

Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Mott Hall Bronx High School

High school 09X252

**1595 Bathgate Avenue
Bronx
NY 10457**

Principal: Kathryn Malloy

**Dates of Review:
October 19, 2017 - October 20, 2017**

Lead Reviewer: Clarence Williams Jr.

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

Mott Hall Bronx 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	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	Area of Focus	Proficient

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	Well Developed

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	Well Developed
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:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders incorporate a theory of action with regards to culture building, discipline and social-emotional support. School leaders and teachers have structures in place, such as advisory, that guarantee every student is known on an individual basis with staff.

Impact

The school environment reflects a safe and inclusive culture resulting from student participation in school-level decision-making and personalizing individual student support.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders build a safe and inclusive culture that is based on student interest, concerns, and decision-making. Each month, teachers and staff have circle meetings for all grade levels. Topics included homophobia, race and cyberbullying. One student stated, "In one of the circles, we discussed bullying and how some people are afraid to speak up. So, we created an anonymous anti-bullying website that students can go to." In addition, the school dean incorporates restorative circles that require students to self-reflect by completing forms to acknowledge their behavior and what they could have done differently. One student stated, "During one self-reflection, I said that I could have chosen to walk away from the situation and I did not consider how my classmate felt."
- Structures are in place so that every student in the school community is known on an individual basis, providing guidance and personalizing attendance. This was evident in advisory. Every student has advisory four times per week for forty-five minute sessions with a ratio of 1 teacher to 10 students. During advisory, students discussed goals and shared opinions and ideas. A student stated, "Hearing our advisory classmates' thoughts and feelings about many different topics can help remind us that we are not alone." Advisory groups have goals. An advisory plan consisted of students being able to speak to their learning profile characteristics. For the month of September, the characteristic was open-mindedness. When discussing open-mindedness one student said, "We discussed this in advisory and we need to look at things from as many views as possible." The impact of advisory was evident as all students were represented by staff members that have strong ties with students, supporting them outside of the classroom.
- Students have a voice regarding school improvement efforts. Students contribute to improvements in student punctuality. Every grade has four student officials that meet once per week with grade-team leaders. Minutes from an agenda showed interventions to help improve punctuality that demonstrated student voice. For example, in grade nine, it was suggested that a student official who lives in the area will pair up with a chronically late student to help the student get to school on time. In grade ten, student leaders will conference with late students to discuss the importance of getting to school on time. Grade-twelve students presented a list of student officials that will be matched with late students. They will check in with their partner every morning to encourage them to get to school on time. Also, school leaders created incentives for students with the best attendance and punctuality called "Mott Hall Perks". Students headed an assembly to discuss prizes which consisted of water bottles, tee shirts and school supplies. The impact of these initiatives is demonstrated by an improvement in student attendance during first period classes this year.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and teachers use common assessments to determine student progress. However, the results are not used to track progress for all students. Teacher assessment practices include checking for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Assessment results are used to make adjustments to curriculum and instructional practices to meet the needs of all students. However, neither student progress is tracked to determine student mastery, nor do classroom checks for understanding reflect next learning steps for students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers and teacher leaders use Regents exam and formative assessment results to make adjustments. Teachers modified a math unit based on Algebra Regents scores. The June Regents showed an overall pass rate of sixty-nine percent. An October unit on algebra was revised to reflect a narrow focus on specific Common Core Learning Standards. The revised unit focused on understanding the function and use of function notation and interpreting functions in applications related to content. The previous unit focused on linear, quadratic and exponential models as well as functions. The unit was revised so that students might improve in algebra; however, student progress was not monitored or tracked beyond this unit to determine student mastery.
- In classrooms visited, teachers check for understanding to make adjustments to instruction. In a grade-nine English Language Arts (ELA) class, the teacher was lecturing on the story, *The Odyssey*. During the lecture, she stopped and asked students if they knew what the hero's journey was before continuing. No one responded. The teacher used a chart illustrating the hero's journey and tied it to *The Odyssey*. The diagram showed a step-by-step display of the hero's journey and how it correlated with the chapters in the story. A student asked, "What happens if the hero doesn't go home at the end of the story?" The teacher stated that this will not apply to this story. Although the teacher did check for understanding, some students were not aware of their next learning steps. This was evident as the teacher did not discuss next steps for those groups who did understand the lesson.
- Students self-assessed their work in classrooms visited and provided samples. Students used a student learning plan to self-reflect. The plan asked students to state what they are confident about, what they need practice in and what they need to review next based on the skills taught. In an ELA class, students listed that they were confident in annotating and knowing how to identify conflict. They stated that they need to work on identifying figurative language and using more relevant evidence. As a result, the teacher stated that they will spend more time on figurative language since other students expressed concerns in this area. An additional example was seen on a text-dependent essay that a student wrote based on the reading of a passage in the book *The Handmaid's Tale*. The self-assessment required the student to write what was frustrating and when the teacher's help was needed. The student stated, "I understood the passage and didn't need the teacher's help. I felt pity and sympathy for the character." The self-assessment did not require students to reflect on their next learning steps.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards with integration of the instructional shifts. Instructional documents are refined using student data.

