Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Wadleigh Secondary School for the Performing & Visual Arts

Secondary School 03M415

215 West 114th St.
Manhattan, NY 10026

Principal: Daisy Fontanez

Dates of Review:
May 16, 2017 - May 17, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Kevin Bradley

The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Celebration** to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Focus** to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as **Additional Finding**. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

Wadleigh Secondary School for the Performing & Visual Arts serves students in grade six through grade twelve. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

Instructional Core		
To what extent does the school...	**Area**	**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 Finding**	**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	**Area of Focus**	**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 Finding**	**Proficient**

School Quality Ratings continued

School Culture

To what extent does the school...	Area	Rating
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults	**Area of Celebration**	**Proficient**
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**

Systems for Improvement

To what extent does the school...	Area	Rating
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	1.4 Positive Learning Environment	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

The school's approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional support are in place to ensure that each student is known well by at least one adult.

Impact

Structures ensure that there is a safe environment and inclusive culture that welcomes and values student voice and is conducive to student and adult learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's culture, both from academic and social-emotional perspectives, is based on *Habits of Mind, Heart, and Work*. The school faculty has focused on helping students learn the habits of heart that include being respectful, collaborating, reflecting, as well as having a sense of community and activism. By promoting the habits of mind, the school also focuses on examining evidence, probing viewpoints, and making connections. Finally, the habits of work include a focus on being responsible, persevering, and being accountable for their actions. Students reported that their role in student government is evidence of their voice being valued. The safe and inclusive environment was reported by staff, students, and parents, and has resulted in a decrease in Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) incidents this school year as compared to last school year. OORS incidents dropped from twenty-seven as of May 2016 to thirteen as of May 2017. Suspensions dropped from thirty-six as of May 2016 to two as of May 2017.

- The school's advisory program includes social-emotional learning support. A Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists (SAPIS) counselor pushes into advisory to teach lessons from the Life Skills Training Program on self-management skills, social skills, and drug resistance. The program director from College for Every Student joins different advisories to provide guidance and resources about planning for college. Other social-emotional support topics covered during advisory include building community, understanding school policies, time and task management, individual conferencing with advisors, goal setting for attendance and academic performance, preparation for Student Led Conferences, college and career exploration, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and allied community (LGBTQ) Life Skills, conflict resolution, anti-bullying, and building communication and listening skills.

- Bi-weekly Kid Talk sessions during grade-level team meetings to review a specific identified student. Kid Talk is an academic intervention that looks at attendance and other data to determine what the team knows about the students and how to best support them. During the bi-weekly meetings, the team looks at areas of strength, areas of concern, the students' perspective, and plan for support. Supports are individualized based on student need and include one-on-one check-ins, setting up lunch-period tutoring, and monitoring progress for possible referral through New York Foundling for outside-of-school counseling supports.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing

Findings

Flexible student groups evidence teachers' work toward providing students with multiple entry points into lessons, although students have limited opportunities to take ownership of learning or demonstrate higher order thinking skills.

Impact

Students are unevenly engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and student discussions inconsistently reflect high levels of student participation.

Supporting Evidence

- There were multiple missed opportunities for student-to-student discussions. In a global studies class, a lesson on thematic essay analysis had students reading essays and looking at the rubric to assess. The teacher asked questions of the students, which the students responded directly to the teacher. The lesson lacked student-to-student opportunities for turn and talk discussion and there were no opportunities for student-centered class-wide discussion. In another global studies class, a lesson on renaissance art and what artists were trying to depict in their art connected to the time period was teacher centered. The class lacked peer-to-peer student discussions and student-led classroom discussion without being prompted with teacher formed questions that resulted in student responses back to the teacher.

- An Earth science lesson on moon phases involved students having multiple options for the do now. However, when there was a transition to turn and talk, not all students participated initially. There was uneven engagement with all three answers from students coming from one table during the share-out. During an algebra I lesson on domain and range of slope intercepts, the turn and talks did not turn into meaningful discussions between students. Students were unevenly engaged as illustrated when students went up to the board to work on problems and other students did not engage with student work. Additionally, during a ninth-grade English Language Arts (ELA) class students were looking at effective narratives and how students could use strategies to improve their own narratives. There was an opportunity for turn and talk, however not all students participated. When I asked a young lady what she wrote, she said "I don't know." Although the teacher stopped and read pieces of the passage, students were not given the opportunity for a turn and talk or share out to the whole class about what they wrote. While there were some supports available such as a thinking wheel and sentence starters, these were not out on the tables as resources.

