Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Dumont School

P.S./M.S. K174

574 Dumont Avenue
Brooklyn
NY, 11207

Principal: Ingrid Mason

Date of review: January 29, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Heidi Pierovich

The School Context

The Dumont School is an elementary and middle school with 132 students from grades four, five and eight. The school population comprises 60% Black, 38% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% American Indian, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 91%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
To what extent does the school…	**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	Developing
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		
To what extent does the school…	**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	Proficient
Systems for Improvement		
To what extent does the school…	**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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient

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 consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness and offer ongoing feedback.

Impact
School leaders provide training and have a system of accountability for those expectations. Staff and school leaders communicate consistently to help families understand student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Parents reported that the school communicates consistently about student progress through access to an electronic grade and behavior reporting system, called Engrade, emails, backpacked letters, and phone calls. One parent was pleased, stating that teachers call even when her child is behaving well. Parents agreed that this communication, through backpacked letters about current units and Engrade, is a way for them to support their children at home. Further, the parents stated that the school has an open door policy so that parents can visit the school, meet with administration or teachers, and visit classes. Parents also spoke about the school communicating paths to college and career readiness, through career day and College Now classes, where students learn what it is like to attend college.

- The guidance counselor provides students with ongoing support and feedback regarding preparation for their next level by articulating with the eighth graders regarding high schools as well as with the fifth graders for the sixth grade. Since the school is phasing out, the administration and guidance counselor have collaborated with neighboring elementary and middle schools, especially those in the shared space.

- Administration communicates high expectations to staff through emails, bulletins, the staff handbook, and professional development. To improve communication, administration determined that staff preferred individualized feedback and information via email and this method has supported a consistent message of high expectations.

- The staff collaborates with administration to determine the professional development calendar, which includes weekly collaborative team meetings, intervisitations, lunch-and-learn sessions, outside workshops and network-sponsored sessions, and weekly professional learning community sessions. Grade leaders turnkey their learnings sharing and developing content knowledge and leadership. As a measure of accountability, the administration reviews agendas and notes from teacher team meetings and then use those as areas to look for in the classroom observations. Teachers receive feedback on the classroom implementation of the collaborations and development sessions. Additionally, staff participates in walkthroughs of each other's rooms using a particular protocol, called the ghost protocol. This helps staff determine a coherency around high expectations for all.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing

Findings
Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best, and beginning to provide multiple entry points for diverse students into the curricula.
Impact
Inconsistent teaching practices lead to uneven engagement in challenging tasks and uneven demonstration of higher-order thinking skills in student work products, including the work of English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.
Supporting Evidence

- Staff and administration believe that students learn best through discussions to make sense of their learning and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills. However, this practice is inconsistent across grades and subjects. For example, in an eighth grade social studies class students engaged in a debate about whether Albert Parsons was a dangerous man, using a fishbowl method where students in the center debated issues and members outside circle tapped in replacing another member so they could make their arguments with text-based evidence. Students moved in and out of the circles fluidly as they knew both the material and the protocol. Conversely in a fourth grade 12:1:1 special education class, in groups students closely read leveled texts and were to conduct a discussion as they answered questions. However, about half were able to discuss with text-based evidence, while others struggled or disengaged without extensions.

- In a fourth grade English language arts lesson, students in groups answered questions with text-based evidence, presented their results, and self-assessed using a discussion rubric. The teacher guided final scores of criteria completed. Student presenters and their respective groups were engaged. However, not all students in the audience were engaged, as they were to observe the presentation with pencils down, and afterward rate their peers, requiring several reminders by the teacher for audience members to focus on the presentations. In an eighth grade science class a group presented a genetic disease research project while the audience rated them using an oral presentation rubric. After, the audience asked clarifying questions and shared their ratings. Conversely a fifth grade integrated co-teaching (ICT) social studies class was to discern how Christopher Columbus' discoveries have affected the world. Directions to students regarding the learning objective and task were unclear. As a result, several students were disengaged until a teacher moved to a table to stop a quarrel and bring clarity to the group. Other tables of students waited disengaged, until it was their turn for clarification.

- In an eighth grade mathematics class, after students completed a gallery walk in homogeneous groups discussing the similarities and differences of figures. Students, engaged in tiered tasks and used mathematical language to discuss why figures were similar or not. After, students were able to explain how the learning outcome relates to the standard. However, in a fourth grade math class, students were tasked at explaining patterns in the number of zeroes of the product when multiplying a number by powers of ten. One student went to the chart to explain leaving many disengaged, without manipulatives. The teacher posed questions but no discussion ensued.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing

Findings
School leaders and faculty are in the process of aligning curricula to Common Core Learning Standards and content standards and integrating the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills inconsistently.