Impact

Common-Core alignment results in promoting college and career readiness across grades. The curriculum reflects tasks and scaffolds that cognitively engage students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs).

Supporting Evidence

- To align the curriculum to Common Core Learning Standards, school leaders and teachers use a curriculum mapping software program for all subjects in order to build coherence. The program tells the teacher which standards will be taught in each course. The program also creates daily learning targets including instructional shifts. An example was written in an algebra unit that reflected instructional shifts. Students were required to use real-world scenarios to create drafts. The instructor used real neighborhoods to graph distance and locations in comparison to different landmarks, thus accomplishing alignment to the standard for interpreting functions.
- Cognitive engagement activities and scaffolds are reflected in the curriculum, specifically to support students with disabilities. A grade-nine unit on *The Odyssey* was reviewed. Students with disabilities are provided accommodations that include addressing the needs of each student as per their Individualized Education Program (IEP). For example, some students would be given extra time while others were provided with an annotated text. Also included is a packet containing an organizer designed to help students outline vocabulary with a pre-populated scaffold. Some students with IEPs are grouped with other students for support. An additional example was seen in a summary section sheet. The document provides reading and math levels of students and interventions that are in place to engage the students. Engagement techniques include, chunking ELA materials for an IEP student who demonstrates difficulty focusing and working on vocabulary, considering reading comprehension challenges, and vocabulary frequency for a student who struggles with reading comprehension.
- The Common-Core curriculum supports college and career readiness across grades. In addition, school leaders have incorporated a college and career curriculum for grades nine through twelve. The grade-nine curriculum focuses on building community study skills. The grade-ten curriculum focuses on research projects that will prepare students for high-level writing. Grade eleven focuses on Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) preparation and the grade-twelve curriculum's focus is on using this period to focus on SAT preparation and college visits. Examples were documented in a grade nine/ten ELA unit. The unit stated, "Students who are college and career ready in reading, writing, speaking, listening and language, will be able to comprehend as well as critique and demonstrate independence." The curriculum supports student preparation for college by challenging students to display higher-order thinking skills.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Classroom instructional practices demonstrate common beliefs about how students learn best which is evident in student work and discussions.

Impact

During classroom visits, student work reflected high levels of thinking and participation which resulted in meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers have stated that students learn best when they are engaged in discussions. This was evident in a United States History lesson. Students were discussing women's rights. The teacher was able to stimulate student discussion by asking "Why are rights necessary in a democracy?" After watching a video on sexual assault, a student stated, "The video made me feel appalled and offended." Another student stated, "I agree, people have to come together to fight for rights and respect." When the teacher asked them how will they go about doing it, a student replied, "A march is one way." Another student stated that civil rights gives them the right to protest because everyone has the freedom of speech. This dialogue resulted in students completing a bill of rights worksheet. Students were required to respond to examples based on a specific right. For example, a person was upset over a curfew for teenagers. The individual started a petition with signatures. The student matched the action to rights held by the people.
- Students in a grade-ten ELA class were observed writing narratives to develop personal experiences. Meaningful work products included student collaboration on ideas that they had to discuss to come to an agreement. Students read a passage and were required to extend the sentence to make it a flashback, a simile or sarcasm. One student stated, "My team agreed that this story represents flashbacks because the story talks about what used to be and is now out of style." A student stated, "This was a meaningful exercise because we were able to take a story and put our own spin on it. Another student stated, "I changed my story to sarcasm because I wasn't really believing the character even though I said I did."
- Teachers provide opportunities for students to learn best by enabling them to make choices. Students have stated that they learn best when they have choices in their learning. This was evident in a grade-nine math class. Students were working on range and domain. Students reviewed their quiz scores, completed a learning plan based on their strengths and weaknesses, and chose worksheets based on what they felt they need to improve on. After selecting the work sheets, they went back to make corrections on their quizzes. One student stated, "I learned that I need to spend more time on graphing. I learn better when I discover this for myself." Students chose their own work sheets to work on based on test scores and made their own decisions on what topics they needed help.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff that are aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Expectations for college and career readiness are communicated to parents on a consistent basis.

