



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Charles O. Dewey

Junior High-Intermediate-Middle School K136

**4004 4th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11232**

Principal: Eric Sackler

**Dates of review: March 4, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Teresa Caccavale**

The School Context

Charles O. Dewey is an intermediate school with 484 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 3% Black, 85% Hispanic, 6% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 41% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.0%.

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	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		
<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	Proficient
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	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

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

Teachers engage in ongoing, inquiry based professional collaboration and reflection aligned to the school's instructional goals, with a targeted focus on the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards(CCLS).

Impact

The school's commitment to distributive leadership and teacher professional growth builds a cohesive professional learning community, promotes improved teacher practice, and provides teachers with a voice in instructional decision making.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet weekly, reflect on individual and shared practice, and support professional growth for all members of the team. Teachers participating in a cross content team meeting shared that they value the opportunity to engage in frequent professional collaborations and are aware that the school's emphasis on professional reflection has resulted in documented improvement in their practice as measured by the Danielson Framework for Teaching.
- Content area teacher team meetings are structured to engage teachers in professional conversations focusing on the CCLS and aligned to the school's instructional goals of improved teacher practice in student data and work analysis, questioning and discussion techniques, and facilitating student-centered and engaged lessons that are aligned with the expectations of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teachers in the social studies team meeting shared that core content department teams engage in an ongoing process of shared reflection on practice with a goal of strengthening the team's overall pedagogical practice.
- Many teacher-led decisions directly impact student learning. Teacher intervisitations are established based on student data, observation feedback from classroom visitations by administrators and MOTP data. Lead teachers create and revise curriculum maps with a focus on academic vocabulary and improving the quality of questions and discussion prompts. Teachers also share best practices by engage in professional learning sessions.
- Teachers shared that professional development consists of three tiers. Tier I consists of professional learning for all pedagogues which is a designated weekly 80 minute professional learning session. Tier II consists of designated weekly 45 minute professional learning sessions targeted for departmental teams of pedagogues to enhance lessons and teaching practices. These pedagogues engage in outside workshops including CMP 3, Board works, Beyond Z, NAEA conference, and technology workshops. Tier III consists of targeted individualized professional learning sessions such as one-to-one coaching provided by leads, consultants, and teachers. Teachers also engage in differentiated self-driven online professional learning sessions through the Leader in Me series, "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" social-emotional resource, ARIS learn, and other researched-based sources. This is evident by the growing number of teachers (99%) receiving effective ratings in this domain thus far.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Pedagogical practices across classrooms do not consistently include targeted instructional supports, scaffolded questioning and discussion techniques, or learning extensions to engage all learners in rigorous tasks and high level discussions.

Impact

Across classrooms, students are not consistently engaged in appropriately challenging tasks or classroom discussions that lead to high level thinking or meaningful work.

Supporting Evidence

- In one class students were working in small heterogeneous groups comparing and defending more than one solution path for a percent problem. The problem set students were working on allowed students to consider multiple solution paths by making comparisons of multiple choice questions and asking for multi-step solutions. Students were attempting to articulate the method they used to solve a percent problem using terms including benchmarks, decimal multiplication and items from the toolbox. The teacher circulated around the room asking questions including, “Why would you use a benchmark instead of other methods?” However, in a science class a student went to the front of the room to write and present his work, yet teacher-centered explanations and questioning of the class occurred. The student was not afforded an opportunity to explain his process or have his thinking pushed.
- During an 8th grade English language arts (ELA) unit on *To Kill a Mockingbird*, students were expected to understand the literal and figurative meaning of Atticus’ language and the irony of his words in his closing speech. Although the teacher instructed students to turn and talk with their partners, many students could not discuss the difference between what was literally written in the text and the figurative meaning of the words. Additionally they could not define the meaning of irony or ascertain the difference between figurative and literal language, thus missing an opportunity to participate in a text-based discussion with a partner, small group or whole class.
- In two integrated co-teaching (ICT) classes, although students were seated in groups, teacher-directed lessons did not offer different pathways to promote student discussions. For example in an ELA class students were working on identifying elements of a narrative poem. Although students were encouraged to talk with their partners, there were groups of students, particularly the students with disabilities, struggling with the task and there were no additional strategies such as models or discussion stems, thus hindering the engagement of some students. Similarly, in a social studies class students were expected to work with a partner to research and write down information that led to the American Revolution. However the slow pacing and teacher-directed lesson provided limited opportunities for student discussions.
- Across classrooms student desks were arranged in groups to encourage peer support and participation. However, high quality extensions and supports such as visuals, manipulative materials and native language resources were not widely available to further engage English language learners and students with disabilities in the lessons.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The principal and school staff effectively communicates high expectations for teaching and learning throughout the school community, including sharing with students and families the expectations for college and career readiness.

Impact

Staff and students are well supported towards progress in meeting expectations and parents understand the school's expectations for their children.

