



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Bergen School

Elementary School K001

**309 47th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11220**

Principal: Arlene Ramos

**Date of review: December 11, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Anita Skop**

The School Context

The Bergen School is an elementary school with 1265 students from grade Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 88% Hispanic, 3% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 42% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.0%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	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 Findings	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	Focus	Developing
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels	Additional Findings	Proficient
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Additional Findings	Proficient
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The majority of teachers are participants in structured professional collaborations, and engaged in raising student achievement. Teachers consistently use student assessments to analyze, group and scaffold supports as well as focus on teacher practice to address student learning needs.

Impact

Teacher teams are empowered to have a voice in identifying and addressing student learning needs and developing six-week cycles of teacher training based on observation feedback.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are teamed by grade bands Pre-K through grade 5 that meet every other Monday. School structures for distributed leadership empower teachers to identify student learning gaps based on assessment review. For example, teacher teams have modified the mission statement so that it is aligned to the school's goals and thereby implemented a focus on developing scaffolds that support English language learners and enhance speech and language development. Further, the cross grade core team has been instrumental in developing vertical planning to smooth transitions across grades.
- Select teachers are trained as facilitators to lead Core Meetings. Teachers serving as facilitators then turn key information to committees including the Professional Development Team, Wellness Team, Response to Intervention Team, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Team, School Implementation Team, Hiring Team, 504 Team, Measures of Student Learning Team, and the Consultation Team.
- The structured, professional collaboration is utilized in two ways. Inquiry-based Professional Development committee called Choice PLC (professional learning community) is led by teachers to share topics offered as choice PLC. Another way is six-week teacher training cycles often tied to observations.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Teaching strategies inconsistently provided students multiple entry points to the curricula, and students' thinking and participation was uneven based on student work and discussions.

Impact

Though teacher practice is aligned to the curricula and reflects high expectations, all learners are not engaged in rigorous learning which pushes their thinking and encourages them to explore and examine their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- A nurturing environment with social and emotional supports was evidenced in early childhood centers, as was student understanding of school routines. However, similar supports were not routinely in place for academic learning. While students could tell how they used their finger to point to the word during reading, materials were not actually ready to each other during partner reading.
- Mini-lessons and small group instruction were evidenced during classroom visits. However, teacher modeling during mini-lessons was inaccessible to many students in some classrooms. For example, a first grade teacher worked on a very small chart that could only be seen by the students closest to the board, despite the fact that there was a smart board in the room.
- While student work products and discussions in most upper grades indicated high levels of student participation and thinking, some classes were less indicative of this level of rigor. In a third grade class where students were referencing a box of artifacts during small group work, a number of students simply played with the artifacts or thumbed through the books.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty review the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project and math curricula to align to the Common Core Learning Standards using standards-based assessments. This serves to ensure that curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills.

Impact

This curricula review revealed similar language concerns in math and literacy and identified gaps in the math and literacy curricula of what students need to prepare for the next grade. Appropriate student scaffold supports were developed and included in the curricula.

Supporting Evidence

- The instructional cabinet meets weekly to examine the alignment to the standards and ensure instruction is aligned through feedback from observations and with a focus on student questioning, use of Universal Design for Learning, and coaching-in with teachers. Questions are posed to students during visits asking them “What are you learning? How are you learning this? Why are you learning it? What is difficult? What do you do when it is hard?”
- Student support scaffolds include language prompts, picture cues, total physical response, picture supports for lower grade levels, word walls, print-rich environment, repetition, extra time, and close up with teacher demonstrating and modeling. These tools enable all students, including English language learners and special needs students to share in rigorous educational experiences.
- Evidence of a rich exploration of non-fiction was seen in classroom visits. For example, in one third grade class students explored an “artifact box” containing a range of materials and non-fiction readings that enabled them to delve into a range of topics with scaffolded supports. This well-crafted task provided English language learners with the multiple modalities needed to provide all students with access to the content-rich reading materials.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

A vast majority of teachers use standards-based assessments to determine student progress towards goals across grades and subjects to adjust curricula and instruction. However, teachers are inconsistent in effectively analyzing the instructional shifts for concepts and skills that students need to know.

Impact

Assessment progress monitoring is set for three times as year and uniform assessments are created in English language arts, math, science and social studies. As a result of this ongoing reflection, teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Timelines are created for each grade utilizing common assessments in all content areas. For example, running records from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project enable teachers and administrators to define year end targets, as student data indicates distance from grade level performance.
- As was observed during classroom visits, teachers take notes during student conferences in math and literacy instruction. This was evidenced at all grade levels. Further teachers provided students with feedback during reading to target specific skills, by asking key questions. In one third grade class a teacher asked her student, “Is this an elaboration or a description?”
- Math “screener” assessments require students a take a quick quiz on Common Core Learning Standards skills. In addition, students’ Daily Journal tasks serve as ongoing checks for understanding and are used to identify problem-solving needs and to group students and plan instruction for the week. However, other routine checks for understanding are not uniformly in place during classroom instruction.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff focusing on professionalism, instruction, communication and elements of the Danielson Framework, and connect these expectations to college and career readiness.

Impact

As a result all members of the school community are accountable to these expectations and provide ongoing feedback to help families understand student progress towards these goals.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders immediately provide feedback to teachers through explicit notes after classroom visits and publicly praise the best teaching practices, holding teachers accountable for their own expectations and students' level of instructional rigor. Expectations are connected to a path to college and career readiness and are communicated with parents who are offered ongoing feedback to help them understand student progress toward those expectations.
- Guidance counselors bring city workers so students can see career opportunities in city government. Fifth grade career fair now going down to younger grades. Sharing the concept that College and Career Readiness prepares you to be successful in life. Further, the school is reflective on all aspects of school culture and instructional practices. Monthly trips for parents and student interactions with cultural institutions such as the Guggenheim Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as well as weekly parent coordinator-led workshops, on the Common Core inform parents of the potential for success for their children.
- Monday morning messages include shout-outs for best practices. Walkthroughs initially focused on environment and the feedback given resulted in consistent learning environments school-wide.