



Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Saint Clair McKelway

Elementary-Middle School K178

**2163 Dean Street
Brooklyn
New York 11233**

Principal: Joseph Henry

**Date of review: May 5, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Hadiya J. Daniel-Wilkins**

The School Context

Saint Clair McKelway Public School 178 is an elementary and middle school with 400 students from grades pre-kindergarten through grade eight. The school population comprises 79% Black, 17% Hispanic, 2% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 88.0%.

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	Celebration	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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff and provide training and accountability systems. Staff routinely communicates expectations connected to college and career readiness to student and families.

Impact

Teachers are held responsible for buddy coaching of content learned in professional trainings; and students and families can articulate the support staff provides to achieve college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Staff members routinely work in book study, vertical teams and scheduled planning sessions, to coach colleagues on identified professional development, in order to build instructional capacity. For example, teachers explained how each selected lead teacher is responsible for working with a group of colleagues, to serve as a peer-coach on the topics of, “Questioning and Discussion techniques, Looking at Student Work, Using the Workshop Model, Applying Depth of Knowledge and Conferencing and Grouping.” Teachers further explained that this system of accountability for building instructional capacity provide them with moments to practice their craft.
- School leaders and teachers implement effective strategies for communicating high expectations that clearly connect to college and career readiness to afford students occasions to experience college and career readiness behaviors. For example, kindergartners are expected to articulate how books are held to demonstrate that they are ready for college. Students, across grades, shared that the college and career skills they are developing in classrooms are those of, “articulating an opinion, persuading your point, note-taking, accountable talk, and working independently.” Students also added that occasions provided to attend college trips, helped them think about what learning’s were necessary to achieve in order to become a college student.
- The school orchestrates ongoing events and creates multiple opportunities to partner with alumni to foster a culture of high expectations for college and careers for families and students. One of the college and career readiness assemblies, conducted for families and students, highlighted former P.S./I.S. 178 alumnus, Dr. Norman Knight. His focus was on speaking to attendees about the path to college and careers.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms teaching practices are beginning to reveal alignment to curricula and showed an emerging set of beliefs about how students learn best. Students' work products and discussions reflected inconsistent levels of thinking and participation.

Impact

Across classrooms, limited student-centered questions and discussions hindered opportunities for high levels of thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Throughout classrooms observed, teachers' directed the instruction, generated primarily recall questions, and validated individual student responses. For instance, one teacher posed, "What kind of angle is this? Can you see another angle? Can you find the missing measurement of the angle?" This teacher repeatedly cautioned students to raise their hands before sharing their one word responses. Opportunities for teachers to demonstrate the belief that students learn best when they are provided with moments to take ownership of questions and answers in order to support their learning, mentioned in Danielson's Framework 3b, were missed.
- While lesson plans had sections for "Group Activity," in most classrooms, students were seen independently reading teacher-selected classroom novels, and photo-copied worksheets. They were often required to answer specific questions at the end of reading assigned paragraphs. In one classroom, attendees observed reading paragraphs in the "Codex-Common Core" book were asked to share the purpose for the reading task. Their responses ranged from, "Miss we are answering questions 7 and 8, because the teacher told us to; We have to do questions 4 and 5; She never said why we had to do questions 14 and 15." The lesson's objective was, "Students will learn how life was for...." The ambiguous objective of "learning about how life was..." prevented students from engaging in a task designed to challenge thinking and foster meaningful discourse.
- Across classrooms, students were witnessed reading books and worksheets. In some instances, students were heard citing pages. Strategies for having students meaningfully interact with the text, to support comprehension, were not evident. The use of post-its, comprehension constructors guides such as, "Questioning the author, noting a wondering, citing confusion, making text-to-text connections," were unavailable. As a result, the few student-to-student exchanges heard were relegated to, "I agree and I disagree." Student opportunities to demonstrate high levels of thinking and authentic content discussions are evolving.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to CCLS and or content standards with instructional shifts to encourage college and career readiness. Curricula and academic tasks consistently highlight demanding habits and challenging skills.

Impact

Teachers are utilizing units and lesson plans to provide a variety of learners' access to Common Core and content aligned standards.