- There were some examples of positive student discussion and student-centered learning. During a choir class, a student led the vocal warm ups with groups divided into sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses. In an art class, students had an opportunity to discuss their challenges with their piece with a partner, who went on to share out the challenges their partners were facing. In a living environment class, students were working in groups on solutions to environmental problems through reading different articles and using appropriate academic language. This task had outgrowth from the mock Regents exam results. However, in other classes such has a seventh-grade writing class, a do now about obligation and commitment included a turn and talk opportunity. The teacher prompted a pair to share out, and another student shared out her disagreement. However, there were missed opportunities for student ownership as not all the pairs had opportunities to share-out or engage in student-centered discussion.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Curricula and tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Curricula promote college and career readiness for all students. Faculty members adjust materials that make curricula more accessible to the school's diversity of learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricula documents revealed alignment to the Common Core and New York State (NYS) content standards where applicable, as well as integration of the instructional shifts across grades and content areas. The school uses *Engage NY* for ELA and math. The *Teachers College Reading and Writing Program* curriculum is used for reading and writing in middle school grades. *Pathways* is used for social studies and *New Visions* is used for science. Curricula documents across grades and content areas evidence consistent alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards and the integration of the math instructional shifts. For example, in a ninth-grade algebra I lesson, students were given the opportunity to explore real-world situations that can be modeled in quadratic relationships. Curricula documents include assignments evidencing integration of the ELA instructional shifts. For example, a sixth-grade ELA Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) lesson plan includes citing textual evidence to support analysis of author's purpose.

- Results from a mock Regents exam administered identified only nineteen percent of students got a question about the effects of global warming on Antarctica correct. Living environment teachers decided to reteach the lesson using a Writing is Thinking with Strategic Inquiry (WITsi) strategy that involved generating a hypothesis and questions from two graphs directly from the previous mock Regents exam. Focusing students on learning how the rising levels of greenhouse gases lead to global warming, teachers used the think-aloud strategy to model graph interpretation for global temperature change. During the do now, students were able to create their own "if-then-because" hypothesis using the information from the graphs. The students followed with generating three specific questions, such as "What causes carbon dioxide to be released into the atmosphere?" and worked with a partner to have them answer one of their questions. Students were then able to answer three questions in reference to the topic, including, "State one specific way in which humans might have caused the changes in atmospheric CO_2 levels." Examples of student work products after the reteach lesson as a result of the mock Regents exam results evidenced improved student progress in understanding the content.

- Students' placements in groups were often adjusted in individual lesson plans based on assessment results. The lesson plan for a forensic science course includes differentiation noted for specific students by name, including annotating the article, and answering leading questions prior to scientific explanation, with support of rubrics and vocabulary. A ninth-grade living environment lesson plan includes differentiation for a sentence combination during a do now task about carbon dioxide in the atmosphere connected to average temperature. A sixth-grade math lesson plan includes specific supports for students with disabilities, including differentiation of steps written out to assist in calculating measures of central tendencies. Included within this plan are partial activity sheets so that smaller parts are presented at a time, partner reading, and a whole numbers data set versus decimal number set as a reference. Supports for ELLs were outlined as translation from a co-teacher and a physical-body movement of charades involving crossing out high and low numbers.

Additional Finding				
Quality Indicator:	**2.2 Assessment**		**Rating:**	**Proficient**

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics, checklists, and grading policies aligned with the school's curricula to inform feedback to students. School leaders use common assessments to determine student progress toward goals.

Impact

Students utilize teachers' actionable feedback and use assessment tools in order to increase their achievement. Common assessments and grade-team findings and actions inform schoolwide curricula and instructional adjustments.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, rubrics and checklists are used as tools of support for student growth. Rubrics that are aligned with the curricula, along with checklists that have been modified for student use, are used across grades and content areas. Evidence of students' use of these tools is posted on classroom walls, on hallway bulletin boards, and reported by the students themselves. A student shared, "We use rubrics, scoring one, two, three, or four. You can use a rubric so you get a higher grade, such as writing an essay or something. The rubric helps you with what to include, and what we should make sure we have in our assignment." Another student pointed out, "In our [Advanced Placement] AP class, we use a one through eight rubric, in place of the one to four rubric, to match how College Board grades you on AP exams. We use sample exemplar essays, to see what can I do better, to make them an eight."

