

# Quality Review Report

## 2017-2018

**New Design High School**

**High school 02M543**

**350 Grand Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10002**

**Principal: Scott Conti**

**Dates of Review:  
May 29, 2018 - May 30, 2018**

**Lead Reviewer: Elsa Kortright-Torres**

## 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

New Design High School 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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## School Quality Ratings continued

<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Rating</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults	<b>Area of Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Rating</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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	<b>Area of Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

Structures are in place so that each student is known well by at least one adult. The school community strategically aligns professional development (PD), family outreach, and student learning experiences and supports.

### Impact

Personalized interventions, routines, celebrations, and supports help students learn positive behaviors and result in the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school believes in a social-emotional learning approach for students to develop metacognition and learn about positive behaviors. To that end, each student is programmed into a four-year sequence Design for Life (DFL) class. Students are taught to manage their time, be self-aware, make positive choices, and form positive relationships with their assigned mentor. Students reported that every Friday, they learn about life skills, such as financial literacy. Other students reported that during their DFL class they learn about colleges, writing college essays, and financial aid. Students expressed being ready for college because of their experiences in their DFL classes.
- There are structures in place to ensure that students are provided with support with attendance and guidance to complete graduation requirements. For example, starting in ninth grade each student begins working on their senior exit portfolio that will be presented at the end of their senior year. Students prepare to demonstrate all requirements to graduate such as meeting the school's criteria to be college ready in reading, mathematics, attendance, and grade-point average. For attendance, students must have a 90 percent attendance rate. Supports are discussed and generated from the guidance department to ensure students are meeting these criteria. There are frequent meetings between DFL teacher mentors and their students. Students are provided with office hours during which they can meet with individual teachers or their mentors to seek assistance in making up school work or for guidance.
- The school community ensures that there is an alignment of PD with outreach to families. For example, teachers and staff communicate expectations for graduation starting in ninth grade. In the beginning of the school year, parents of students across all grades are invited for orientation. Parents of seniors are invited to the school for a presentation on the requirements for graduation including attendance and academic criteria. Parents reported that they receive timely emails or text messages to regarding their children's attendance. One parent reported, and all present agreed, that the school pushes their children to attend college and provide all the support they need such as teacher office hours. Through the DFL program, parents reported that their children receive ongoing instruction to prepare them for life after graduation. A parent of a student with a disability explained that her child has received a lot of support and because of that he is now an honors student. According to teachers, they have received PD geared toward dealing with trauma and de-escalation in addition to restorative strategies. Teachers reported and all agreed that everyone in the school are empathetic and work hard to establish a positive school culture where student learning is the focus.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.1 Goals and Action Plans</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School goals are implemented and monitored throughout the school year. Goals and action plans are informed by ongoing data-driven needs assessments.

### Impact

While goals and action plans are tracked for progress and used to drive schoolwide initiatives, they have not explicitly resulted in accelerated student learning and students' social-emotional growth. However, those adjustments have not yet resulted in a closing of the achievement gap.

### Supporting Evidence

- There is a short list of school-level goals and action plans created by members of the cabinet and grade-level teams. For example, the instructional foci of the school emerged from teachers and school leaders working together to vertically align expectations with the intent of the potential to increase graduation rate and Regents passing rates. The cabinet decided to focus on having common assessments called milestones, and strategies for reading and writing. These strategies were created to enable repetition and lead to mastery of writing steps by using acronyms such as Read, Annotate, Identify, and Determine (RAID), Claim, Context, Evidence, Analysis, and Link (CCEAL), and Group Problem Solving (GPS). While there is evidence of the use of these strategies in classrooms, lesson plans, and in team-meeting minutes, there is no evidence of a theory of action including a rationale for these goals.
- Goals in the school's Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) are being monitored by using data and the New Design Readiness Tool (NDRT). The NDRT enables teachers to look at a student's overall picture of whether they are ready to graduate based on attendance, reading Lexile levels, mathematics levels, grade-point average, and eighth-grade reading and math State assessments results. School leaders and teachers also track data for reading and math by using portal detailed progress tracking spreadsheet. Reading Lexile levels are used to form groups and provide individualized interventions by literacy teachers and English teachers. There is evidence of a Power Point presentation provided for teachers to explain the use of RAID and what it looks like, and the articulation of expectations for GPS. While there is evidence of analysis of data using different tools to track progress toward goals and inform teacher practice in reading and writing, there is lack of evidence that these efforts are resulting in improved teaching practices or a decrease in the achievement gap.
- Teachers and school leaders report that PD is individualized based on their needs. Throughout the year, teachers partake in and lead Professional Development Offerings (PDOs) such as Regents planning, Mindful Writing, and writing effective Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). There are also PD opportunities through the New Visions initiative. Though PD offerings are embedded throughout the school year and there are various online platforms in use to look and gather student data in an ongoing basis, the school has yet to evidence a data-driven needs assessment to inform PD offerings that lead to improving teacher practice and closing the achievement gap.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core State 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, curricula emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects so that all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs), are supported.

### Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricula, evidence the alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. For example, in a grade-nine English unit and lesson plan, the standard is to analyze complex characters and how they develop over the course of a text. Students are to read Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Glass Castle*. Students are then to deepen their understanding through a role-play mock-family-court performance based on *The Glass Castle*. These performances are to be informed by reading, analyzing, writing, and editing out scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*. Students are also exposed to real-life situations faced by teenagers in the present by reading articles and comparing current issues such as teen suicide, parental control, marriage for love or necessity, and society's effect on their dreams while also comparing these to *Romeo and Juliet*. In a grade-ten global unit, students are charged with citing textual evidence to support analyses of primary and secondary sources. While there is evidence of a unit plan listing the Common Core Learning Standards addressed in the unit, the lesson plan consisted of an agenda where the teacher planned to facilitate group work and council circles about the Industrial Revolution.
- A grade-ten algebra lesson plan includes data-driven preparation for the Regents exam. The teacher listed the Common Core Learning Standards and lesson objective which is to interpret and model linear functions. The students are charged with using RAID to identify the type of function given in a scenario, determine the view of the function, and what they would do with that view. The function is a linear function which leads into the lesson's review focus. In a living environment grade-nine lesson plan, the teacher listed the Common Core Learning Standards and the objective which is to have students describe how events that occur during ecological succession can change populations and species diversity. The plan also calls for the use of RAID and for an additional schoolwide GPS strategy. Students will work in groups by participating in a game. While there is evidence of schoolwide coherence with the use of these strategies, the school is yet to ensure that the instructional shifts are strategically integrated and result in coherence across subjects and grades to promote college and career readiness for all students.
- A review of units across subjects and grades evidence the consistent use of rigorous habits and higher order skills. For example, in a global grade-ten unit, students are tasked with writing an essay about the division of Germany, Palestine, and British India using at least four sources and supporting their ideas with facts, examples, and details. In a geometry unit plan on circles, students are charged with teaching a lesson to demonstrate their knowledge of the relationships between arcs, angles, and line segments. In a science unit plan, students are charged with discussing the interrelationships of various organisms in ecosystems. While there is evidence of an emphasis on rigorous tasks, lessons and unit plans have yet to evidence how rigorous tasks are coherently embedded, so that all learners including ELLs and students with disabilities, will demonstrate their thinking.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The vast majority of classrooms demonstrate teaching practices that are aligned to the curricula and reflect a clear set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts.

### Impact

Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership so that all students produce meaningful work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- During a grade-nine English class, students were presented with a quote of the week and the concept of analyzing fate and destiny, as it emerges in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Students wrote their responses as the teacher walked around the classroom and conferred with students before engaging the class in a discussion. Students argued whether the quote, "Everything in life is luck" by Donald J. Trump, held merit based on their personal experiences and the experiences about which they read in *Romeo and Juliet*. The teacher facilitated the discussion by having students respond to each other. In a grade-eleven math class, the teacher had students design their own lesson to teach the concepts of circles. Students worked in pairs and triads. The teacher provided support to an ELL by writing notes in his paper. Students had a choice of topic and the teacher provided resources such as laptops, reference notes, model problems, and vocabulary.
- During a living environment class, the teacher presented an image of ecological succession. She asked a student to come up to the board and show where the climax of a tree community is and explain the reasoning behind that choice. As the student was incorrect, the teacher asked follow-up questions to help the student arrive at the correct response and rationale. This was an introduction for students to play a game about ecological succession in their groups. In a grade-eleven English class, students conducted a collaborative analysis of memoir excerpts to identify their archetype. Students read to each other in their groups and used the schoolwide strategy RAID. One student commented on an observed irony because the character was being treated as an object. Across these classrooms, teachers demonstrated the use of strategies aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and their beliefs of how students learn best such as, students using the RAID, CCEAL, and GPS strategies.
- Across the majority of classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student participation and ownership. Student ownership is reflected across classrooms by students' use of a professionalism rubric or students conducting their own analysis of their work. For example, in a grade-nine English class, students had to reflect on their work and behavior for the week, such as coming to class on time, staying on task, and being fully engaged in instruction. Students complete the rubric daily, and then total their points at the end of each week. In a DFL class, students worked in groups to select and use the dump-and-clump study strategy, a cognitive strategy that helps students learn difficult information by grouping lists of words together. Students worked collaboratively, as the teacher went around to each group offering guidance and support. Students reported that this strategy and working with their classmates helps them to remember information in preparation for the Regents. In a science classroom, the students conducted their own item analysis based on their practice Earth Science Regent Exams. This assignment was considered a milestone, a summative assignment which would count for 30 percent of the quarter grade.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and checklists aligned with the school's curricula. School leaders and teachers use common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

