

Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Richard R. Green High School of Teaching

High School 02M580

**7 Beaver St.
Manhattan
NY 10004**

Principal: Nigel Pugh

**Dates of Review:
April 20, 2017 - April 21, 2017**

Lead Reviewer: Adam Breier

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

Richard R. Green High School of Teaching serves students in grade 9 through grade 12. 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		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	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	Additional Finding	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 Finding	Developing

School Quality Ratings continued

School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	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	Well Developed
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		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	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	Area of Focus	Developing
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:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school's culture-building is reflected in its safe and inclusive culture in which lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or students questioning their gender identity (LGBTQ) feel welcome and supported. Structures ensure that all students are known well by at least one adult who personalizes supports.

Impact

Student-voice has resulted in the creation of clubs and forums that have strengthened the LGBTQ community as well as the bonds between LGBTQ students and those who do not identify as such. Implementation of restorative circles as well as attendance intervention supports have resulted in decreases in disciplinary infractions and increases in student attendance.

Supporting Evidence

- Students have an active voice and role in developing and maintaining an inclusive school culture. Students meet during their lunch period each Thursday to engage in student-facilitated group conversations around sensitive topics during group sessions titled Hot Topics with Hot Pockets. Discussion topics are determined by students and have included current events, political and social issues facing the entire nation as well as local communities, and students' gender identity and transition. Teachers are welcome to join these conversations. Students reported that as a result of these sessions, they feel less alone and have developed a great appreciation of the different perspectives on the issues they share in common. One student reported that these sessions "opened my mind to things I would never have considered." Additionally, one teacher reported and all present agreed that attending these sessions offers a wonderful opportunity to engage with students around the real challenges and deep issues that they face every day and to support them as they mature through addressing these issues as a community.
- In addition to the Hot Topics with Hot Pockets program, students created the Equity League forum. This forum involves strengthening the school community through discussions and activities between students facing gender identity and transitional issues and students not facing those issues. Leaders of this group helped forge a multi-school Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) forum that has met on four occasions and is planning an event designed to build confidence and self-respect. Students in the Equality League also designed and delivered a session for teachers during which key terms associated with the LGBTQ community and the issues this community faces were covered in order to strengthen the school faculty's understanding of the issues faced by this school's community.
- All students attend advisory classes. Within this structure, students facilitate and participate in restorative circles in response to disciplinary issues that have either occurred or have been predicted and are preventable. A committee comprised of school leaders and teachers meets monthly to determine the topics that should be covered. In addition to college and career preparedness lessons during the advisory class, students are engaged in community and trust building exercises, and conversations around inclusion. Data reveals a decrease in both the number of disciplinary incidents as well as student suspensions. Additionally, a program has been implemented that delivers attendance supports and interventions to a targeted group of students struggling with attendance. This program involves a committee made up of school leaders, teachers, and support personnel who monitor student attendance, are assigned to specific students as mentors, and facilitate events at which students with improved attendance are celebrated. Data reveals not only an increase in attendance for the entire school, but also a marked decrease in the number of students who have been absent for twenty or more days.

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. Teacher teams analyze students they share.

Impact

Use of an inquiry approach is developing across teacher teams. Analysis of assessment data does not typically result in progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are engaged in a variety of structured professional collaborations that do not use an inquiry approach but do further the mission of the school. The grade ten teacher team met to discuss the progress of four students. In the course of this discussion, teachers referred to each student's transcript as well as observed student behaviors that may present obstacles for success. Teachers discussed a particular venue for literary work summaries that a student prefers and how this student needs to be seated near the front of a classroom in order to remain on task. Another student's struggles were considered when a teacher suggested allowing the use of a laptop computer during exams, even though there is no mandate for its use as an exam modification. Issues around a third student's consistent cell phone use during class were considered as teachers discussed options for increasing that student's time spent on-task. Grade eleven team meeting agendas reveal conversations around common issues such as how teachers should formulate a marking period grade for a student newly admitted to the school in January and which students should be selected for any one of a variety of student-of-the-month awards. However, no evidence was provided to show decisions regarding interventions and their impact are tracked over time.
- In addition to discussions of common planning around issues and the analysis of students' struggles with behavior and academic success, teacher teams conduct meetings to which students are invited. During these meetings, teachers use a quality circle protocol that involves the analysis of attendance, behavioral, and academic success data in order to create an action plan so that the student can make progress in the noted areas of concern. For the students who present persistent problems a follow-up session including the student and a family member is scheduled so that all stakeholders can discuss the issues and possible next-steps that could be taken in order to assist the student in finding success. Agendas reveal that quality circle meetings are occurring across all grade teams.
- A grade twelve teacher team agenda from April 7, 2017 revealed that teachers utilized a protocol in their analysis of student reaction papers. Teachers found that the student's response lacked supporting evidence citations and recommended the use of graphic organizers in the future. Review of meeting agendas makes clear that grade teams' endeavors to conduct inquiry work around targeted groups of students are not followed by reexamination of the same student, or students' work products to assess the success of suggested next-steps, thus missing opportunities to move groups of students towards higher achievement.