- Across classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher-written actionable feedback. For example, "Be specific of who is saying 'what' and for what reasons and how is it important or relative to your central ideas?" An example of written feedback on math assignments, "You need to reject negatives when dealing with measurement. Descriptor in # 2 needs to be a sentence explaining how you found new dimension." One student reported about how often she receives feedback from her teacher, "All the time, if you're struggling with something, like global history, she will read over what you're struggling with and she lets you know what to add, take out, or change."

- Common assessments include the *iReady* baseline diagnostic assessment, mock Regents exams across content areas, *iReady* benchmarks, and living environment common assessments across all sections aligned to Regents exams. The school analyzed the results of the January 2017 Global History and Geography Regents exam. As a result, the school created a Global History prep class during ninth period. The prep class involves a review of Global History content, followed by practice on multiple-choice questioning and essay preparation for the extended response document based question (DBQ).

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

School leaders consistently convey high expectations to staff through ongoing feedback and professional learning aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. The school provides ongoing information to families regarding student progress toward college and career readiness.

Impact

Ongoing communication by school leaders found in feedback from observations as well as within teaching and learning-focused professional development (PD) make high expectations clear. The school communicates the learning opportunities for families to understand student progress towards meeting standards.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* as the standard for professionalism and high quality instruction. One example of this feedback was, "Have the scholars become accountable to ensure that they consistently are engaged in discussion. Use the accountable talk stems so scholars can expand their thinking. Put the critical thinking wheels on the tables in case scholars need it." Another example of this feedback is, "Begin to incorporate the Habits of Mind, Work, and Heart in your lesson plans and communicate the Habits of Mind, Work, and Heart during the lesson when it is appropriate." In addition, teachers receive a staff handbook that covers a wide variety of expectations ranging from the grading policy, professional expectations, classroom responsibilities, characteristics of good instruction, and school grading policy.

- Weekly *Habits Updates* emails are sent to all staff with a weekly focus, areas for growth, areas for celebration, and shout-outs for jobs well done. School leaders hold scholarship meetings with teachers to review student academic progress of all students enrolled in teachers' classes. Teachers are held accountable for creating academic supports for struggling students by creating an Academic Intervention Plan (AIP) for students who are failing a class. AIPs include steps students will take to improve their grade and steps that teachers will take to help students pass their classes. PD is aligned to the school leader's instructional focus and provides support for teachers to meet the expectations of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

- School leaders and staff communicate expectations to students and their families through regular communications via phone and email as well as a handbook for parents and students. Additionally, teachers use an online grading program that keeps families informed regarding academic standing. The school community has also utilized a social media app to inform parents of their child's attendance progress. One parent reported about how the school faculty helps parents to support the students at home, "They offer workshops in the school about the Common Core, and we were brought in to workshops once a month. The Common Core, it's harder, but when you get used to it, it helps us understand what our children need help with at home."

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote achievement of school goals and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Teachers' collaborations have strengthened their instructional capacity. Additionally, teachers have voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- An observed living environment inquiry team used an inquiry cycle protocol during their meeting as they looked at post-assessment data from a mid-unit assessment on human impact. Teachers reviewed the item analysis, annotated the document, and referenced the original assessment. The team proceeded to make inferences as they discussed trends and patterns in students' performance on specific questions. The team then determined instructional strategies to best address the problems that students were having. Next steps were identified as having students use the same annotation skills they use in ELA class to try to understand text heavy questions, having students graph at least three times a week, and seeing if they know the difference between ozone depletion and global warming to understand biodiversity.

- An ELA team determined that there was a group of students who were in need of a ninth grade-tenth grade bridge honors class. This was determined based on assessment data and the intention was to guide these students to be able to take the ELA Common Core Regents exam sooner than originally planned by prepping them for a higher level of content, rather than staying in the regular English 9 course.

- Teacher leaders have led the Authentic Intellectual Work (AIW) team as an important team with input on schoolwide instructional decisions. The AIW team involves peer support of teachers and delivering PD to increase the instructional capacity of teachers across the school. The AIW team analyzes the rigor of tasks and develops supports for teachers to lift the rigor of their tasks during their lessons. A teacher reported the effect of the AIW system, "It helped me grow immensely. I was totally opposed to video recording my lesson for my students. My students deserved to be noticed for their much improved academic reading and writing scores. Now they ask for the camera to be out. It was about growing and seeing where we need to go."