Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Edward Bush School for Leadership

Elementary School K018

101 Maujer Street
Brooklyn
NY 11206

Principal: Alison Alexander

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Lead Reviewer: Maria Giacone

The School Context

P.S. 018 Edward Bush School for Leadership is an elementary school with 197 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 14% Black, 84% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 22% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 91.0%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
To what extent does the school…	**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**	**Developing**
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**	**Developing**
School Culture		
To what extent does the school…	**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	**Celebration**	**Proficient**
Systems for Improvement		
To what extent does the school…	**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	**Additional Findings**	**Proficient**

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
High expectations are consistently communicated to the staff by using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Leadership and staff successfully communicate expectations with families apprised of student progress leading to college and career readiness.

Impact
School leaders' high expectations result in staff awareness of instructional expectations. Parents are aware of their children's academic progress as well as school-wide expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's handbook clearly outlines staff expectations and identifies resources and supports that are available to them. Among the areas addressed are the expectations for homework, bulletin boards, classroom environment (including libraries and technology), flow of the day, goal setting, unit and lesson plans, and assessments.

- Professional learning sessions are designed to support teachers in achieving the school-wide instructional focus to increase the level of rigor and student engagement. Sessions have included identifying rigorous habits, Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels for Four Content Areas presented by the teacher development coach, types of scaffolding, inclusive lesson planning: anticipating and planning for the needs of all students.

- Feedback on lesson observations shows that teachers are provided support and held accountable for meeting the goals of the school-wide instructional focus. One comment stated, "…teach students how to use the discussion prompts to have meaningful discussions." Another comment read, "Ask questions to extend student thinking, invite students to respond to other students' comments and use strategies to involve all students in the discussion. Attached are the DOK question stems to help you craft questions."

- A bulletin published monthly delineates expectations grade by grade so that all faculty and parents are clear on what is expected in classroom instruction. In one bulletin it stated that in 1st grade math "children learn how to use place value to model, read and write numbers to 120." In 2nd grade social studies "students will examine how technology has changed throughout time and how immigration has impacted NYC." The at home section for 5th grade students and parents includes, "Read each night for 30 minutes to build stamina; practice using close reading strategies to understand complex text and in math practice solving word problems and explain how you got the answer."

- Parents spoke about how the school is preparing students for college and careers by integrating reading and writing programs at a higher level and about a pilot program using tablets across grades so students can also access curriculum at home. They spoke about the expectation to nurture curiosity and inquiry. One parent said, "They instill in children questioning everything." Parents are continuously kept informed of their children's progress through reports, emails to and from teachers and opportunities to sit in on classes. One parent commented, "My child is struggling. The teacher gives me a report every day." Workshops on the Common Core, and newsletters with tips, are still other ways families are kept informed.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing

Findings
Across classrooms visited, teaching strategies and scaffolds inconsistently provided multiple entry points into the lesson and student discussions reflected uneven levels of student engagement.

Impact
Across classrooms there were missed opportunities to engage all learners in challenging tasks and higher order thinking, thus hindering students from participating and exhibiting their work at high levels.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, there was inconsistent use of scaffolds and student grouping to provide entry points into the lesson. While in some classes there was purposeful differentiation in the grouping of students as in a 4th grade class where students in groups engaged in reading appropriately leveled texts to address a task, in other classes, there was whole group teaching, or scaffolds were not used to maximum benefit. For example, in a 5th grade math class, there were no differentiated supports as students engaged in a task involving subtraction of fractions. In a 1st grade class, the majority of students were engaged in a lesson on insects and were provided a variety of visuals while a group of English language learners and students with disabilities in the back of the room worked on vocabulary without the use of visuals thus missing the benefit of an integral support.

- The level of rigor of tasks and questioning varied across classrooms. In a 4th grade class students were asked to observe clues in order to make inferences. However, in a 5th grade math class students responded to questions such as, “What number do we use to simplify?” and “”Do we always need to change a denominator?” to which students chorally responded, “No.”

- Student discussions were uneven across classrooms. In some classes students were given the opportunity to turn to a partner to have a discussion. For example, in a 1st grade class, students discussed with a peer what they observed about insects through visuals and text. This was followed by a whole group discussion. However, across classrooms there were missed opportunities for students to engage in extended discussion with peers or in small groups guided by higher order questions to work through a problem or explain their thinking.

Additional Findings

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

Findings
Teacher teams engage in professional collaborations by analyzing assessment data and student work. Distributed leadership structures allow teachers to have a voice in key decisions across the school.

