



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The SEEALL Academy

Elementary-Middle School K180

**5601 16th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11204**

Principal: Gary M. Williams

**Date of review: May 4, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Roxan Marks**

The School Context

The SEEALL Academy is an elementary and middle school with 1,140 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 1% Black, 26% Hispanic, 27% White, and 48% Asian students. The student body includes 24% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 96.0%.

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	Proficient
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

School leaders communicate high expectations for teaching and learning to staff and align professional development plans to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Partnering with families enables school to communicate high expectations for students related to progress towards goals and college readiness.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability for high expectations is shared by all staff that ensures families understand student progress towards expectations for college and careers.

Supporting Evidence

- Clear and high expectations are communicated to all staff members through the staff handbook, daily memos, grade meetings, website, emails and in SEEALL magazine. Teachers completed a needs assessment and coupled with input from observations and the professional development committee created a plan. The professional learning plan is yearlong and needs are clearly identified based on data and timelines listed for all activities. Areas of focus include creating interdisciplinary curriculum, lesson planning, data driven instruction, using assessment in learning and study of vocabulary. The parent handbook communicates expectations to parents and the Title I Parent Engagement Center enables parents to volunteer and provides information for parents on a daily basis.
- In order to build teacher capacity to promote rigorous high-level discussions and tasks across classrooms, focus is to provide professional development for teachers, coaching, targeted feedback during post-observation conferences and sharing of best practices and highly effective strategies. Teachers engage in professional development to create multiple entry points to lessons, by developing questioning techniques, best practices, and scaffolds to address the needs of all learners in the classroom, including students with disabilities (SWDs) and English language learners (ELLs). Pedagogues collaborate with one another, specifically the special education department and the ESL department, to share resources and ideas that will help to engage all students in rigorous instruction and learning activities. Teacher teams share school wide during PD sessions.
- The school uses Engrade to communicate with parents about student progress on assessments and classwork. Town Hall meetings and newsletters are used to share information about school activities and highlight special events and accomplishments. Ongoing assemblies celebrate student of the month, attendance achievements and share the creative talents of students through concerts. Parent workshops, open houses, family nights and high school application process are some events conducted this year. Parents commented that more parent workshops are welcomed and they value the teamwork, cooperative environment and how much the school celebrates student success.
- Enrichment classes are offered to students including but not limited to graphic novels, chorus, Photoshop, art, community service and band. Parents are given multiple means of input, communication, and ownership/a meaningful stake in their child's education, school-wide practices will be prepared for next level of student progress.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Teaching practices are aligned to the Danielson Framework for teaching and core beliefs are reflected in classrooms. Across most classrooms questioning and scaffolds consistently offer support for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs).

Impact

Instructional practices across classrooms provide most students with opportunities to think deeply as they engage in content. However, supports and extensions for higher performing students were not observed in all classrooms, as well as high levels of student ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- Core beliefs held by the staff and grounded in the SEEALL philosophy include doing work and cultivating leaders, students engaging in service roles, building confidence and public speaking. The school leader shared that the Danielson Framework for Teaching is used as a common language to focus on academic rigor and improving curricular, pedagogical, and assessment practices. Student directed learning and demonstration of independence are areas of alignment between the school community's beliefs about how students learn best, the community's definition of rigor and the common teaching framework.
- Some key instructional strategies that are promoted across the school are questioning and sentence starters to support accountable talk in rooms. For ELLs, focus is on using sentence frames to support the development of language skills, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model and language skills objectives. All classes ensure students are citing text evidence and using chunking strategies in writing. Teachers stated that focus on vocabulary at the onset of lesson, using visuals, audio books, graphic organizers, checklists, translation software, peer support and wait time are some techniques used to scaffold instruction. Teachers of ELLs and SWDs provide support to colleagues with modifications and strategies are shared through the articulation process to next grade. During classroom observations, technology was used across classrooms, various graphic organizers, students were researching, teachers provided clear directions and visual and graphic support assisted students to make mental connections. In most classrooms, student thinking and participation were at high levels, however, students-centered learning discussions that extend thinking and students' ownership was not consistently seen in all classrooms.
- During a grade 5 math lesson on properties of quadrilaterals, students were divided into groups and one group was using Success Maker program on laptops. The teacher asked students questions about how to recognize a quadrilateral and the differences with other shapes. Students were responding to questions, making connections and challenging their thinking. This level of discourse and extension of thinking, cognitive challenge and discussion was not evident in all classrooms. In a middle school science lesson, students were designing and organizing their work using a graphic organizer tailored to the task and the task was scaffolded making it attainable to all students. In a grade 8 English language arts (ELA) lesson, students were improving their research paper by engaging in peer editing and revision strategies. The class was divided into 5 groups that would rotate among 6 stations that contained different tasks related to punctuation, organization, formatting and other areas. In the lesson plan, the teacher adjusted the level of complexity in the stations to ensure rigor in tasks for all students.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school uses Common Core aligned resources that integrates the instructional shifts and college readiness. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize higher order thinking.

Impact

The schools' curricula foster coherence by promoting cognitive challenge for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs).