Impact
Curricula and academic tasks are inconsistently engaging, rigorous, and coherent across subjects across grades, and/or for English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricula are becoming coherent as evidenced by the summer revisions moving to a two-day pacing to allow for scaffolding and multiple-entry points for all learners. For example, fourth grade English language arts syllabi in general education and an ICT lesson use similar texts and questions.

- A review of curricula shows unit plans have similar format that includes a time frame, essential questions, enduring understandings, standards, vocabulary, assessments and performance tasks. Of the unit plans reviewed, the fourth grade lists strategies for ELLs and students with disabilities as well as providing multiple entry points and the eighth grade unit plans provides tiered activities and reading strategies. However, the fifth grade unit plans do not list instructional strategies. Fourth grade unit plans list all the instructional shifts disconnected from tasks, fifth grade unit plans do not list the instructional shifts. However, the eighth grade unit plan not only applied the targeted instructional shifts to certain plans, it also listed Depth of Knowledge (DOK) leveled activities.

- Lessons plans include learning outcomes and I Can-standards statements for students to understand the goal of the lesson. Another outgrowth of the summer planning is the syllabus, a unit overview that communicates unit description, objectives, grading, timeline, vocabulary, and required materials. The syllabus is for students to own their learning and for parents to support their child's learning.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing

Findings
The school is developing in their use of common assessments to measure student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas. Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.
Impact
Teachers inconsistently used results to adjust curricula and instruction or make effective adjustments to meet students' learning needs.
Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricular maps, syllabi, and lessons demonstrate some revisions based on student work and data from common formative and summative assessments. Yet, some post-reteaching results are unanalyzed or re-teaching is unplanned, missing opportunities for targeted support to increase student achievement. In fourth grade, teachers determined that students were unsuccessful in multiplying two digit numbers. The team adjusted the key activities to include scaffolds, students created visuals or area models. Although teachers reported that students were more successful in multiplying two by two digits, data was unavailable. A fifth grade team reviewed an interdependence unit noting implications for further instruction including student need for small group activity centers to address deficient needs without noting specificity of number of students by level, curricula or pedagogy.

- During classroom visits, teachers inconsistently checked for understanding and tracked student responses. For example, in four of seven classes visited teachers noted student responses. Although students did self-assess on their group work using a rubric in one class, there was little to no evidence observed in other classes of making real-time adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

- There are mid-chapter/unit action plans used to identify students who are scoring at specific intervals below 65%, 66-75%, and 76-100%, and to list target skills, conceptual gaps, differentiated homework, and next steps for the student groups. Of the action plans reviewed, one pre/post chapter test showed some improvement and some students slid backwards. The first version had differentiated homework items as 'assignments from mathematics steps and workbook given for review and remediation' for the 89% of the class who scored 65% and below. The post-chapter showed improvement with a decrease to 86% of students scoring 65% and below and differentiated homework for lower achievers.

- Using the skills and concepts mastery check form, staff analyzes the number of students demonstrating understanding of expectations, mastery of expectations, or mastery beyond expectations of a unit. After listing observations and comments per standards, staff lists implications for further instruction. Of the unit reflections reviewed, there was an inconsistency in analysis and next steps in instruction. For example, three fourth-grade team analyses determined students who demonstrated levels of understanding and determined implications for further instruction. Yet, two fourth-grade and one fifth-grade unit analysis inconsistently completed the analysis. Although the fourth-grade unit analysis did determine the numbers at each level of mastery, it did not determine the implications for further instruction. Conversely the fifth-grade analysis did not determine the number at each mastery level, leaving incomplete implications.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher Teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations. Distributed leadership structures are in place.
Impact
As a result, these collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of Common Core, including the instructional shifts, strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers. Further, teachers have built leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions positively impacting student learning across the school.
Supporting Evidence

- Administration structured the master schedule such that teacher teams meet weekly in teams for professional collaborations on curricula, inquiry, looking at student work using the Atlas protocol, data analysis, and sharing best practices. Teachers, including those new to the profession, work in collaborative and professional teams weekly, resulting in improved professional capacity. This is evidenced by teacher comments as well as in their observations by administration. One new teacher stated that the team meetings have been the best professional development she has had.

- Since the school has been shrinking, the distributed leadership model has spread so that everyone is involved in key decisions about curricula and instruction. Teachers share facilitation of team meetings and everyone works collaboratively to make decisions, for example about syllabus creation and curriculum revisions. Since there are no more coaches, staff support each other as they share best practices and conduct lunch and learn and other professional development sessions. For example, as teachers have moved from one grade level to another, colleagues share best practices to support teaching at new grades. This work has created a collaborative and supportive collegiality.

- Teacher leaders met over the summer to revise and refine the curricula based on summer training. Teachers revised the pacing from one to two days lesson pacing. This work then continues to be revised in teams as it is implemented.