



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Public School 141

Elementary-Middle-High School K141

**655 Parkside Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11226**

Principal: Michele Thornton-Mannix

**Date of review: January 29, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Kathleen LeFevre**

The School Context

Public School 141 is an elementary-middle-high school with 397 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The school population comprises 51% Black, 29% Hispanic, 15% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 67% of the students enrolled and girls account for 33%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 87.5%.

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	Celebration	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	Additional Findings	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	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	Focus	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	Additional Findings	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curriculum and performance tasks are refined using student data to ensure that all students have access to the curriculum.

Impact

The school's curricular decisions build coherence across grades and populations and promote students' academic achievement and communication skills for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers made purposeful curricular decisions based on analysis of a wide range of assessment data, including performance on SANDI (Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory). To further inform the curricular decisions, in Spring 2014 school leaders had teachers complete reflection sheets about the effectiveness of the curriculum and had a team of staff review the Attainment core curriculum for students in alternate assessment prior to its implementation during this school year.
- School curriculum maps and tasks use a blend of resources, including Ready Gen, Attainment, Unique Learning Systems, and AbleNet. These resources include essential questions, standards based aligned learning goals, and targeted vocabulary. The school's scripted lesson plans support curricular coherence by including aligned SANDI skills, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies, and instructional resources, to make learning tasks accessible for all learners.
- A review of unit and lesson plans shows that instructional shifts are integrated across subject areas. For example, in English language arts (ELA), science, and social studies, teachers plan opportunities for students to read informational text, refer back to the text for evidence, and use specific vocabulary related to the lesson. In math, teachers plan activities that provide opportunities for real world application of math concepts, including comparison of quantities, and formation of sets.
- To ensure that all students have access to the curriculum, teachers have adapted the material to increase literacy and print exposure and shift expectations to the assumption that all students will be readers. Teachers use suggestions from Building with Stories and Pathways to adapt books that may include highlighted target words, repeated story lines, embedded objects to support story, and built-in literal and inferential questions.
- The school website provides a means for teachers to share revisions made to the curriculum and instructional resources that are used in modifying, adjusting and adapting curricular materials to meet the needs of all learners. This structure has built curricular coherence and consistency across the classes in all sites.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff and provide professional development opportunities relevant to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Leadership and staff communicate high expectations connected to college and career readiness to families to support student progress.

Impact

The communication of high expectations is accompanied by a system of accountability linked to supporting student achievement. Staff provide ongoing feedback to families; however, some families do not have a well-defined understanding of expectations related to instructional goals, resulting in missed opportunities for effective partnerships that support their children's progress.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate high expectations for staff related to the Danielson Framework for teaching, with focus on components of questioning and engagement of students in learning. Professional learning opportunities for staff aligned to the components include Monday professional development, Chancellor's Day, monthly, Saturday sessions, new teacher orientation, and informal and formal observations. A review of feedback to teachers shows clear, actionable next steps to improve practice, along with instructional resources that support lesson planning and questioning skills, resulting in an increase in effective and highly effective ratings for most teachers.
- School staff use a weekly parent communication log to inform parents about what their children worked on in academics and next steps for their children in academics and behavior. However, review of the logs showed inconsistency in the specificity of the feedback to families, resulting in missed opportunities for some parents to support their children in the learning process. Parents stated that there was ample communication about their children's progress; however, some parents were aware to a greater extent of behavioral progress than academic progress.
- In the parent meeting, parents stated that the school holds high expectations for the development of the whole child and presents multiple opportunities for them to learn strategies that foster the academic, communication, and social skills of their children. Individualized parent training supports parents in learning how to use communication devices and routines that provide their children with options to make preferred choices.
- School leaders provide staff extensive opportunities to participate in inter-visitations using a highly structured protocol that has teachers establish a focus connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, state what they saw and heard in the class being visited, what strategy they would like to try, and the impact of that strategy on their own practice.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classes, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula, reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula for all students.