Supporting Evidence

- Across content areas, unit plans are designed to include the following; Essential Questions, Big Ides, Enduring Understandings, Goals, Common Core Learning Standards, Vocabulary, Content & Skills, Selected Books, Reading Focus, Writing Focus, Questions (Accountable Independent Reading), Close Reading Words, Formative Assessments, Performance Task, Writing Wrap Ups, Homework Assignments. School leaders purposefully use CCLS to ensure curricula alignment and integration of instructional shifts.
- Lesson plans included the following: Reflection, Common Core Learning Standards, Aim, Learning Target, Objective Materials, Motivation, Problem of the Day, Academic and Content Vocabulary, Mini-Lesson, Model Skill Guided Practice, Assessment, Independent Practice, Conferencing, Final summary, Extension Homework. Accommodations for students in the target populations of "ELLs, IEPs and Struggling" were also included in lesson plans. For instance, review of the lesson plan of a fourth grade teacher uncovered that she had planned the "Independent Practice" of her lesson to have students engaged in the following: "Students at and above level two and three will work independently with the problems work sheet and computer. Students below grade level, including IEP, ELLs and struggling, will complete task sheet and teacher conferencing."
- Teachers' lesson plans included accommodations for providing various students access to academic tasks in purposefully designed collaborative groups. One science teacher's lesson plan included the following accommodations for learners: "Level 1 group: Explanatory- Students work independently on the computer to write a brief informative paragraph explaining how scientists use scientific method to gain knowledge; Level 2 group: Summarize-Students will use graphic organizer to write a summary of the lesson, beginning with this sentence, 'The scientific method help us gain new knowledge; Level 3 group: Draw Conclusions-Students will apply what they learn to use evidence from the text to support their answer, 'Will the scientific method be different 100 years from now/' why? Or why not?" All students were provided with an opportunity to access the content with a specific leveled academic task.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The school is developing the use of assessment rubric analysis to inform instruction; Interim evaluations, school-wide, inconsistently reflect effective instructional adjustments.

Impact

The inconsistent feedback to students regarding performance, and the uneven analysis of quantitative performance data results in limited adjustments to meeting the learning needs of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers used a zero to four point writing rubric, with categories of, “Structure, Content, Language and Mechanics, for writing assignments. Students’ work products displayed, had the rubric attached. Feedback to students however, ranged from a post-it note of, “Great Job,” to a highlighting of columns, to highlighting and additional rubric language notes. For example, a student assignment posted on one bulletin board had the blank rubric attached with the following feedback affixed to the student’s writing piece: “4 Debbie, I can see that you really researched this topic well. Very informative and good use of details! Great job!” Yet another teacher noted, “ 3, Your story is clearly written. It makes sense from start to finish.” Teachers’ missed opportunities to provide students with specifics on how to continue improving to the next academic level.
- Teachers use a, “Formative Assessment Tool” to conduct an analysis of student work. The school’s tool has the following categories: “Description of Student Performance, Learning Needs, Differentiated Strategies/Next Steps.” Review of the school’s analysis tool uncovered that students were placed into the categories of, “Far below standard, Approaching Standard, Meeting Standard and Exceeding Standard.” All students identified as, “Meeting Standards expected next steps were to, “Continue to work on speed and accuracy in afterschool.” Students highlighted as, “Exceeding Standards,” were expected to, “Continue to work on high level of accuracy in afterschool and Saturday academy.” Instructional challenges to stretch students to the next learning steps are not mentioned. Moments to make effective teaching adjustments, for students who have mastered skills and content, were not seen.
- In discussion with students, they reported that they were paired with peers because their teachers thought they “knew the work.” Students however, were unable to articulate strengths and challenges with classroom content. While teachers had a, “Conference Sheet” for students in folders, evidence of conferencing was limited to October, and November. A system for communicating next learning steps to students, based on assessment outcomes, is a work-in-progress.

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured collaborative professional teams, and distributive leadership structures are in place to honor teacher voice.

Impact

Teacher teams meet regularly to assess students work products and make instructional decisions to meet school’s goals and share best practices.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers reviewed samples of students’ work products using the facilitated process of a modified tuning protocol for the inquiry process. Teachers were observed working in pairs for the purpose of assessing the “Writing Mechanics” of identified second grade students. This team focused on, “Sentence Structure, Paragraphs, and Punctuation.” Teachers explained that the findings, from the review on the students’ writing task, will provide them information for making learning accommodations for the identified group.
- The school has professional structures in place for teachers to make instructional recommendations to colleagues focused on improving student learning across the school. Teachers routinely conduct scheduled inter-visitation observations of each class using an observation protocol. Observers are expected to use a form to make low-inference notes on what is seen and heard in colleagues’ classroom visits. Observers are then required to provide their colleague, “Warm and cool” feedback. On one teacher’s observation notes, she penned the following to her colleague: “Warm Feedback: A lot of conferring, group work, everyone on task, ELL group had non-ELL leader; Cool Feedback: All students, including ELLs were reading the same book, How were groups formed? Limited questions and discussion.”
- School leaders purposefully designed three grade level teacher teams to empower them to make key instructional decisions, appropriate for the learning needs of the students they serve. Teacher on teams Pre-kindergarten through second grade, third through fifth and sixth through eighth grade meet weekly to discuss curriculum matters, student work, instructional strategies, and resources critical to students’ learning needs. Teachers of students in early grades were heard discussing how they made the decision to alter a “ReadyGen” chapter to support students’ understanding of characters in a story. They explained that they provided the students with an opportunity to determine a creative end to one character in the selected story. This decision, they chimed, helped increased students’ understanding of the concepts in the story.