



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2014-2015**

**The Henry Longfellow**

**Elementary School K094**

**5010 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11220**

**Principal: Janette Caban**

**Date of review: May 15, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Anita Skop**

## The School Context

The Henry Longfellow is an elementary school with 1,504 students from grade K through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 39% Hispanic, 1% White, and 58% Asian students. The student body includes 62% English language learners and 4% 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 96.0%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations. Embedded distributive structures ensure effective teacher leadership.

### Impact

Professional teacher collaborations have significantly impacted the achievement of school goals, promoted the implementation of the Common Core and the instructional shifts, and have increased teacher capacity and student achievement for all learners. An extensive distributed leadership structure enables teachers to play a key role in decisions that impact student learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- All teachers in the school meet with grade level teams at least once a week (and often more than once a week) to reflect on student work in both English language arts and math, while vertical teams meet monthly. All teams have firmly embedded protocols and roles which enable them to focus deeply on the evaluation of student work and on the strategies to support student success. Charts seen at team meetings evidenced the results of cycles of inquiry, and student work indicated great improvement in mastery levels on unit assessments in both English language arts and math. Minutes are shared with the administration. Further, successful strategies are shared at faculty meetings to ensure that all teachers and students build skills school-wide.
- As exemplified by the third grade team, each individual has a role on the team, such as moderator, time keeper, recorder, chart master, etc. Consequently, the teams run very efficiently and are highly effective. During the team meeting charts reflecting grade-wide trends and annotated student work, enabling the participants to determine that a number of previously tried strategies had not been successful for the students. It was then suggested by one team member that they target a need to work more deliberately with colored markers to support close reading. Teachers are requesting more common preps and stated that these collaborative opportunities had improved their practice significantly, stating, "I can add your strength to my toolbox".
- Distributive leadership opportunities have blossomed at the school. Teachers have the opportunity to provide input on decisions that affect student learning school-wide through grade leader and other team roles. For example, the idea of having a school newspaper was teacher generated, as were decisions to modify the curricula to incorporate exemplars for math. New teachers are supported with a book study group and lunch and learn sessions, as well as intervisitations and professional development with Pam Allen. Teachers affirmed that teacher collaboration has led to transparent communication, and that teachers empowered at the school.

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

### Findings

Teaching practices are well aligned to the curricula, accurately reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best, and include a strong focus on quality student work products and discussions. However, in a few classes, teaching strategies, including questioning, scaffolds in English and/or native language, are not yet as fully developed.

### Impact

The majority of classrooms demonstrated teaching practices that align to the school's learning beliefs, effectively showcasing high levels of student participation and discussion. In a few classes, the use of high-quality supports and learning extensions was not yet deeply embedded, limiting some students' opportunity to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers consistently utilize instructional practices that align to the school's curricula. Classroom visits evidence the use of "I can" learning objectives, small group instruction with scaffolds for struggling students, teacher conferencing and student discussion, and the use of SMART boards to provide text and visual support. Essential questions were also seen across classrooms and grade levels. During reading in a kindergarten integrated co-teaching class, the teacher working with one small group used a document reader to project the text onto the smart board for the students to access and then also used visual definition charts that showed a large picture to help students define complex vocabulary words such as the word, brooding.
- In kindergarten through grade 2, students explore the content rich Core Knowledge curriculum that includes project-based, inquiry-driven units of study. For example, In kindergarten, students were deeply engaged in a unit on the farm. Teachers provided students with multi-sensory opportunities for learning. In a Spanish Dual Language integrated co-teaching class, students had created a chicken coop and were incubating live chicks. In a Chinese Dual Language class, students had the opportunity to pretend that they were milking a cow that had been created out of an easel, using a rubber glove filled with milk and a bucket. Students in small working groups then ran seminars in English on *The Life Cycle of a Cow*, *How to Milk a Cow*, and *Things We Get from Milk*. During the seminar, each child spoke about their findings, and called for questions from the rest of the class while the teacher facilitated from the back and took notes.
- While the preponderance of the classrooms demonstrated instruction well aligned to the curricula with highly engaged students and rich discussion, a few classes did not provide evidence of instruction that was fully aligned to the school's non-negotiables. In a grade 1 integrated co-teaching class, the students were divided into several small groups. One teacher sat with her group holding her clipboard but taking few notes, while the other teacher worked with a group of students on the rug and read aloud to them from a book about river otters. The two other adults in the room continuously circulated and supported students. Although there was a good deal of shared reading and choral reading, some students were clearly not engaged. Further, there was very little evidence of student work, and low levels of questioning, such as, "Why would the otters be wet?"