### Impact

Teachers provide students with actionable feedback that students use to improve their work. Teachers use students' assessment data for all Regents exams to adjust curricula and instruction and inform teacher teams' inquiry work.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use rubrics, checklists, and grading policies that are aligned to the school's curricula. For example, the school's uniform grading policy was adjusted to reflect how students and teachers view grading based on a schoolwide survey. School leaders decided that quarter grades would be based on 50 percent classwork and homework, 30 percent milestones, and 20 percent professionalism. Milestones are considered for summative assessments such as tests, projects, presentations, and essays. Professionalism addresses the behaviors that impact learning such as tardiness, attendance, participation, and being prepared. The school terms the grading policy the *50 30 20* grading policy. There is a rubric that informs ratings for professionalism. Teachers report that the school's grading policy is aligned to the school's goal to prepare students for life after graduation because students realize that grades are not just about completion but also about effort and mastery of the content.
- Teachers provide actionable feedback to students using various modalities. For example, students are provided with feedback using rubrics. On a thematic essay five-point rubric, a student earned an overall rating of five. The teacher circled the skills that the student demonstrated and wrote comments such as, "The theme was richly supported with relevant points of evidence, facts, and examples." In a social studies rubric to grade a Document Based Question (DBQ) essay, the teacher wrote that the essay had great organization and use of documents and that the student also used the CCEAL strategy to organize the essay very well. As a suggested next step, the teacher wrote that the student should focus on drawing out specific facts more to support the theme of, "Why is targeting the military absurd?" Students reported, and all agreed that feedback is provided frequently during teachers' office hours and in writing using rubrics and checklists. While there is student work that evidence teachers' use of written feedback using rubrics, students were unable to articulate how feedback from teachers has impacted their overall learning styles in addition to improving individual assignments.
- The school uses a data spreadsheet to analyze common assessments and determine student progress toward achieving success on the Regents examinations. Teachers create their own assessments to emulate the format and content of the Regents. The school focuses on improving literacy using reading inventories and keeps a scorecard on each student. Math is monitored using math common assessments and tracked in New Visions. The students are informed of their grades using the scorecard by a coach assigned based on their area of need. Data is not tracked by subgroups and therefore, has yet to be used to drive curricular decisions and instructional adjustments so that all students including ELLs and students with disabilities demonstrate increased mastery.



## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Most teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams consistently analyze data and student work for students they share.

### Impact

Teachers' collaborations contribute to the implementation of schoolwide expectations. Teacher team consistently analyze work that results in progress toward school goals.

### Supporting Evidence

- Most teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations and inquiry-based work. For example, grade-level teams meet on a weekly basis to discuss schoolwide expectations, events, and concerns including student issues, also referred to as kid talk. Kid talk is based on social emotional, attendance, academic, or personal issues related to certain students. Ideas to address these issues are recorded and meeting minutes are available on an online platform. In a grade-nine meeting held in September, teachers continued the work of completing a schoolwide task of creating common expectations such as, punctuality, coaching, school engagement, academic engagement, and cross curricular knowledge for students to be considered on track to graduate. All grade level teams were charged with discussing the criteria to be considered for a NDRT. Minutes from a grade-twelve team meeting reflect a discussion of the assignment of students to different staff members who would serve as their coach, the different responsibilities of a coach, and upcoming scope-and-sequence expectations for coaches.
- During a Literacy Intervention Team (LIT) meeting, teachers analyzed student work based on a baseline and final assessment. The final assessment consisted of students writing a response to a prompt about *Voice* by Margaret Atwood. Students were tasked with writing about the central idea that good things cannot last forever and supporting their position with textual evidence. Teachers practiced grading by analyzing samples of student work to norm their ratings. Teachers compared and analyzed the final-assessment data to the baseline data and planned their next steps. Several findings and challenges that they believed played a role in the results were discussed such as student attendance, not enough exposure to non-fiction, and not teaching syntax and sentence structure. As next steps, the team discussed changes in the schedule for the following school year, identifying at-risk students and talking to counselors so that attendance issues and motivational issues are addressed. While there are grade-level team meetings, LIT, and cabinet meetings that promote the achievement of school goals, such as the use of the NDRT and integration of the Common Core, there is lack of evidence that these practices have strengthened teacher instructional capacity that results in increased student achievement for all learners.
- Teacher teams consistently analyze student work to increase the percentage of students that are ready to graduate by using the NDRT and other data portals. The NDRT provides a visual representation of whether a student is ready for high school and college level work based on a 90-percent weighted calculation for attendance, reading level, math level, grade point average, and eighth-grade ELA and math levels. Grade-level teams discuss the progress of students they share and collaborate with student mentors. Teachers agreed that their instructional capacity is strengthened by attending PD. While there are teacher teams that are focused on student progress toward school goals, there is no evidence of teacher teams focused on analyzing classroom practice that results in improvement in teacher practice and mastery of goals for groups of students.