Impact
The work of teacher teams has strengthened teacher collaboration resulting in improvements to pedagogical practices and a stronger voice in key decisions affecting student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams employ a modified Tuning protocol that allows teachers to examine student work against a rubric to continuously norm assessment practices, identify trends and progress towards achievement of curricular goals in terms of strengths and challenges, and plan next steps that involve adjustments to lessons. For example, the upper grades literacy team examined three selected 3rd grade pieces of narrative writing by a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), an English language learner and a high performing general education student. Among the strengths identified they noted that students had sequenced their writing properly. Challenges included lack of dialogue, and the need for more descriptive detail. Collaboratively, teachers began to share ideas to design a mini-lesson on dialogue using dialogue charts and questions to elicit pertinent details from the text in this way collectively enhancing their practice.

- Collaborative team practice is purposefully structured so that teachers incorporate the next steps derived from the results of the analysis of formative assessments of representative students so that a greater number of students can benefit from enhanced instructional practice. For example, during a teacher meeting, teachers spoke about designing a new unit on Peter Pan to address the needs that emerged from the past assessment and incorporate new learnings arrived at through their collaborative work. One teacher said, “We incorporate next steps from formative assessments for the whole class. We’re all on the same writing unit, so we all do teacher reflection.” Another teacher stated, “I looked to give better clarification to students regarding the task.” Yet another teacher said, “As a team, we make changes and chose something that would work and can apply across the school.”

- Teachers have built leadership capacity through the Teacher Leadership Team that comprises teachers from different grades. This team has had a voice in making key decisions regarding student learning. For example, the team was interested in adopting Core Knowledge and visited a school to observe its implementation in action before coming back to make the final decision to institute it at the school. The team also has been active in promoting the writing process across grades.

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing

Findings
Curricula and academic tasks reflect planning to provide students access to curricula and tasks. However, rigorous habits and higher-order skills are inconsistently emphasized across classrooms for a diversity of learners.

Impact
Students are not consistently challenged with high level tasks that extend student thinking and emphasize rigorous habits for all learners, including students with disabilities and English language learners.

Supporting Evidence

- To ensure alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards, the school's curriculum for literacy incorporates Core Knowledge, Expeditionary Learning supplemented by Strategies for Writers, and Go Math. Yet, the school is still in the process of ensuring a rigorous curriculum that meets the needs of all students. A review of curriculum documents revealed the inconsistent use of higher order questions and tasks as defined by Webb's Depth of Knowledge to ensure standards-level rigor in all tasks and units.

- Although the school has selected curricula in literacy for lower and upper grades, teachers are still in the process of reviewing and revising reading and writing units so that Expeditionary Learning for reading and writing, Strategies for Writers, and all rubrics are aligned to produce a rigorous and fully integrated, coherent curriculum.

- Most of the lesson plans reviewed subscribe to a workshop model approach that includes an "I do" teacher modeling component, "we do" practice, and "you do" independent/group work. However, many plans lacked tailored supports to address the specific needs of student subgroups within the class.

- Curricula and academic tasks reflect some planning to provide students access to the curricula. For example, a 3rd grade Expeditionary Learning module was modified to unpack vocabulary words, adjust the pacing of lessons, and include additional guided practice. Teacher team meetings are structured to include changes to lessons or strategies to improve teaching and learning based on student work. However, the systematic data based refinement of curriculum that builds towards rigorous habits that cognitively engage all students including struggling students, English language learners, and students with disabilities is still evolving.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing

Findings
While there are common assessments in place, results are inconsistently used to adjust curricula and instruction. Checks for understanding are inconsistently used in the classroom to make effective lesson adjustments.

Impact
Structures to use common assessments and classroom checks for understanding to inform curricular and instructional practices are still evolving thus hindering effective adjustments to increase student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- The school employs common assessments across grades and teachers examine assessment results to make changes to subsequent lessons and units. For example, when teachers assigned an opinion piece on injustice, they saw that students struggled with the topic because it was too broad. They amended the topic of the task to be narrower, choosing "extending the school day" and achieved better results. However, the systematic collection of benchmark data to assess the efficacy of adjusted practice against instructional goals to inform curricular modification to meet the needs of all students is still evolving.

- The shift to using assessment data and rubrics to measure student progress and inform student grouping is emerging. Teachers have begun to note common assessment data on summary sheets. While summary sheets capture formative, midpoint/goal setting, and summative assessment notations as demonstrated on a 5th grade summary sheet on the unit of study on opinion writing, the practice of using this information to form student groups is not yet a consistent, embedded school-wide practice.

- Across classrooms, checks for understanding are inconsistently used. In some classrooms visited, teachers circulated and engaged in one-on-one questioning and assistance. In a 3rd grade math class, as the teacher circulated she stated to the class, "I am noticing you're having a difficult time getting the answer. How do we use an array to get the answer?" However, in other classes, checks for understanding did not lead to significant adjustments to instruction so that all students could be actively and cognitively engaged, leaving some students not engaged in the lesson, or waiting for the lesson to progress having little to do.