Supporting Evidence

- The school communicates high expectations through the manual which outlines policies, procedures and tools for all stakeholders to engage in school activities that support high expectations. The school's handbook explains specific policies, procedures and supports in order for explicit messaging for teachers, students and families. There is a Parent Compact Policy in the Agenda and the Leader in Me packet provides information to all stakeholders about the school's clear expectations and resources for success.
- The parent coordinator strengthens home-school connections. There are monthly parent meetings that focus on Common Core Learning Standards, grading policies, reading comprehension/math, writing strategies, articulation to high school and the high school application process. Consequently parents are better able to support their child's learning and advocate for their academic and social emotional needs. Improvement in communication with parents has resulted in a 97% satisfaction rate regarding the school keeping them informed about their child's academic and behavioral progress.
- Flexible scheduling and targeted guidance provides the opportunity for all self-contained students to move into least restrictive environments. This has resulted in several students moving to less restrictive environments, additionally, this resulted in the movement for more ICT students into mainstream classes. 100% of parents surveyed on the NYC survey are satisfied with the educational planning and IEP development process at the school.
- There are incentives for students exhibiting successful academic and social behaviors specifically in the areas of attendance, classwork and behavior. Students receive tickets to attend dances and other extra-curricular activities which has led to increased participation in school activities. Furthermore, student attendance has improved from 94% last year to 94.7% this year.

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school ensures curriculum is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards while emphasizing higher order skills across grades and subjects.

Impact

The school's curriculum consistently promotes rigorous habits as well as college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers work to adapt pre-existing Common Core aligned curricula to the learning needs of students. Sources which serve as starting points for the work include Expeditionary Learning, Connected Mathematics Project 3(CMP3), and EngageNY modules. Instructional staff members identify standards and integrate lessons from the Common Core aligned resources during weekly planning sessions. Teachers meet monthly for 80 minute planning sessions to review/refine curriculum maps and lessons, plan inter-visitations, analyze student data via Advance, and track departmental WIGS (goals). Common Core aligned curriculum maps, accessible through Rubicon Atlas and Goggledocs include rigorous activities that are reflective of Webb's DOK, Leader in Me, and the Common Core. All lessons are a direct out-growth of scope and sequences, Engage NY, curriculum maps and infuse instructional shifts. Lessons are scaffolded in a format that sequences the flow of the lesson in a coherent manner. In addition, all teachers use the Instructional Expectation guide to ensure coherent instruction across the school.
- The Curriculum Mapping Team lead monitors and supports revision of curriculum maps for the 2014-2015 school year. Lead teacher teams create and revise curriculum maps showing units of study, tasks aligned to the Common Core and instructional shifts with a focus on academic vocabulary. Teachers identify gaps in curriculum resources and utilize supplemental materials to close the gaps. Planning is aligned to the school's instructional focus with a lens on improving questioning and discussion techniques.
- Across grades and content areas, unit plans and lesson plans show challenging tasks that include scaffolds to solve math equations and word problems as well as emphasis on the instructional shifts, with students being asked to interpret or make inferences from text as well as develop questions and hypotheses.
- The curricula documents contain tasks aligned to the Common Core and include modifications including the use of technology to provide multimedia experiences for all learners and visual displays that model reading strategies. Furthermore, teachers use technology to support differentiation of lessons using MyOn, TTM, and other software designed to support reading standards and math skills. Specifically the self-contained classes and English language learners use the iLit program on iPads for 360 minutes each week during ELA instruction. Many students also use the i-Ready system for 45 minutes a week in class as well as independently at home throughout the week. This program provides rigorous, on-grade level instruction and practice with additional downloadable lessons to meet individual student or small group needs.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The school is beginning to use common assessments to track student progress towards goals and inform curricula and instructional adjustment. However, teachers' ability to use "in the moment" formative assessments to gauge student understanding was inconsistent across classrooms.

Impact

Although the school has implemented structures to measure learning progress through data analysis and during instruction, these practices do not consistently inform adjustments that meet students' academic needs, hindering students' mastery of learning objectives.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses a range of common assessments that include state tests, measures of student learning selections, pre, mid and post unit tests, performance tasks, writing samples and exit slips. The school has also gathered targeted information from these assessments to track student progress towards goals in all content areas. However these practices have not yet impacted progress for student achievement.
- Across classrooms teachers' checks for understanding and assessments varied. For example, in some classes teachers used an exit slip to assess student mastery of the learning objective. In remaining classes observed, teachers conducted whole class or on the spot checks without follow up questions to check for understanding or adjustments to meet the needs of all learners.
- In an ELA class students were studying literal and figurative language. Though many students were struggling with the concept of literal and figurative language, the teacher checked for understanding by asking, "You got that, right?" and proceeded with the lesson, leaving many students confused with the vocabulary and meanings of new terms.
- While teachers gather data that includes formative assessments, rubrics, information from baseline Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) and student work to ascertain levels of student learning, the use of data to inform and adjust instruction in all content areas is not consistent across classrooms. For example, during some classroom visits, even when teachers identified students who were struggling they did not make immediate adjustments to the lesson to provide students with additional opportunities to work out solutions and explanations.