

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Eltingville

Elementary School 042

**380 Genesee Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10312**

Principal: Brian Sharkey

Dates of review: May 6 - 7, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Jessica Jenkins

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Eltingville is an elementary school with 953 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 12% Hispanic, 83% White, 3% Asian, and 1% other students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 93.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and staff strategically implement a Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) aligned curricula emphasizing rigorous habits and integrating the instructional shifts, promoting coherence across grades. (1.1)
 - Through a collaborative decision-making process the school's adoption of Ready Gen and Go Math provides a basis for its instruction as both programs are aligned to the CCLS. This, along with maps that are created using the Universal Backward Design (UbD) model and incorporate the instructional shifts with an emphasis on rigorous tasks, provides a framework for the identification of desired results of each unit. Teachers establish learning goals, determine how those goals will be assessed, and work in concert to develop instructional strategies to support rigorous learning. Consequently, maps are purposefully structured and logically sequenced across grades. As a result, teachers are able to build upon what was previously learned as they design authentic tasks that require students to apply, evaluate, and connect concepts. In science, teaching for understanding lives in inquiry-based units of study, providing students with numerous opportunities to draw inferences and make generalizations as they actively construct meaning, supporting rigorous habits for all students. For example, fifth grade students utilize the skills of engineers and through productive struggle construct a rocket designed to travel the greatest distance. Another way the school has strategically implemented the instructional shifts is through the implementation of Socratic Seminar, enabling powerful discussion based on ideas presented in complex texts, resulting in authentic experiences that promote college and career readiness for all students.
- The principal makes highly effective organizational decisions that are well aligned to instructional goals resulting in improved student outcomes and meaningful student work products. (1.3)
 - Cognizant of the need to provide teachers with ample time to plan CCLS-aligned tasks to implement the goal of increased rigor across classrooms and improve student outcomes, the principal reworked the school's master schedule to afford teachers with additional professional periods. Across grades, teachers have been provided with between three and five additional planning periods with one designated period to unpack Danielson. Furthermore, additional planning days have been budgeted for teachers to meet in grade-teams to modify and adjust units of study. These planning sessions have resulted in focused efforts to build upon increased rigor in academic tasks, evidenced in a range of meaningful student work products, including published informational essays that required students to conduct extensive research, interpret meaning of high-level texts, and properly cite multiple references.
 - Using a range of data including strengths of teachers and New York State assessment data, the principal makes strategic decisions around teacher assignment, placing the most effective teachers in classrooms where instructional needs are the highest. For example, an upper grade teacher with proven results in closing the achievement gap and extensive

experience at the middle-school level was placed in fifth grade, promoting access to college and career readiness for these students, including students with disabilities (SWD's) and English Language Learners (ELL's). Additionally, a lead science teacher supports literacy efforts for all students through the incorporation of differentiated teacher-made texts and the infusion of writing in every lesson. Weekly teacher-facilitated inquiry meetings focus on trends across each grade through a careful analysis of student work and performance based assessments. The strategic hiring of his former instructional coach to serve as assistant principal, highly skilled in developing and implementing instructional strategies, has been instrumental in leading these efforts. Consequently, grade teams hold themselves accountable for the progress of their students. For instance, a group of third grade teachers, met to analyze the results of a realistic fiction performance-based assessment and found that a group of students struggled with using sensory details and dialogue to describe a character's actions, thoughts, and feelings. Collaboratively, the team developed a graphic organizer for use when revisiting their anchor text, additional short stories, and exemplar student work samples and reconvened to assess progress. Accordingly, all students made progress toward mastery of the standard.

- The principal is a reflective and supportive leader who cultivates a respectful and inclusive environment of trust, resulting in the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors for both staff and students. (1.4)
 - From the moment students, families, and staff step inside the school building, they are welcomed by a nurturing and supportive team of educators who encourage interpersonal respect among students and staff. This is evidenced by the presence of multiple staff members and school leaders throughout the hallways and in classrooms who greet students on a first name basis upon arrival. Students articulated that the school “is a second family” where the “needs of each student comes first.” In recognizing that students are the largest group of stakeholders in the school and its greatest resource in creating and sustaining a supportive school environment, the principal engages students in a number of philanthropic activities including a project to reduce global warming and ongoing student led clothing and food drives. Furthermore, the principal has created a suggestion box in the student lunchroom to encourage voice in determining extra-curricular activities and school-wide procedures such as morning announcements and student government, and a peacekeeper group leads efforts to promote acts of kindness across the school. Consequently, one student indicated that the school was his “home away from home,” while another shared that “there isn’t a teacher in the building who I can’t go to for support.” Additionally, the principal has cultivated a trusting environment whereby the staff feels valued and respected as adult learners. This was evidenced in multiple teacher team meetings where staff articulated how the principal has “cultivated a learning community that encourage teachers to explore and experiment with varied instructional strategies,” thus promoting professional growth and improved student outcomes.
 - In an effort to support improved student outcomes and to promote the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors, the school works determinedly to align outreach efforts to support the developmental and academic needs of all students. An active Parent Teacher Association