Impact

School leaders provide training and teachers demonstrate mutual accountability for the high expectations. Family partnerships that include senior college night result in student progress toward expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal communicates high expectations to all staff and teachers accept mutual accountability for those expectations. An example was evident in a professional expectations survey that all staff were required to complete. The survey explains the expectations of all staff with regards to professionalism. It states that all staff must be fully engaged during staff and instructional meetings, parent outreach must be consistent and timely, and teachers are expected to accept feedback as an opportunity to continue to grow. Teachers demonstrate mutual accountability, for example, by creating a parent letter that is distributed to all parents regarding the International Bachelorette (IB) program. The letter informs parents of how the child is doing in all IB classes and due dates for assignments. All parents interviewed stated that this is a consistent form of communication that they look forward to. One parent shared the following, "All of my child's teachers communicate with me on a consistent basis. They are very responsible." As a result of this mutual accountability, twenty-three of twenty-four teachers received a highly effective rating in professional responsibilities based on the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.
- Expectations for college and career readiness for students is consistently communicated to parents. Parents are given a list of assessments from teacher teams. The document lists all assessments from November to May, the type of assessment, the dates of mandatory workshops that students will need for each assessment and the teachers' cell phone numbers. Parents have stated that the assessment letters that go home enable them to prepare their children for upcoming test. One parent stated, "My child is doing better as a result of the access I have to her teacher." Another parent stated, "I'm informed of everything that happens in the school on a day-to-day basis because of the access I have through phone calls or text." Additionally, parents were informed of a college night in which over seventy five percent of senior parents attended and on the same evening most parents from grades nine and ten attended. A parent stated that, "Because of the senior college night, I was able to help my daughter make an informed decision about what college she wanted to attend."
- Teachers partner with parents regarding college and career readiness by inviting parents to participate in financial aid seminars on Saturdays and parent circles for incoming freshmen offered during the summer about college readiness. These venues enable time for review and expectations of the IB (International Bachelorette) program and the courses that will be available to students. As a result of these meetings, one student stated, "I knew what was expected of me to get into a good college when I was a freshman; now I'm a senior and I'm going to Cornell University." Teachers help organize these meetings and conduct the outreach to parents. The school community collaborates with parents to arrange these meetings; as a result, the financial aid meetings are held on Saturday to support parents' schedules.

Additional Finding

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

Most teachers participate in organized inquiry-based collaborations. Teacher teams consistently analyze student assessment data, such as interpreting homework data of students with whom they are working.

Impact

Professional collaborations are designed to improve teaching pedagogy. Teacher teams focus on individual student data to improve on practices and meet goals for students.

Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teacher teams are involved in inquiry-based collaborations that are designed to improve teacher instruction. A grade-ten teacher team was observed. Teachers discussed the work of high-, medium-, and low-performing students. For one writing sample, a teacher stated, “The student had good organizational skills and referenced primary sources; the student demonstrated a clear understanding of OVPL (origins, values, purpose, and limitation.)” During a discussion of a medium-performing student, one teacher noted that there was repetition; the student ran out of time in answering a timed, short response and lacked detail to expand on ideas. Also, a teacher stated that using clipboards to share team notes was an effective way of listening to new ideas from other teachers. For example, one teacher stated, “I now keep information about my low-performing students and IEP goals on my clipboard to track their progress and areas of concern. This allows me the opportunity to provide scaffolds in real time [instruction] as needed.” This also had an impact on units of study which included scaffolds based on teacher observations of student work.
- Teachers use homework data to analyze student performance. The minutes from an English teacher team reflected how teachers used a homework tracker and student work products to adjust and monitor instructional practices. Homework from the previous week was examined. The data showed that grade-nine students read *The Odyssey*. Annotated chapters showed that the structure of the text was complicated and the characters were complicated. Teachers suggested a Socratic seminar to expand on student knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. Grade-twelve students annotated the text *The Other Wes Moore*. Students had some difficulty with vocabulary words and the switching of character perspectives. Teachers suggested that students use a checklist of noticings of the characters to self-assess their understanding of the material.
- Grade-team meetings have specific foci to meet the academic needs of the students. The grade teams use an academic results spreadsheet. The spreadsheet demonstrated individual student performance by subject. For example, students failing two to four classes were listed along with the reasons they were failing. One student was listed as failing because of homework, and lack of completion of assignments. Teachers use the data to conference with students. Impact was demonstrated as students have articulated an understanding of where they are in their academic performance and what they need to do to improve. One student stated, “I know what college I want to go to, but I know now based on the data that I need to improve my writing to get my scores up.”