



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Nathanael Greene

Elementary-High School K036

**2045 Linden Boulevard
Brooklyn
NY 11207**

Principal: Johanna Schneider

**Date of review: March 17 - 18, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Ketler Louissaint**

The School Context

Nathanael Greene is an elementary-high school with 278 students from kindergarten through grade 12. The school population comprises 60% Black, 29% Hispanic, 6% White, 3% Asian and 2% other students. The student body includes 12% English language learners. Boys account for 77% of the students enrolled and girls account for 23%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 84.0%.

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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Focus	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	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	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Teaching practices, aligned to the curricula and to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, reflect the school's articulated coherent beliefs about how students with disabilities learn best. Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching strategies and high level supports extend the curricula and provide students with strategic multiple entry points.

Impact

School wide instructional strategies informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and school discussions lead students toward instructional shifts. Strategic teacher pedagogy reflects the diverse needs of all students to produce work that demonstrates higher order thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leaders and staff believe that students with disabilities learn best when they are taught through modalities that optimize their skills and abilities. This belief was reflected in a 4th-5th grade English language arts (ELA) class of students with intellectual disabilities where they were first asked to record everything they know about flying and airplanes on a graphic organizer and share it with the other members of their groups through a Turn and Talk activity. The teacher used a series of events chain map to connect the students to prior learning about Bessie Coleman. Finally, students were asked to use evidence from the text to describe Bessie Coleman's life. One student wrote that Bessie Coleman must have been "bad", as a means to say she was brave and daring to fly solo. Another student stated that Bessie Coleman was a role model for African-American women.
- Teachers use questioning and discussion to increase students' interest in the lessons. In a 6th-7th grade English language arts class of 12 students with learning disabilities, while reading *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien, students defended their thought processes verbally, in writing, or by drawing a picture with a claim and a prediction on what they believe is going to happen. In a K-2 science class, without looking, students touched different beach items and identify them in their groups. With teacher and paraprofessional prompting, the students were able to record their answers on a chart using descriptive words of what a beach would smell like, taste, feel, and sound like. Finally, students wrote sensory poems using expressions related to the five senses.
- Manipulatives, visual supports and technology are used to give students multiple entry points into the curriculum. Teachers were using a variety of graphic organizers, quiet corners, and one-to-one instruction with paraprofessionals to provide high quality supports to students. Teachers stated that curriculum extensions such as reading articles, developing art projects, writing autobiographies, and field trips are designed to enhance students' creativity and learning experience. Additionally, instructional strategies that include the use of Smart Board and I-pads, Workshop Model and small group instruction are strategically utilized. In one grade 6 class visited, a non-verbal student used his I-pad and Tech Talk, an assistive communication device, to respond to text-based questions. In a 6th-7th grade ELA class, strategies such as the use of interest vocabulary, visual clues and song lyrics such as *Glory* by John Legend and *Beautiful* by Christina Aguilera engaged students in collaborative discussions about the use and power of words used in lyrics with the teacher and with their partners for a superhero project.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use a variety of assessments to provide actionable feedback to students. The school uses common assessments to evaluate student learning and determine progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

Impact

Curriculum aligned assessments, feedback and adjustments across classrooms have yet to provide a clear portrait of student learning and mastery of goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the school, different stakeholders collect and analyze a wide range of academic and behavioral data such as Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI), Formative Assessment of Standards Tasks (FAST), Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS), and Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) tracker to monitor student progress. School leaders reported that the data collected is shared and discussed by administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals and related service providers. Subsequent decisions are made based on the information gleaned from the body of collected data. For example, the PBIS team regularly reviews School Wide Information System (SWIS) student behavior data aligned to the PBIS Curriculum to identify students in need and create customized behavior and academic intervention plans to assist them. However, although all teachers collect daily behavior sheets, in a few cases, data from the sheets is not discussed with students to give them an opportunity to effectively monitor their behaviors.
- Assessment at the school is ongoing and used to inform decision making about students. Administrators at the leadership meeting confirmed that data collection is embedded in the school culture. Since last year's assessment results showed a decline in grade 6 and 7 math scores, the school has decided this year to use Engage NY as their math curriculum and has added extra math units that offer students multiple steps in problem solving.
- The use of rubrics and checklists to provide feedback is evident across classrooms and on all bulletin boards. Teachers offer feedback to students through comments written on post-its. The school uses "Grow" and "Glow" to provide specific feedback to students. However, although most teachers provide students with meaningful and actionable feedback, in a few of the classes visited, the feedback reviewed only respectively stated "Good Job" and "Good! Please read next chapter" with no specific information to guide students' next steps.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school's curricula and thematic units align to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curriculum and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigor across grades and subject areas.

