



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Raoul Wallenberg

Elementary School K194

**3117 Avenue W
Brooklyn
NY 11229**

Principal: Mary Zissler-Lynch

**Date of review: March 6, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Matthew P. Melchiorre**

The School Context

Raoul Wallenberg is an elementary school with 476 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 46% Black, 29% Hispanic, 12% White, 11% Asian students, and 2% other. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 91.0%.

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	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	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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The principal has created extensive opportunities for collaboration and professional development opportunities for staff. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students with guidance/advisement supports to ensure that and rigorous learning opportunities exist for all students.

Impact

There is a culture of mutual accountability for high expectations for all members of the school community. All stakeholders participate in this culture.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal communicates high expectations to staff through frequent and ongoing feedback to the teachers and the school community through email, official memos, and professional conversations. Teachers are given an extensive self-evaluation in which they must agree or disagree with items such as, “rigor is alive and well in your classrooms,” and “student progress is occurring in your classroom.” Teachers must then reflect and write about what they would do to increase rigor and “how they will monitor progress for all students. These self-evaluations serve as a centerpiece for professional collaborations between faculty and administration.
- The instructional team is engaged in ongoing professional development and collaborations. School leaders and teacher teams assume mutual accountability for meeting expectations. Weekly professional development opportunities include topics, such as the Danielson Framework, strategies for English language learners. This was expressed by administration and confirmed by members of teacher teams.
- All teachers develop goals and reflect on their progress throughout the year. Teachers expressed that they were thankful for this opportunity and stated that it has helped them grow professionally. As stated by administration, each person (student and educator) has a starting point which is recognized and celebrated. The expressed expectation is that continual and significant growth will occur for all members of the school community.
- Students shared that they receive support from their teachers in establishing goals and that all of their teachers create action plans in collaboration with families. Through these plans, teachers expect students to use strategies, get good grades, and go to college. Students convincingly explain that teachers are invested in their learning and hold high expectations for their progress as evidenced in their accounts about what happens in classrooms. For example, students stated that teachers want what is best for them so they receive hard work, teachers “push” them and use quotes to motivate them.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula and uneven engagement in challenging tasks.

Impact

Across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student higher order thinking and participation, including the work of English language learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, there was inconsistent implementation of effective strategies to support the diverse learners in the school. For example, although some teachers provided students with copies of prepared graphic organizers, in one class observed, the teacher asked the students to choose their own graphic organizer. When students were asked why they had chosen one, a student said, "It is better." Another student said, "It looks like fun."
- There were opportunities for peer-to-peer discussion across classrooms. However, the level of those discussions was inconsistent. For example, in a math classroom, students were working in groups; however, the groups were chosen based on whether or not they got the correct answer on a previous problem. The discussion was low level. In another classroom, students were engaged in a higher level discussion centered on stating their opinion and supporting it. In addition, in some classes, the pattern of interaction between student and teacher was call and response, with students responding in one word answers.
- In one classroom, students turned and talked to each other to compare living and non-living things; however, this level of discussion was not observed consistently across classrooms. In another classroom, students turned and talked about the steps they used to eat a cookie.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The leadership team ensures that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts, and that curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all learners.

Impact

Unit and lesson plans reflect adjustments created to build coherence for all learners that promote college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers have adapted the Ready Gen and GoMath! curricula to promote coherence across grades. For example, the school adjusted the Ready Gen curricula to increase the complexity of texts used and to incorporate close reading. For Go Math!, the school used a pre-assessment to modify instructional units.
- Teachers work collaboratively to ensure a consistent level of rigor across grades and content areas and to ensure that higher-order skills are emphasized across grades and for all learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Displayed writing samples provided actionable feedback such as, “Next time remember to cite evidence from the text”.
- A science lesson plan provided enrichment and re-teach activities for students. The lesson also included questions that required access of prior knowledge and varying Depth of Knowledge levels. For example, in answering the essential question, “How can we use the scientific process to explore the natural world?”, student activities included categorization, and self-check rubrics.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers collaboratively develop common assessments and rubrics aligned with the school's curricula and use to determine student progress toward goals.

Impact

Actionable feedback that is rubric-based is provided to students across classrooms and students use this feedback to improve their work. Teachers use assessment results to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers provide feedback to students regarding next learning steps, and in most classes, students were observed using task-specific or class work rubrics for writing. A rubric for writing opinion essays allowed teachers and students to assess work based on organizational structure, citing text-based evidence as support, and summarizing a conclusion.
- The school regularly uses Fountas and Pinnell to assess reading levels using a school designed instrument that they have used for several years. As these ongoing assessments, teachers are able to track student progress and make instructional adjustments, including student grouping, based on data.
- In mathematics, teachers administer a school-wide pre-assessment as a baseline to determine student groups and adjust those groups based on data collected throughout the year. This was stated by teacher teams and evident in the actual assessment and observed discussion.

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

The principal ensures that the majority of teachers engage in ongoing content area professional collaborations that promote the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts, and align practice to the school’s instructional goals. Additionally, distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school. Student work and teacher capacity have improved as a result of collaborative teacher team work.

Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers are engaged in ongoing professional reflection and collaborations, and use protocols for looking at student work and reflecting on teacher practice, analyze assessments, and refine practice aligned with the school’s key instructional goal of student discussions using text-based evidence. For example, the grade 4 team was observed in a shared reflection and analysis of a piece of student work in which they utilized a teacher-created protocol to share feedback to the teacher who had developed the writing task.
- Professional learning is embedded in the school culture. Teachers share responsibility for facilitation of department meetings. For example, teachers have been engaged in curricula design and revision, and have been instrumental in decisions regarding the implementation supplementary materials to support the Go Math and Ready Gen, in developing common rubrics and assessments. Teachers shared that these structured collaborations have strengthened teacher practice. For example, Advance data and observations reports provide evidence that teachers have improved their practice over time.
- Teachers stated that they have a voice in key instructional decisions and stated that their perceptions and findings are taken into consideration. As an example, teachers shared that they had redesigned the midterm exam to more accurately match the skills taught in class to ensure that the assessment results would be useful.