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses Reading Street in the elementary grades ensuring alignment to standards and Code X drives the reading instruction in middle school. Envisions Math is used school-wide and core curriculum options are used in social studies and science. Focus this year has been on analyzing non-fiction texts, academic vocabulary, and increasing rigor in reading, writing and social studies. Teacher teams aligned social studies content and writing exposes students to argumentative writing, citing text evidence and researching. To develop academic language the school is offering grade 6 students Latin, citing the foundations of many words have Latin origins.
- The social studies and science fair requires students in the middle school to engage in research paper and projects. A comprehensive packet was distributed to students and families including requirements for the research paper, ideas for topics, sample outline to support organization, graphic organizers, project rubrics, oral and written rubric.
- One entry into ensuring that students are college and career ready is utilizing technologies, the school uses boards and students are responsible for supporting this by becoming members of the school Tech Squad. Pre-Law and Pre-Med programs began this year and courses engage students in understanding the expectations for those careers. College readiness is addressed in students through critical thinking; collaboration and making certain students develop effective oral and written communication skills. Teachers shared that they are preparing students for college by having them collaborate in groups and enabling them to make decisions while problem solving. By providing choice or options on how to present information, developing vocabulary, using technology to publish reports citing text evidence, developing thesis statement and research papers are ways to ensure students are prepared for the next levels of learning.
- The school uses DOK to ensure rigor and cognitive challenge to promote higher order thinking across grades. Students are encouraged to explain their thoughts using text based evidence and using higher order vocabulary words to justify their answers. Success Maker and Imagine Learning provide on-level instructional activities and data from these programs are also used by teachers to make modifications. Review of a grade 2 unit plan in writing shows standards for existing grade 2 and also provide the next grade expectations that teacher ensure students have the foundational skills in order to be successful at the next level. This practice was seen in other units reviewed. The unit has essential questions, texts required, skills, resources, assessments, and a section for supporting ELLs. The unit plans for ELA provide a breakdown that includes genre, skills, phonics, and grammar. Additionally, high frequency words are explicitly listed that students will learn.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and staff use and create assessments, rubrics and grading policy that are aligned to key standards. Common assessments are used to track student progress toward goals.

Impact

The schools' use of assessment results in actionable and meaningful feedback to students providing them opportunities to take ownership of their learning and aware of next steps in learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leaders and staff use data to make instructional decisions. Item analyses from the New York State assessments are analyzed and data is used to inform adjustments to units and lessons, as well as identify students who require academic intervention services. Based on assessment data it was noted that special education students were not making adequate progress and a decision was made to use the Success Maker program that provides teachers with data sheets that track progress towards IEP goals. For example, Success Maker also generates individual student reports with performance summary and percent correct in comprehension, spelling and fluency.
- Teachers create and use rubrics aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and content area studies. Review of student work during the small group meeting revealed consistent use of rubrics specific to tasks with feedback and next steps, checklists created to support students and self-assessment documents.
- Students' individual data reports are provided that is standard based and includes mastery status. Three times a year Fountas and Pinnell reading level data is collected and analysis is completed to see how many students are meeting grade benchmarks. Midterm and finals are administered in grades 2-8. Literacy and math unit assessments are collected as well as benchmark analysis. Teacher Monthly Data Reports are completed following assessments and teachers indicate strengths, challenges, priority area and next steps for individual students.
- Principal shared that teacher teams continually use data to revise units and instruction. Rubrics are created by teachers and provide next steps for students. Benchmark data and item skills analysis are used by team to make decisions about lesson and units. Conferencing with students provides data that is used to inform planning. Conference logs are maintained for students noting strengths, focus, challenges and next steps. Writing data is also collected and reviewed for progress. Engrade is used and allows students to track their own progress and parents access to see grades for their children.

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

All teachers participate in structured collaborations to build up teacher pedagogy. Distributive leadership structures provide a voice for teachers to provide input into school decisions.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has resulted in strengthening teacher pedagogy. Teacher leadership is an essential aspect of the daily work in the school and teachers have a voice in key decisions.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has created grade level and departmental teacher teams based on a combination of factors including the teachers' certifications, preference sheets, experience levels, expertise, and personalities. These teams meet regularly during Mondays after school professional development. Learning walks are done to show and share best practices. Inter-visitations are done, one teacher shared that she visited a grade 4 class to observe Envisions Math lesson using the SMARTboard. Time is also utilized on Tuesday's after-school for planning, weekly prep periods, and monthly departmental meetings with the administration. Vertical and grade level team meets to review curricula and lessons to ensure tasks provides challenge and English as a Second Language (ESL) and teachers of students with disabilities support colleagues in selecting appropriate scaffolds and entry points to provide access into the curricula.
- Teams work together to develop units and share strategies to improve instruction. Data is generated throughout the year from state tests, periodic assessments, running records, mock exams, and mid-term exams, along with summative and formative classroom assessments. This data provides a useful measure for teachers and administrators alike to use in order to inform decisions. Teachers use the data to gauge precisely what a particular student did not understand or which questions gave the class trouble as a whole and then the teacher proceeds with instructions.
- Distributive structures are in place and teachers have to voice in key decisions. The school was recipient of UFT Partnership award, which recognizes the true partnership between school leadership and teachers. All assistant principals were teachers in the school and the principal stated, "No one swims without a life preserver and that we are here to support each other". During teacher interviews it was shared that school leaders ask opinions about programs and allow for teachers to make the necessary adjustments in maps and lessons. Grade leaders are selected by the team and articulate with administration. Templates are created by teachers that are shared and used by other staff. ESL teachers meet with teams and ongoing collaboration between grades. Teacher collaboration and cross curricular sharing occurs. For example, the art teacher works with departments to infuse arts in lessons and units.