supports the school's instructional goals through contributions of funding to advancements in student learning through field trips to the Liberty and Buehler Science Center, linked to units of study, and student team-building assemblies, supporting the school's focus on developing the whole child. Moreover, parents describe the school environment as one that is fully supportive of their children both academically and emotionally. For instance, several parents indicated that the principal treats their children as if "they were his own" through daily interactions with them at the morning arrival stop-and-drop and throughout the school day. Other parents described school support staff as "proactive" who go "above and beyond for their children," including cafeteria staff who contribute to a personalized experience for all children. For example, one parent described a "whole-child approach" the school took when collaboratively developing a program and the goals set forth in his Individualized Education Plan. Furthermore, an instructional coach facilitates multiple hands-on workshops for parents to deepen their understanding of the CCLS and the skills required for college and career readiness. Parent described these frequent workshops as "helpful and parent friendly" in developing their own understanding of the school's expectations for their children. Teachers are provided support through Goldmansour and Rutherford to build their repertoire of strategies to foster inclusive instruction and to promote an environment focused on social-emotional support for all learners. Consequently, all members of the school community work in partnership to maintain a student-centered learning environment.

- Teachers use common assessments and rubrics aligned to key standards to gain an understanding of student progress toward goals that allow for actionable feedback to students and adjustments to instruction. (2.2)
 - Across grades, teachers utilize a hybrid approach to the creation of common assessments reflective of the big ideas and skills embedded in the school's CCLS-aligned curricula framed around UbD. This backwards design approach to unit planning that requires teachers to be cognizant of the desired outcomes and key understandings of each unit, results in staff creating assessments and rubrics aligned to the precise skills and concepts taught. Consequently, teachers are able to gain finite information to provide students with feedback about their mastery as well as actionable next steps. For example, even though 92% of fourth grade students mastered the multiplication of two-digit numbers evidenced by a thorough item analysis, only 57% of students were able to master these problems when posed in a two-step word problem. To address misconceptions, teachers implemented a daily routine of a "Math Hot Problem" to deepen students' conceptual understanding. These efforts have resulted in 78% of fourth grade students mastering two-step word problems with multiplication.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance instruction to ensure teachers strategically provide multiple entry points in lessons to engage students in challenging tasks that promote critical thinking and ownership of their learning. (1.2)

- In some classrooms, instructional strategies promote higher order thinking and tasks are designed to meet the needs of all students. Strategies include flexible grouping for student discussion, tiered questions, exit slips to assess overall understanding, and the use of Socratic Seminar to deepen class discussion. In a second grade science class, students engaged in productive struggle to analyze the variables that affect force and motion on an inclined plane using an online simulation. Students worked in flexible groups to read a range of texts, hypothesize, and conduct their own experiment to observe the effect of friction on sliding objects. In a fifth grade English language arts class, students led a Socratic Seminar, based on a story rooted in slavery. Students explored how the slave auction and its participants dehumanized a particular family, with the lesson including multiple entry points via discussion prompts and vocabulary cards. However, in other classrooms, low levels tasks limited student engagement and depth of thinking for students. In a fourth grade classroom, students read the same informational text on earthquakes and developed chapter titles for each section as an introduction to opinion writing. Sameness permeated the lesson and did not extend thinking for higher-achieving students, resulting in limited engagement and student ownership of learning. In a second grade math classroom, students engaged in a problem-solving lesson with money. However, teacher-dominated instruction, lasting more than 25 minutes, limited student interaction and the level of teacher questioning led students along a single path of inquiry. Although students used white boards to demonstrate their understanding of various configurations of money, other manipulatives were not used. Furthermore, several students had already mastered the concepts with speed and precision as evidenced by immediate and accurate completion of the task. Failure to plan for multiple entry points results in uneven engagement and lack of demonstration of higher-order thinking in student work products.
- Further develop the connection between the observation and feedback process so that professional growth and accountability is leveraged for pedagogical improvement. (4.1)
 - An analysis of observation data resulted in a school wide focus on the Socratic Seminar to deepen the level of student discourse across classrooms. This has resulted in improvements in student-led discussion across classrooms, evidenced in multiple observation reports. However, a review of the school-wide professional development plan indicates that school leaders are at the beginning stages of consistently using observation feedback to inform professional development efforts. Consequently, there are missed opportunities to support teacher growth.
 - School leaders conduct formal and informal observations and provide both verbal and written feedback. However, next steps are not consistently actionable and feedback is not always effective for all teachers, as it does not consistently reference student work or concrete and actionable next steps. This results in missed opportunities to accelerate teacher development and student outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The Eltingville School	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
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?			X				
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?		X					
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?			X				
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations?			X				
Systems for Improvement							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
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?				X			
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?			X				
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?		X					
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
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?			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed