



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Sal Abbracciamento School

**Elementary K108
200 Linwood Street
Brooklyn
NY, 11208**

Principal: Constance Hahn

**Date of review: December 4, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Joyce Stallings-Harte**

The School Context

P.S. 108, The Sal Abbracciamento School is an elementary school with 891 students from grade Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 19% Black, 74% Hispanic, 1% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 24% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92%.

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	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	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	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

A positive school culture that supports all members is maintained as leadership communicates excellence in instruction and communicates high expectations. Families are partners and are kept abreast of student progress on a consistent basis.

Impact

Effective communication of expectations and a system that holds each member accountable for productivity ensures students are prepared for college and career and families know and understand the requirements.

Supporting Evidence

- The Staff Development Team comprised of a representative teacher from each grade and cluster content area analyzed the 2013-2014 Measures of Teacher Practice. Teachers received a score for every component in order to target their improvement plan collaboratively with school leadership. Professional development was provided based on teacher needs. Teacher leaders with exemplary practices host intervisitations which are then debriefed with the Staff Development Team which uses a teacher reflection sheet that notes 'what I learned, questions or wonderings and what I will try' as areas for discussion. Teachers are provided professional learning opportunities and have a mutual accountability for the expectations.
- School Leaders and staff convey high expectations through a robust system of communication with students and families that reinforce the school's expectations. Teachers share quarterly reports with families noting student progress and progress toward benchmarks. Teachers partner with families via scheduled weekly check-ins that focus on areas of growth for students. Via workshops, parents understand how rubrics are used across subjects to assess their child's progress and are used at the weekly check-ins to review growth. Parents note that the school helps them understand how they are preparing students for college and careers through workshops on the new grading policy and Common Core Learning Standards. Schoolwide, grade-wide and content area newsletters are distributed monthly to inform families of what students will be working on for the month.
- Students state that the school prepares them to be successful and helps them get more prepared and organized to prepare for college and career. They set unit goals and develop plans to achieve their goals, which the student monitors. Each student and family is able to monitor progress through the bi-monthly progress reports and work portfolios for each unit of study that details the skills for mastery with accompanying work samples that confirm mastery.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Pedagogy across all classrooms closely aligns to the Danielson Framework and reflects a coherent belief of how students learn best. Pedagogy strategically provides multiple entry points, supports, and extensions for all learners.

Impact

Teaching strategies aligned to the Danielson Framework are discussed at school and team levels to meet the learning needs of all students and provide access to learning at higher levels as reflected in meaningful work products. All learners, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities engage in challenging tasks at high levels.

Supporting Evidence

- During a third grade English language arts (ELA) lesson, students engaged in a non-fiction close reading with a rubric that they used to self- and peer-assess. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies for multiple types of learners included use of an anchor chart and SMARTboard slides, clarifying vocabulary and symbols, and highlighting features and patterns. Five students used reading tubes to improve reading fluency and accuracy as indicated in the teacher observation notes.
- Since the school believes that students learn best in data-determined groups, in all classrooms, teachers created opportunities for flexible grouping of students based on the results of ongoing assessments. Students participated in various learning activities that allowed for self-paced learning opportunities, such as use of Read 180 for reading comprehension and vocabulary development, book clubs, Socratic seminar, group work and independent learning activities.
- Across all classrooms, student-to-student conversations were guided by a rubric and prompts used by students as needed. For example, in a fourth grade ELA lesson, students noted the focus for lesson, were offered tiered charts, “it [text] says, I say” and asked to give specific evidence from the text to support their conjectures. The teacher facilitated a guided reading group and other students did computer-based work. Student conversations revealed that students are expected to use discussion prompts for group work across most classrooms. Students in second and fourth grade classes performed math tasks at varied levels using manipulatives, computer games and written responses to express their understanding of the task.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Curricula that ensure challenging tasks and rigorous habits for all students are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

All students, including English language learners (ELLs) and special education students are engaged in a coherent curricula and academic tasks that require high levels of thinking, speaking and participation which prepare them for college and career.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has developed coherency in the curriculum maps using a careful blending of Engage NY and Ready Gen that strategically integrate the instructional shifts across grade bands, K-2 and 3-5. After an in depth-analysis of student work, pre-assessments, running records and summative data, teacher teams made revisions of writing prompts to support the writing process across subjects. Curriculum maps were adjusted to reflect alignment to Common Core Learning Standards and lesson plans reflect integration of higher order questions using Depth of Knowledge and Hess Matrix.
- Lesson plans and units of study include Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies and differentiated strategies for groups of students such as an interactive science technology connection. For example, fourth grade lessons delineate the use of computer-based learning modules in science to investigate how natural events impact the world and in social studies second grade lessons support exploration of the changes in New York City over time. Teacher teams meet to identify the learning gaps and necessary scaffolding and extensions to ensure access to rigorous curriculum. For example, in a second grade lesson, to support listed data-based groups of students, specific content vocabulary activity was designed to front-load. Additionally a small group lesson was designed using gradual release and guiding questions.
- Curriculum maps ensure the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts both horizontally and vertically. For example, grade-wide teams, science teams, arts teams and the physical education team build maps that include an area of the school's stated focus, vocabulary development. Vocabulary is infused across content areas that promote improvement in student writing products.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Common assessments, rubrics and grading practices across all classrooms reflect alignment to curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery and progress toward goals that are tracked and adjusted.

Impact

Student achievement provides actionable and meaningful feedback to all students and teachers, demonstrating increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use multiple assessments such as Fountas and Pinnell, Scholastic Reading Inventory, benchmark assessments, performance tasks and conference notes to monitor and revise instruction to meet the needs of all learners including ELLs and students with disabilities. For example, teachers of ELLs, students with disabilities and grade level teams meet weekly to analyze these multiple sources. These analyses are used to plan for differentiated professional development for teachers and differentiated instruction for students. For example, across grades it was noted that students struggle with citing evidence to defend their verbal and written answers. This led to professional learning and lesson study which impacts instruction and student performance.
- Analysis of math data revealed students struggled with two-step problem-solving. The school reviewed the resources being used and revised Go Math to ensure that the problem-of-the-day included two-step word problems and the addition of FASTT Math, a computer-based program, to assist with speed and accuracy. Student improvement is tracked via computer and progress is monitored by the student, teacher and shared with the family during weekly parent conferences. Parents note that this allows them to be well informed of their child's progress toward mastery of standards.
- The school invested in time for teachers to craft rubrics aligned to curricula and Common Core Learning Standards. Teachers worked collaboratively to create student-friendly rubrics that indicate mastery. In grades three, four and five teachers use the rubrics from the New York State Office of Assessment to ensure all students know and are aware of the grade level expectations in literacy and mathematics. For example, based on the state rubrics, teachers developed rubrics based on what students should know and be able to do to exhibit mastery for content area performance tasks. Students track their progress with a self-reflection sheet as well as provide peer reflection.

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

All teachers participate in multiple structured professional learning venues that focus on strengthened teacher pedagogical capacity and continuous student improvement via implementation of Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. Teacher leaders facilitate vertical and horizontal team meetings on a consistent basis that focus on the attainment of school goals and promote increased student achievement.

Impact

As a result of the professional learning community there is school-wide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners. Key decisions on curricula and instructional practices are impacted through teacher leadership structure.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers meet in vertical and horizontal teams using an inquiry approach to improve classroom practice. The English language learner (ELL) teacher team reviewed student writing and initiated adjustments to instructional practice using Universal Design for Learning approach. The team developed a PowerPoint titled 'Ensuring Equal Educational Opportunities for ELL's and presented it to all teachers, in order to share best practices that yield schoolwide improved performance for ELLs. This sharing of best practices occurred at the beginning of the year, and now the teams are showing a positive trend in improved student writing for ELLs. Teachers are also responsible for sharing information to their teams from off-site workshops, which builds teacher leadership practice.
- Teacher teams utilize a consistent looking at student work protocol and all teachers share leadership roles during the team meetings. The analysis of student work includes pre-assessment, desired student thinking, what students need to know, implications for instruction and post-assessments. Based on data analysis, the team implemented the integration of technology in Go Math with tutorial videos based on specific areas of student need. The team developed math progressions based on observations from the team inquiry that detail what students should know and be able to do on each grade level, thus providing coherency across grades.
- All teachers engage in professional learning through rounds of lesson study. The lessons initiate from instructional practices identified as crucial to student progress during the inquiry cycles. Lessons developed jointly are taught, observed, analyzed, rewritten and re-taught. In a kindergarten lesson, teachers adjusted the explicit teaching, modeling and use of oral rehearsing to improve student achievement. Teachers commented that lesson study allowed colleagues to identify and employ specific instructional strategies that meet the needs of all learners.
- Teachers refine their practice according to identified next steps following the analysis of student work. During the lesson study teachers have the opportunity to participate in intervisitations and refine their practice because of the team collaboration. Teachers utilize a DAN (Data-Analysis-Next Steps) sheet, which shows student growth and next instructional steps. Review of the DAN sheets show tracking for reading and math. Student reading levels are noted and strategies such as guided reading recommended.