Impact

The school's thematic units foster coherence and promote college and career readiness across classrooms. Units of study are planned to ensure rigorous habits and thinking for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and teachers have incorporated the Depth of Knowledge Matrix (DOK) in their lesson planning. The SuperYou curriculum incorporates the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. For example, the SuperYou curriculum focuses on creating tasks involving a cooperative approach to skill acquisition with learning experiences for all students. The lessons increase analytical thinking skills by interpreting texts. They help students practice understanding of different perspectives, creative writing and journaling skills. For example, a 6th-7th grade ELA lesson plan included tasks for students to state the central ideas and explain the meaning of each stanza in the poem, *Still I Rise* by Maya Angelou. The tasks concluded with an activity on comparing and contrasting how the main character deals with obstacles and oppression.
- Based on students' reading needs, the school uses the A to Z reading curriculum and Expeditionary Learning curriculum which are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, for standardized and alternate assessment students. For math, the school uses GO Math! in their elementary classes and Engage NY units for their middle and high students. A February ELA 5th grade writing unit reflects tasks where students were asked to read and share their opinions about selected periodical articles in order to write persuasive editorials. In addition, one of the lessons incorporated tasks to provide students with opportunities to critique their editorials with their writing partners in a collaborative discussion forum and write a final draft that would be published for the whole school.
- Alternate Assessment high school students use the yearlong Attainment curriculum, which incorporates rigorous tasks such as figuring out how much money is needed to buy an item on sale, estimation, and the differences of the values if needed. The Attainment Curriculum contains strategies, which align with academic, vocational and functional skills. In addition, the Attainment Curriculum connects students to real life and teaches them about life beyond the walls of the school, tied to the math instructional shift #5. In math, the curriculum provides tasks for students to learn to figure out the net pay on their weekly paychecks after working a certain amount of hours per week. Additionally, the curriculum includes other activities such as chess tasks that teach students about different ways of solving problems.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Structures and systems are in place to consistently communicate high expectations to staff and to partner with families and provide them with a variety of workshops so they can support student progress toward those expectations.

Impact

School wide systems of mutual accountability and effective partnerships with families are resulting in meeting expectations in teaching and learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The school offers a variety of workshops to help parents further educate and support their children at home. School staff takes into account their scheduling challenges by offering evening and weekend workshops that cover a variety of subjects that include the Common Core Learning Standards, guardianship, positive behavior intervention support, transition/front door and post-secondary options. For example, the administration and teachers regularly hold 7:00 a.m. breakfast with parents to accommodate their schedules. Parents stated that they “are very grateful and happy here”. At the team meeting, teachers reported that they share their personal phone numbers with parents, regularly text and e-mail them to advise families of their children’s progress.
- School leadership has created a culture of mutual accountability that is evident in staff interactions with students and their families. The school proactively addresses the needs of staff through the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Staff and families receive welcoming packages in September outlining parental, professional and pedagogical expectations for the school year. School leaders communicate daily expectations to staff through a dry-erase board messages, memos and e-mails. They also hold regular meetings with special education teacher support services (SETSS), job developer/transition coordinator and related service providers to remind them about expectations to find ways to foster greater independence in students. A weekly bulletin and a monthly calendar revisit the expectations and introduce staff to the week ahead and the month at a glance. Parents state that they value the school’s support for their children.
- A professional development feedback survey and a professional development calendar offer staff a variety of training opportunities to keep them focused on the expectations for college, career and life readiness. Monday professional development provides staff with the time to not only review instructional expectations and student progress, but also to share the expectations with parents over the phone or via e-mails. Parents at the meeting stated that communication is excellent. One parent stated that the school has even placed a parent suggestions and concerns’ box in the lobby for parents who do not want to publicize their issues, to do so at their convenience. Another parent indicated, “The school keeps us informed about our children and have made much improvement in their lives.”

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

The majority of teachers participate in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations aligned to school goals, the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. Teachers analyze data and student work consistently for targeted students.

Impact

Professional collaborations lead to strengthened teacher capacity, adjustment of curricula and improved academic outcomes for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service staff participate in collaborative Mondays where they engage in inquiry work that focuses on developing curricula, reviewing student work data and planning instruction. During a meeting, teachers stated that they value the opportunity to collaborate on developing project-based learning tasks. They cited collaborations on initiatives and programs aligned to school goals of improving student outcomes. For example, they stated that they have jointly developed the Reading Buddies program, the school’s garden, and talent shows that have in turn fostered a lot of learning and growth for students. Other teachers indicated that professional collaborations and teamwork have strengthened their pedagogical ability, increased their capacity and have consequently helped them do better on various components of the Danielson Framework.
- Teacher Teams meet weekly to analyze a body of data sources that includes student work, IEP goals, daily student behavioral assessment, and test scores. Teachers use the results to inform their instructional decisions. All cluster teachers have a common prep to meet and reflect on their practices. They use that scheduled time to align their instruction with the classroom teachers. In one project, the science and art teachers collaborated and taught students how to analyze the structure of relationships among specific scientific and technical concepts such as force, friction and energy. The collaboration culminated in students creating racing cars and a ramp that are made from discarded objects to determine the relationship between force, friction and speed.
- There are structures in place that result in all teachers sharing best practices at team meetings. For example, during teacher team meetings and Monday professional development, teachers hold professional conversations using student data and freely exchange thoughts and lesson plans to illustrate ideas for further refinement of instructional plans for engaging in differentiated instruction. Additionally, they share information about students they share and design intervention strategies to not only build their knowledge through complex texts but also to empower and hand over learning responsibility to students. During the teacher team meeting, teachers used an inquiry approach to discuss specific students’ academic and behavioral issues, to brainstorm academic strategies such as individual instruction, use of graphic organizers, longer wait time for student responses and re-teaching to better assist and support students. Teachers reported that students have made progress on their English language arts test.