group practice task on one step and two step equations resulting in most students working independently.
- Students were engaged in higher level Depths of Knowledge questions in a Global History class that asked students assigned to different country perspectives to analyze the Battle of Britain, Pearl Harbor, and the Battle of Stalingrad to explain the cause, effect, and the reason the battle is a turning point. They then engaged in discussion to make a claim as to which battle was the most impactful in the outcome of the war. Students in an English class engaged in higher order thinking during a poetry explication task involving poems written by Shakespeare and Tupac Shakur and were asked if they thought Tupac could have borrowed elements of Shakespeare’s sonnet in writing his poem. In contrast, in a Design for Life class, student participation was lower during an “Agree or Disagree” activity on the college process that was based primarily on lower level Depths of Knowledge questions asking for recall.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Curricula align to the Common Core Learning Standards integrating the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills across subjects.

Impact

The school's curricular decisions build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of English language arts curricula across grades demonstrates adjustments made to align curricula with the new Common Core aligned New York State ELA Regents exam. For example, units have increased the use of nonfiction texts, the 9th and 10th grade curricula contain four summative assessments. Two of these assessments are modeled after the exam's textual response prompt, and two after the exam's argumentative essay. The 11th grade curriculum shows all four summative assessments modeled after the argumentative essay using nonfiction texts. Documents also capture a common approach to writing an argument paragraph that is adopted by the history department as well that asks all students across grades and subjects to use "Claim, Context, Evidence, Analysis, and Link" as a structure for writing.
- Science curricula and tasks incorporate the Common Core literacy standards as well as New York State standards for science. For example, a chemistry unit plan on the effects of combustion incorporates the content from the Regents curricula for chemistry and incorporates the Common Core standards of citing evidence to support analysis and integrating multiple sources of information in order to solve a problem or address a question. A living environment course task incorporated content on the immune system with a debate on vaccines based on textual evidence from multiple sources.
- Students take design courses across all grades that teach the design process through different fields of fashion, graphic, and industrial. In addition to exposing and preparing students for further study and careers in these respective fields, all of the courses contain tasks that engage students in creative, problem-solving, and higher order thinking processes. For example, a unit titled Independent Fabrication asks students to use extensive research on fashion design and fabrication techniques to design and fabricate their own garment to be entered in the school's Fashion Showcase. A task from an industrial design course asks students to research, experiment, and build a lamp from diverse materials. Finished products are sold in the school's pop up shop housed in the local neighborhood and is student run.

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use assessments and rubrics aligned to the school's curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. The school uses common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress.

Impact

The use of on-going assessments provides students with actionable and meaningful feedback, and is used to adjust instructional decisions so that all students demonstrate increased achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use shared assessments called Milestones that are 30% of students' grades and ensure all course assessments align with the overall school grading policy regarding student mastery. Milestones align to Regent exams or subject area standards and are used by teachers and students to measure progress, as well as by teachers to adjust instruction. For example, a Milestone for English language arts was an on demand argument based essay. The assessment contained actionable feedback that the student used to revise their work demonstrating increased mastery of those standards. A math Milestone on quadratic equations also demonstrated teacher feedback and student revision towards increased mastery.
- The school tracks student progress using online grading and monitoring systems. Teachers who coach small groups of students use this data with students to self-reflect, goal set, and action plan to increase student achievement. Coaches and students use an Academic Goal Setting graphic organizer that is focused on the school's On Task Measure to develop student work habits in relation to academic goals. For example, a weekly goal can be set for increasing a math score that would include math interventions, and a goal to increase participation in class. Coaching sessions are tracked in an online tracker over time so impact can be measured and adjustments made to action plans.
- The school has established Credit Amelioration Daze and Retro Rewind days that stop all regular instruction at set points in a semester. Teachers and students use credit accumulation data, course progress data, and feedback on student work to develop targeted instruction for small groups of students and/or time to revise work towards increased mastery with adult guidance to increase student achievement.
- The tenth grade Design for Life (DFL) course was adjusted to provide added support to students for the Global History Regents exam and the 11th grade DFL course was adjusted to support students for the United States history Regents exam. Social studies and Design for Life teachers used item analysis from the exams, in order to identify key concepts and skills that students needed reinforcement and were incorporated into lessons. For example, lessons on creating a study plan or test taking strategies focus on these subject areas versus a more general approach.

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

All teachers are engaged in structured inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote school-wide goals and the implementation of the Common Core instructional shifts. Distributed leadership structures are embedded so there is effective teacher leadership.

Impact

Professional collaborations result in strengthened teacher instructional capacity, instructional coherency across the school, and a key role for teachers in decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Department teams have monthly full day professional learning days called Department Days. Teachers within each department are relieved of teaching duties for the day and teams engage in structured goal setting according to the school's instructional focus of increasing student-centered instruction, refine instruction and assessments, and review student work to develop further instructional strategies. For example, a review of Department Day agendas from September to April reveals teams examining questions such as "How can we use assessment to drive instruction?" and using a tuning protocol to analyze the department's Milestone assessments.
- Every teacher participated in a "21 Jump Street" protocol where they shadowed a student an entire day and reflected on the experience individually and as a department to determine student centered strategies that would benefit students and increase achievement. Departments used the design process to develop individual instructional prototypes to use in their courses, bring in student work or data after implementing the prototype, engage in inter-visitations providing feedback to one another, and then revising the practice. For example, an English teacher moved away from whole class read a-louds and developed "Squad Reading" that increased student engagement through a small group structure. A social studies teacher implemented independent research and presentations to increase student choice.
- Distributed leadership structures ensure teachers have ownership of their professional learning and it is targeted to improve student learning cross the school. For example, POD is a professional learning structure that forms inquiry groups on teacher-selected topics, is teacher-led, and change quarterly. Topics are all centered in teacher practice and the school's instructional focus. For example, topics include a Video Learning Community where by members develop instructional goals for themselves connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, present video of their classrooms, and receive constructive feedback from their peers. Other topics include using design theory in planning, using student work and assessment for writing quality Individual Education Plans, and sharing best practices. In an observed POD meeting focused on teaching diverse learners, teachers shared student work products that demonstrated the instructional strategies they personally developed as part of the group. Every teacher spoke to improved teacher practice and raised student achievement in their class based on collaborative work from the POD.