



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Purvis J. Behan

Elementary School K011

**419 Waverly Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11238**

Principal: Alonta Wrighton

**Date of review: November 24, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Barbara Freeman**

The School Context

PS 11 is an elementary school with 791 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 73% Black, 10% Hispanic, 10% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 93.6%.

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	Well Developed
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	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 Findings	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

All teachers participate in inquiry-based team work that has strengthened teacher capacity. Teams strategically focus on analyzing student work/data and instructional practices.

Impact

Professional learning collaborations have led to grade to grade instructional coherence and student achievement. Teams have elevated teacher practice school wide resulting in targeted students reaching mastery in specific goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers have weekly common preparation periods to meet and discuss curriculum, instructional practice, and the use of assessment. Teachers also participate in Summer Institutes to refine curricula to ensure that all instructional expectations and recent summative data are reflected in the school-wide curricula and units of study.
- The school has structures to support the instructional learning across teams to deepen teacher capacity. Weekly professional learning time is utilized for discuss the work in teams. Teams have shared successful practices such as Turtle Talk in kindergarten to support phonetic awareness and spelling and the strengthening of rubrics to more effectively evaluate student constructive responses to prompts.
- Teacher teams discuss gaps in student understanding based on student work and common assessment data. All teams utilize a protocol, *Looking at Student Thinking/Work*, which identifies current student thinking, desired student thinking, and implications for teacher planning and preparation. Teachers debate and discuss the necessary strategies and changes in instructional practice that are targeted to those gaps. Subsequent student work is evaluated in order to determine whether the decided strategies were successful. Team discussions and adjustments are strategically documented in order to support future planning of lessons within units.
- During the observed team meeting, teachers discussed necessary changes in math instruction. One teacher stated that, “analyzing student work drives instruction in the classroom.” Teams are responsible, accountable and given freedom to constantly refine curriculum and supports to be more effective. Team members believe that the professional collaborations given them time to “bounce ideas”. Teachers are confident that their analysis of student work and class data informs them of what is working and what needs to be strengthened in order for students to be more successful in mastering skills and concepts.
- Teams discuss student work samples and their utilization to support differentiated instruction for target groups. For example, Students with Disabilities (SWDs) are an increasing high need group. Teams monitor types of supports and scaffolds that will occur throughout units of study. Student work samples provide teachers with evidence of pre-requisite skills students need in order to master specific goals like citing text-based evidence and stating claims and counter claims. Students have been making progress as evidenced by increases in closing the achievement gap of the school’s Snapshot for English Language Arts.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across most classrooms teaching practices are aligned to the CCLS, the school's belief system and reflect multiple teaching strategies to support all learners.

Impact

Varied strategies that provide all students with multiple opportunities to engage in challenging academic tasks were not pervasive across all classrooms lessening school-wide instructional coherence for all learners to demonstrate higher order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's belief system is that students learn best with explicit and direct instruction by well-trained teachers who are strong in literacy and mathematical instruction, and in an environment that celebrates the teaching and learning process providing student voice in order for them to take charge of their learning. School leaders utilize the Danielson Framework to align teacher pedagogy with the curricula and to inform school-wide discussions that are focused on strengthening coherent instruction (1e) and engaging students in learning (3e).
- The school believes that the best instructional methods include a balanced combination of whole-class, small group activities, step-by-step demonstration and modeling, guided and independent practice, small group instruction, timely and actionable teacher/student feedback, and a varied assessment program.
- In most classrooms, teachers planned tiered lessons based on student needs. Teachers utilize technology such as Brain Pop, Scholastic News, and Teacher News to support student engagement and to provide multiple pathways of access for all learners. Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) classes utilize similar strategies and the same challenging materials based on grade level; however, students were not exposed to deep level questions and were assisted more frequently lessening their ability to struggle and think through difficult tasks. For example, in a grade 1 ICT class, students were asked to describe what an animal needs to survive by using key details. The additional teacher monitored student work and assisted students when they struggled lessening students' opportunities for productive struggle, thus accelerating student learning.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School-wide curricula are Common-Core aligned with deliberate focus on instructional shifts. Academic tasks are created and adjusted based on the student work of all learners.

Impact

The school builds coherence across grades and subjects that results in Common-Core aligned curricula and academic tasks that are cognitively demanding and provide multiple levels of access for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has developed curricula and units of study to support instruction. School leaders and teachers unpack the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and state standards to identify expected and specific skills grade to grade. Research-based programs such as Expeditionary Learning, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP), Exemplars, Envision Math, and Go Math are analyzed and support the development of tailored units in all core content areas. The school has also integrated whole class novels to support the instructional shifts in English Language Arts, emphasizing text-based evidence and close reading.
- Scope and sequence maps are developed to outline units of study and also incorporate the use of school-developed Common Core Learning Goals sheets which track the learning of individual students based on Common Core Literacy and Math goals. For example, students' document and track when they have attained goals, such as quoting accurately from text, explicitly explaining what the text says, and drawing inferences from the text. Students are also required to identify the pieces that show their work in their goal areas and the impression or reflection they have on the work. Teachers design and refine tasks, projects, and activities to provide students with opportunities to have access to curricula. For example, low performing students have additional support in strengthen academic vocabulary and various ways to represent their knowledge, such as oral reporting, diagrams, and charts. High performing students extend their learning by using rubrics that contain aspirational goals that exceed expectation goals aligned to challenging tasks.
- Curricula and academic tasks are refined and tailored to the needs of students and the CCLS. Teacher teams are charged with the responsibility of utilizing student work samples in order to make changes to units of study and curricula maps. Reading and writing curriculum maps included scaffolds and supports for targeted students and extensions for higher achieving students. Academic vocabulary question prompts and work habits are also reflected in units of study. Units also include unit concepts, big ideas, and guiding questions. Unit refinements are attachments to units of study and curricula maps that are informed by results from common assessments and student work samples. Changes of instructional practices are also noted in order to support the cycle of consistent monitoring and revising of all curricula. Additionally, school-wide conversations and planning occur annually and all information is utilized to support planning for the upcoming year in order to ensure all students are presented with curricula that are engaging and demanding.