Impact

Across all classrooms, grades and subject areas, students are actively engaged in appropriately challenging work aligned to the curricula and informed by the Danielson Framework for teaching.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices reflect and support the school wide belief that students learn best through the workshop model of teaching that includes explicit instruction, teacher modeling, use of visual supports, questioning, and student grouping, and opportunities for students to share their work. Across classrooms, grouping of students was flexible and reflected the different components of the workshop model.
- Teachers use instructional strategies, such as adapted or leveled texts, technology, graphic organizers, vocabulary prompts, word banks, real life objects and picture symbols, to consistently provide multiple entry points for learners to complete tasks and demonstrate their thinking. For example, in one class focused on word study, the teacher, related service providers, and paraprofessional, worked with different groups using strategies appropriate to the needs of the individual learners. Strategies included, braille, communication boards using targeted vocabulary from a shared reading, adapted books using picture symbols and real life objects, and a SMART board activity requiring students to complete a cloze statement using the appropriate word.
- All classrooms demonstrated evidence of strategic questioning to support students in understanding the content. Teachers plan in advance the questions that they ask during the lesson, make them relevant for different groups of students, and record student responses and the level of prompting for each of the students. The school wide expectation of engaging students in questioning sequences by increasing wait time and ensuring that students use their communication devices was evident during lessons observed.
- Teachers provide differentiated checklists to students to outline expectations and support student learning and ownership of their learning. For example, in library, one checklist outlined 12 steps for students to use Google for accessing adapted books about Maya Angelou in order to answer questions about her life. Another checklist presented pictures of three different steps to access and read an adapted book about treasures. In the student interviews, several students referred to the use of checklists across subject areas and one student specifically stated that the use of a checklist "helped him so, so much to make and complete a Venn diagram about *Make Way for Ducklings*."

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Common assessments and ongoing data collection are used to track students' progress and to make curricular and instructional adjustments at the team and classroom level.

Impact

As a result of teachers using data from common assessments, teachers are able to make curricular and instructional adjustments that meet the learning needs of all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Across all observed classrooms, all stakeholders are involved in collecting multiple sources of data. These include student responses to each of the questions asked during a lesson or morning meeting, the amount of time students are engaged in a specific learning activity, the number of trials and prompts required for students to demonstrate mastery of an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) skill, or the SANDI skills demonstrated by students as they participate in a shared reading. Teachers use the data to inform lesson plan adjustments, to track student mastery of IEP goals, and to form instructional groupings,
- School leaders and staff developed and implemented "performance observation logs" in the classrooms so that all stakeholders can record low inference data of student accomplishments that may not be directly related to the instructional focus of a lesson, such as a spontaneous request or participation in a new learning activity. Review of the performance observation logs has shown that educational assistants have relied less on physical support as the first strategy to providing students access to learning activities. For example there are positive trends showing an increase in wait time with a decrease in hand-over-hand physical prompting as a response to the need for support.
- Comments and feedback on student work include the level of student independence and student accuracy. Across classrooms, comments related to the level of student independence are consistent and aligned to a five-point rubric, that includes no response, need for specific visual, verbal, or physical prompting, need for general prompting or independent functioning. When presenting their work, students were able to share whether they did it by themselves or if they had some assistance. However, at times some feedback was vague and did not provide students with a clear picture of what they did well and what they needed to work on. Some students were not able to explain why they did well on a piece of student work and stated that the teacher would tell them what to do next, thereby missing opportunities for all students to assume ownership of their learning.
- Common assessments are used from instructional materials and SANDI in the core content areas. These assessments are aligned to standards-based curriculum and assess student mastery of skills and understanding of concepts. Teachers and teacher teams effectively analyze ongoing collection of data aligned to SANDI for information about student's progress and learning needs relative to their individual goals.

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

Teacher teams analyze classroom data and student work and share best practices with a commitment to improving instructional practices. Embedded leadership structures provide teachers with a voice in key decisions related to curriculum and school wide routines that promote independence and improved achievement for all learners.

Impact

The work of teacher teams and teacher leaders has strengthened instructional practices, resulting in instructional coherence and improved student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams analyze assessment data, lesson plans, individual student data, and share instructional practices, that improve mastery of goals for all learners. For example, during an observed teacher team meeting, individual student progress was shared on mastering the Dolch sight words and looked for patterns in words that were challenging to the students. Teachers shared strategies to support students who were struggling, such as using flashcards, tapping out words, identifying the words in a text, using iPads or re-teaching some words. Their inquiry work included planning for a list of new words to be introduced to students. The impact of their work has been that the students have increased their fluency in reading and have been more independent in reading unfamiliar texts. A first year teacher stated that the being a member of the team has provided her with "lots of support" in helping the students move up reading levels.
- The vast majority of teacher are engaged in inquiry based structured teams that serve to strengthen teacher instructional capacity and promoted the integration of instructional shifts in the lessons. Teachers participate in common planning time four times a week to collaboratively review data and use the data in adapting and scaffolding lessons to promote higher order thinking skills. Team work includes all constituents of the school community, teachers, related service providers, and teaching assistants, in reviewing data and planning the next steps, resulting in high levels of instructional coherence across student groups in the individual classrooms, as well as increased student time-on-task and student achievement. Across classrooms, it was evident that all stakeholders in the class were familiar with the UDL strategies and modifications to the lesson and the needs of the students in their groups.
- In teacher meetings, teachers stated that they are able to have input to curricular decisions and instructional practices. For example, based on their inquiry work, teachers of students in 12:1:4 settings developed a draft plan to restructure their day to support more learning and time on task in their classrooms; subsequently school leaders implemented the restructured the schedule, resulting in increased student achievement.