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core and/or content standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades, subjects, and for English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

### Impact

The principal, her assistant principals, and faculty make purposeful decisions that build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students so that a diversity of learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, are cognitively engaged and have access to the curricula and rich academic tasks.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school utilizes the Common Core aligned Core Knowledge curriculum for literacy in kindergarten through grade 2, and the equally aligned Expeditionary Learning curriculum for literacy in grades 3 through 5. These programs consist of interdisciplinary units of study that are content-rich and engage students in research and ongoing discussion. The literacy programs were selected as they provide multisensory learning opportunities and promote language development through discussion for the school's large number of English language learners (62%).
- In math, the Envision Math curriculum, though seemingly aligned to the Common Core, was found to be lacking in sufficient problem solving skills. Reflection on student data on state assessments and Measures of Student Learning assessments indicated that math was an area of significant need. This was also evidenced by grade level inquiry team findings. Therefore, it was determined that the curriculum be judiciously supplemented with Exemplar problems school-wide. Grade level team findings demonstrate a significant increase in student mastery as a result of this change.
- Document review of unit plans and classroom lesson plans indicated that differentiated scaffolding was a school-wide expectation so that all students could meet the rigors of the Common Core. Small group instruction was seen in every classroom, and the vast majority of students utilized a range of supports including manipulatives, graphic organizers and visuals to enable them to access the learning. For example, during a math lesson in a second grade Dual Language class, the student groups were presented with a set of problems with a range of numbers, thus empowering students to grasp the mathematical concept utilizing their individual computational strengths.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula, and utilize these common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

### **Impact**

Assessments are used to provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement and to make critical adjustments to the curricula and instruction in order to meet student learning needs.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The school utilizes a broad range of common and classroom assessments, including Measures of Student Learning, Fountas and Pinnell running records, pre-, post- and mid-unit assessments in all content areas, and the Teachers College Writing Continuum rubric as a means to assess writing. Rubrics and checklists are a key component of both literacy programs, and are integrated into the writing across content areas as well.
- The school has developed native language assessments in Chinese and translated the unit assessments into Spanish for Core Knowledge in order to further support the school's extensive Dual Language program in both Chinese and Spanish. Classroom visits and discussions with students indicated that teachers were able to identify students' areas of strength and areas of improvement, and had provided students with feedback to support their learning in both languages. This was also demonstrated by the students in the monolingual classes, as was the use of student checklists in writing and the utilization of rubrics school-wide.
- The school reflected on the knowledge that almost every entering early childhood student was an English language learner, and reviewed the data from the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test that indicated that student listening and speaking skills needed support. As a result, teachers adjusted both the Core Knowledge curriculum and the Expeditionary Learning curriculum to target enhanced language development as a top priority. In addition, student generated questions and presentations were prioritized in the school's curricula non-negotiables, and this was evident in classroom visits.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations including professionalism, instruction, communication, and other elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching to the entire staff. School leaders and staff offer ongoing feedback to families and establish a culture of learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students.

### Impact

School leaders have a system of accountability for high expectations that is routinely shared with teachers during training. Students and families are provided with the feedback, guidance, and advisement supports needed to prepare students for the next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal and her assistant principals have utilized the Danielson Framework and the Chancellor’s Framework for Great Schools to establish the culture of learning, and hold teachers accountable to those expectations by providing feedback during observations and supporting teacher growth in light of those identified needs. School-wide foci were routinely identified by staff as priorities and the school’s environment universally reflected those expectations as well. These expectations are shared during faculty meetings, team meetings, and conferences, and are communicated with every consultant prior to initiating professional development at the school.
- Parents consider teachers to be highly accessible, and are provide with ongoing feedback on student learning. Workshops on the units of study, project-based learning and the book of the month also deepen parent understanding of school and student expectations. Further support is also provided through *Coffee with the Guidance Counselor* sessions that provide parents with opportunities to ask questions as to how they can better support their children and prepare them for middle school. Additionally, guidance counselors work with parents to assist them in preparing their child’s middle school application so that their choice is both appropriate and child specific.
- The school leader and her staff have worked tirelessly to set high expectations for students and establish the community goal of college and career readiness. Staff members readily hold themselves up as immigrant role models and English language learners who have achieved academic success. They post their colleges in their rooms, and share pictures of themselves and their families with their students. The school hosts a Career Day and focuses on their uniform policy to establish the concept of dressing for success. As one teacher stated, “Your uniform tells the world who you are”! Students are expected to draft college entrance essays for practice. In addition, students are empowered by their project-based learning experiences that require presentations and student discussion, and participate in the school’s Student Council, Green (recycling) Team, as well as Penny Harvest, in which students determine how the money collected should be donated.