Findings

All teachers use a variety of assessment strategies aligned to curricula that offers a clear portrait of mastery and consistently use a range of checks for understanding throughout lessons.

Impact

Multiple data sources provide students and teachers with meaningful feedback resulting in effective instructional adjustments and student awareness of next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers use a range of assessments to monitor student progress and the effectiveness of instruction. Assessments include summative grade-level data, Measures of Student Learning (MOSL), teacher-developed periodic and benchmark assessments. Performance task and project-based assessments are also used to measure student achievement. All teachers have one-to-one and group conferences to gain additional information regarding student work to identify needs and strengths. The school has also developed a customized report card for each grade which highlights key strategies for all content areas including areas to monitor student homework, personal and social growth and parents as partners in child's education. Parents have space in order to have reciprocal conversations with the teacher in order to provide feedback on student progress.
- Teachers administer running records three times per year to assess student fluency and comprehension of fiction and informational text. This data is used to determine strategic groups, refine whole class instruction, and determine students' needs for additional instructional programming and support. Students receive verbal/written feedback on work that includes strategic and effective feedback based on rubrics designed for each task. Student use of feedback is monitored in the revision process and in subsequent work samples.
- All teachers utilize item analysis and disaggregated data such as for students with disabilities, English language learners, and the bottom third to identify learning gaps, patterns, trends and other important information based on summative and common assessments. Analyzed test scores of specific subgroups of students has enabled teachers to pinpoint the level of which standards have been mastered and which group of students require re-teaching, remediation, and enrichment. Based on the school's Snapshot, student performance exceeds city averages in English Language Arts and mathematics.
- Teachers utilize exit slips, quick checks, and short responses to not only check for student understanding, but also as an assessment of instructional practices in order to refine teacher lesson plans from day-to-day. During a teacher meeting, teachers discussed how they utilize checks for understanding to pinpoint the students that master specific skills and concepts based on the CCLS. Teachers also monitor student work habits and achievement through student self-assessment tools such as peer-to-peer feedback sheets, reflection sheets, Common Core student goal sheets and the regular use of rubrics to self-assess as they complete projects. Using these tools students are aware of their next learning steps to improve their work products.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations supported by professional development to all staff emphasizing elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching (DfT). The school partners with students and families, informing them frequently on student progress towards college and career readiness goals.

Impact

A school-wide culture of reciprocal responsibility among staff, students, and families ensures accountability for all students to be prepared for next levels on the path of college and career.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct an annual “State of the School” meeting with staff in order to outline instructional goals, summative data and teaching and learning expectations for the school year based on the analysis of teacher data from the Advance system. The staff is provided with a detailed handbook, classroom visit and student notebook checklists, bulletin board rubrics, and a needs assessment in order to differentiate professional learning opportunities.
- School leaders provide feedback through formal and informal observations in order to continue to strengthen and support pedagogical practice as measured by the Danielson Framework. In reviewing observations reports it is evident that the school is focused on providing support for all learners as well as actionable feedback to the teacher that serves as one-to-one professional development. Samples included, “To ensure ALL students fully understand any task at hand, be sure to provide them with scaffolds needed to support completion of their work, such as providing a sample of a summary paragraph indicating main idea, conditions, possible solutions... Scaffolds could be removed during graded assessment if desired.”
- The School Leadership Team (SLT) supports school-wide goals and expectations and communicates those to the parent body. The school has designated a Parent Communication Chairperson who regularly and consistently shares school expectations and serves as an information resource for families. Parent workshops on academic behaviors, such as organization and rigorous work habits, such as persistence are scheduled regularly to reinforce college and career readiness skills. The school’s math coach has also provided support to parents in explaining problem solving and number sense concepts when they expressed difficulty in working with their children at home. The principal conducts Town Hall meetings to keep parents informed and engaged with the changes in curricula as well as ways to support their child’s learning. This has resulted in 97% of parents that are satisfied with the education their child is receiving based on the NYC School Survey.
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- Correspondence between the school and families is facilitated through a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) funded communication “red” folder that travels back and forth between the home and school with vital school information. The school utilizes listserv, school website, school/class newsletters and school messenger. Volunteering as class parents provides another level of communication between the teachers and parents. They support classes with increasing parent participation in celebratory events such as class publishing parties and experiential trips to support the curricula. Parents also partner with the school serving as role models in the mentoring programs, such as Boys to Men and Sisters Circle.