Additional Finding

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

Curricula are coherent and promote college and career readiness. Additionally, rigorous curricula are accessible for all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs).

Supporting Evidence

- Review of curriculum maps revealed evidence of alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and New York State (NYS) content standards, as well as integration of the instructional shifts. In an Earth science lesson plan, students are to write paragraphs in which they describe the findings of the different experiments on wind erosion, making sure to cite evidence from their lab notes to support their conclusions. A grade nine English Language Arts (ELA) lesson plan reveals that students must use textual evidence from *Hamlet* in supporting their arguments over how Hamlet changed after his meeting with the witches early in the play. An algebra unit covering exponents and factoring includes the real-world application of exploring exponential growth by having students consider how many zombies would exist in New York City given a variety of variables. Also embedded in this unit are tasks that ask students to utilize different perspectives to arrive at solutions to problems. Additionally, curricula across all content areas include writing tasks that will either be assessed by the teacher or peers, or serves the purpose of preparatory work for the lesson itself.
- A grade nine global studies lesson plan has students writing about their perspectives on religion. The lesson plan includes a modified vocabulary preview for ELLs, and students with disabilities are supported by a graphic organizer scaffold. The lesson plan for a grade eleven U.S. history class that covers the end of the Cold War includes readings that have been leveled to meet the needs of student groups based on reading level. In addition, this lesson plan details the mandated individualize educational program (IEP) modifications for all students in the two class periods who would receive this lesson. The unit plan from which this lesson was derived on covering the spread of communism, indicates the general differentiation strategies that should be applied to the planning process for all lesson topics. During a grade nine English Language Arts (ELA) class, students have access to both the original *Hamlet* text as well as a modernized version.
- A U.S. history lesson plan covering the Harlem Renaissance through analysis of visual art, poetry, and music of that period, details how students would spend a fixed period of time at three stations. Each station included a differentiated plan, including plans for both co-teachers in the class. This plan contains a chart that divides the lesson into beginning, middle, and end sections, each of which includes specific steps each co-teacher will take to address the needs of their respectively assigned student groups. For instance, the teacher focusing on meeting the needs of students with disabilities will use strategies including highlighting vocabulary words and directing students to take note of context clues. This lesson plan also includes the specific mandated IEP modifications for all students in the class for which this lesson was designed. Similarly, a grade twelve lesson plan on Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* includes the initials of all students with whom the teachers would conference and the modifications these students were to receive, in order to assess students' progress. Also included in this lesson plan were the three ELLs in the class and the different supports they would receive, including access to an online glossary and modified text.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the articulated belief that students learn best when they are consistently tasked with writing assignments. Student work products reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Across content areas, students are engaging in low- and high-stakes writing assignments. Additionally, student discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Teaching practices evidence the shared belief that students learn best when they are engaged in student-to-student discussions and write across grade levels and content areas. At the start of a grade eleven ELA class, students reflected on their acting of a scene from *Hamlet* during the previous day's lesson, focusing on the processes they used to prepare and the methods used while engaged in the acting. During a grade nine global studies class, students reread the free-writing pieces they created about religion just before the holiday break. Using pre-essay writing exercises, students were to expand on their initial discussions of religion in a more comprehensive and structured in-class writing assignment detailing their perceptions on religion. In preparation for a lesson on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, students were tasked with writing a paragraph about whether or not all people have a capacity to conduct evil acts. Additionally, in an Earth science class students were assigned to synthesize their findings from three different experiments on the effects of wind erosion into separate paragraphs for each.
- Students worked with peers and explored topics through discussion, leading to meaningful work products in ELA and social studies classes. After reflecting on the previous day's work in the grade eleven ELA class mentioned above, students shared their findings with partners and worked collaboratively to implement peers' acting recommendations. In a global studies class, students shared their writing pieces on religion with two set of partners. Similarly, prior to writing about peoples' capacity to commit evil acts in preparation for a lesson on *Macbeth*, students were given a moment to consider the question individually and then to share, discuss, and question their opinions during turn-and-talk discussions. Additionally, during a U.S. history class covering the Harlem Renaissance students moved between three different stations and carried out student-to-student discussions at each about how the specific art focus at each station represented the issues faced by African-Americans during that time period.
- Similar to their work in ELA and social studies classes, students explored topics through discussion in math and science courses. Prior to writing about their findings regarding in-class experiments on three levels of wind erosion in an Earth science class, students discussed those findings using a discussion protocol which included sharing observations made during the experiment and how they differed from each other. During an Algebra II class, students worked individually on their do now question and then shared their responses with a peer before the whole-class share-out. Additionally, all further assigned equations were solved by students in partnership with other students. The fluidity and ease with which students conducted student-to-student conversations in classes spanning all core academic subjects evidenced the purposeful work toward increasing student engagement and impacting student learning across the school.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create rubrics and grading policies that are loosely aligned with the school's curricula. Common assessments are in place but results are inconsistently used to adjust instruction.

Impact

Feedback to students regarding student achievement is inconsistent and limited. Use of common assessment data is mostly informal providing little impact on curricular or instructional adjustments.

Supporting Evidence

- Although the use of rubrics aligned to the curricula are widely used, their use does not result in the consistent actionable feedback to students. Written feedback to students in one class advised students to elaborate more on the examples employed to support an argument, reread the essay and edit for grammatical errors including frequent sentence fragments and other writing convention errors. In another class, feedback guides students to consider strengthening the contrast between the economic situations depicted in different documents along with references to grammar and writing mechanics that needed editing. Teacher feedback was only available in two of the nine classes observed, though this feedback evidenced an uneven representation between actionable feedback and teacher comments such as "Great work" and "Shows understanding."
- One student reported that in writing an essay on progressivism in a U.S. history class, the teacher guided her through the four different drafts. This student discussed how with each draft, the teacher would ask different probing questions and that this helped her focus on writing with greater detail. Additionally, another student spoke to the assistance that her teacher provides when writing essays for an AP English class. However, of the fourteen students interviewed, these were the only two who could speak to specific instances of helpful feedback from teachers. Other students reported, and most agreed, that teachers do not consistently offer actionable feedback to students.
- School leaders and teachers spoke to the use of the resulting data from common assessments such as NYS Regents exam results as well as grade eight state exam results during discussions of individual students at kid talk sessions and in the outreach efforts designed to increase attendance at after-school and Saturday academic programs. One teacher was able to produce an item analysis of student scores from a recent ELA Regents exam and discuss how he was using this information to track his students' progress and adjust instruction. However, practices around the use of this data for measuring student progress across grades and subject areas are being developed.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

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

Impact

Teachers understand expectations around teaching and learning and there is a system of accountability for those expectations. Communication from school leaders and teachers through an online grade book system and other strategies provides frequent opportunities for families to understand student progress towards meeting standards.

Supporting Evidence

- Ongoing communication and support by school leaders around classroom visits support teachers' understanding and awareness of expectations around teaching and learning. Frequent classroom observations and the accompanying feedback utilizing the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* establish a high standard for professionalism and quality instruction. A review of observation reports evidences actionable feedback to teachers on using questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, and using assessment in instruction. Additionally, teachers receive a weekly electronic bulletin titled *Green Market* which includes expectations ranging from day-to-day professional conduct as well as guidelines for instructional planning. Some of those professional commitments deal with giving actionable feedback to students, tracking student work, and celebrating students' academic success by posting work on classroom and hallway bulletin boards.
- Through newsletters, memorandum, emails, phone calls, workshops, the school website, and the student-parent handbook, expectations around students' preparation for college readiness are shared with families and students. Among the expectations shared through these means are the partnerships existing at the school that result in college trips for students, the courses and examinations students must pass in order to earn promotion to the next grade and/or high school graduation, as well as the many activities and clubs available for students at the school. In addition, expectations for students' day-to-day responsibilities such as attendance, policies around student behavior, as well as the many student services available, are available to families and students. Students and families learn about students' academic progress through an online gradebook system from which parents reported receiving daily and weekly notifications. One parent reported and all present agreed that the emails received from the online gradebook system have been central to helping them keep their students on track with daily assignments.
- An annual career day event involves invited speakers from a variety of professions sharing their experiences with students at this school. Past career day events have included participants such as a radio program host from National Public Radio (NPR), fashion designers, assistant district attorneys, uniformed military personnel, uniformed New York City (NYC) employees, graphic designers, and educators from a variety of positions. After a series of presentations by industry-leading professionals, students then attend workshops offered by fellow students, staff members, and visitors, in which students are exposed to how people have transformed personal passions into careers. The roster of speakers and presenters at the career day event to take place later in this school year includes eight students' family members, four alumni, a former teacher, and the school's founding principal. One parent reported, "Even though I couldn't be there, it's great that parents were at the career day to talk about their jobs. Feels like parents were completely represented!"