



Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Sheepshead Bay

Elementary School K052

**2675 East 29 Street
Brooklyn
NY 11235**

Principal: Rafael Alvarez

**Date of review: March 31, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Julia Bove**

The School Context

Sheepshead Bay is an elementary school with 828 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 16% Black, 14% Hispanic, 57% White, and 13% Asian students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.1%.

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	Additional Findings	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	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	Celebration	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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school has established a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations to staff, provides professional training, and effectively shares those expectations with students and families as well.

Impact

Consistent communication for high expectations results in a culture of mutual accountability. Expectations for college and career readiness are effectively communicated and supports are provided to successfully create partnerships with parents that help students to achieve those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal states that all parents need to have an active voice that is representative of the school community. This was evident at a parent meeting, as all parents participated equally and shared that they felt a part of the school culture and had an active role in setting goals for their children.
- The school maintains a website through eChalk that is translated into 65 languages to adequately meet the linguistic needs of the school community. Parents state that they use email as one way to maintain contact with the school. Email communications serve to keep parents informed about ongoing progress of their children.
- The school has an advanced math program that was created in the style of a college course. Students receive a syllabus with a breakdown of content, assignments, due dates and exams. Students are treated as though they are attending an actual college course.
- The school holds career fairs that not only showcase various careers but also holds career development seminars in which students are required to explore various aspects of searching for a job, such as which fields are hiring, why workplace vocabulary is important, and how to write a resume. Teachers state that they have ownership over key decisions and share accountability for students meeting their goals.
- The school provides frequent professional development for teachers. Topics include, but are not limited to, building content vocabulary and how to improve questioning techniques. The school also has regular and frequent professional development sessions specifically designed for parents and conducted by teachers and administration. Parents are given activities that they can use to help their children. These include specific prompt questions such as, "Do I know what my child's reading level should be by June?" Parents also are given workshops in mathematics and English language arts based on upcoming instructional units. Children also state that their parents help them and use activities that the school provides. The administration stated that the next step is to have students conduct professional development sessions.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The school aligns assessments to curricula and analyzes information on student learning to adjust instructional decisions.

Impact

Students are provided with actionable feedback that is beginning to create a clear picture of student progress. Student data is used to modify curriculum and assessments, however these efforts have yet to impact all students in all grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- The school chose its instructional focus, academic and content area vocabulary, based on longitudinal data based on year-to-year item skills analysis, to specifically incorporate the needs of all students. Teacher teams also spoke to the instructional focus and stated that they participated in choosing that focus. Teachers are continuing to work on the use of formative assessments in the classroom. For example, a teacher observation report included the comment, “continue to work on Danielson Component 3D: Using assessment in instruction.” Another report outlines that a next step would be to teach students how to better monitor their own learning.
- Comments in teacher observation reports show evidence of a need to expand efforts to use assessment data. For example, one observation stated, “I was able to observe the Socratic seminar and was able to see the students facilitate the learning. I would like to see you incorporate some of the same strategies into mathematics.”
- Displayed student work contains rubric-based actionable feedback that includes students self-assessing their own goals. In a 3rd grade classroom student comments included, “I will make text-to-text connections,” and “I will be able to measure the length of an object.”
- After creating a baseline data set, the school used mid-module assessments within the EngageNY curriculum. The school also administers an end-of-unit assessment and a middle of-the-year assessment created by the teachers. The result is an increase in understanding of how to address academic vocabulary needs of students.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school ensures that engaging curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards for a variety of learners. Units and lessons are revised based on student data.

Impact

As a result of purposeful decisions based on data, a variety of learners, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, have access to curricula and tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- Unit plans are revised often and as needed. Administration stated that a staff-wide analysis of existing units revealed that vocabulary did not show rigorous increase from grade to grade. Teachers came up with the instructional focus of content area vocabulary and collaboratively revised the units based on the needs of each grade.
- Lesson plans show a variety of strategies and text levels. For example, several mini-lessons in a kindergarten unit use simple nonfiction books, low level pattern books, familiar nonfiction big books, and unfamiliar non-fiction texts. Some groups require prompting and support, while others require active engagement on the part of the teacher. Needs of groups are identified both through regular assessment and in-class data gathered through the administration of running records.
- In a classroom of predominately ELLs, a word wall displayed high-level content vocabulary. Each vocabulary word was printed with its definition, phonetic pronunciation and syllabication. This provides scaffolds for all students in the classroom to access the words as needed.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teacher pedagogy is developed from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points for a variety of learners.

Impact

All learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks. Students produce meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The school believes that the needs of all students—not just struggling students—are best met by recognizing and celebrating differences while maintaining academic rigor. For example, in a kindergarten integrated co-teaching class, students were asked to be detectives. They were given the assignment of looking for digraphs with the “ch” sound. One group was working with the teacher on decoding. This group included a new admit to the school who was an ELL. Other students worked independently, and one student found a “ch” digraph in the name of his classmate.
- In a 3rd grade literacy class, the teacher and students engaged in a read-aloud of a chapter of *James and the Giant Peach*. Students then went back to their groups to re-read Chapter 19 and make connections to previously learned writing prompts. Groups were assigned based on pre-assessed interest and reading level. They were paired with same language students as a scaffold in addition to the support of the classroom teacher.
- In a 4th grade class, students were gathering information in preparation for a Socratic seminar on the poem, “Mother to Son,” by Langston Hughes. Students stated that they needed to look at the text in order to do this. Questions included, “What can we infer about the life of the speaker of the poem?” Written and spoken vocabulary was at students’ academic levels.

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

Teacher teams engage in structured professional collaborations using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning. Teams engage in school-wide inquiry based on subject and this work is then aligned vertically.

Impact

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations where they systematically analyze classroom practice, assessment data, and student work. This has strengthened teacher capacity and ownership of process and content, resulting in shared improvements of teacher practice and mastery of goals for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams exist across grades with each member being a content area specialist. Teams first met to analyze trends across curricula and grades. Each team has created a plan with benchmarks to measure progress along the way. Teams also make interdisciplinary decisions. For example, a social studies teacher stated that changes were made to existing social studies units based on vocabulary components in the English language arts curriculum.
- In a 5th grade team meeting, teachers were analyzing student work. They referred to the school’s instructional focus, and one teacher stated that a student had difficulty interpreting the expression “scores of voices”. Through close reading, annotating, and the use of text-based context clues, the child was eventually able to derive the correct meaning. The team planned for next steps, which included providing more scaffolds to support figurative language and idiomatic expressions.
- Teachers have the ability to affect changes in curricula based on data-driven arguments for change. For example, the teachers created their own unit plans after they discovered that the ReadyGEN program did not address the needs of their students with disabilities and ELLs. One student stated that her goal was to improve her introductions and conclusions when writing an essay. Another stated that the way that her teacher taught allowed her to better incorporate new vocabulary into her written explanations.