



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Dyker Heights

Middle School K201

**8010 12th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11228**

Principal: Robert Ciulla

**Date of review: January 7, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Karina Costantino**

The School Context

Dyker Heights is a middle school with 1,414 students from grade six through grade 8. The school population comprises .5% Black, 14% Hispanic, 40% White, and 45% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 96.6%.

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 | 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 | Additional Findings | 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:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The school has a very rigorous, engaging curriculum across content areas and plans demonstrate extensive and effective scaffolding for sub groups, including English language learners and students with disabilities.

Impact

Purposeful planning results in rigorous curricula that provides access and effective gains for students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers design units of study across content areas aligned with Common Core Learning Standards and the established curricula of Code X, as well as Go Math. Both programs possess rigorous tasks and allow for differentiation that encourages students to explore the curriculum through multiple entry points. Supplemental resources, such as Achieve 3000 and MyOn, are used to further support English language learners and students with disabilities by allowing them to explore the same content but progress at their own rate.
- Teachers in the sixth grade have implemented stations for sub-grouping allowing students to meet for small group instruction based on their need and to allow them to engage in rigorous tasks embedded in the curriculum. The stations are flexible so students are able to explore content with while English language learner teacher or a special needs teacher provides specific strategies for entry points into the same content. Additionally, MyOn, a computer program engages English language learners and students with disabilities with learning the same content in the unit plan through embedded tasks at their level of entry, allowing them to progress as they achieve mastery. Furthermore, the school celebrates a number of fairs throughout the school year, such as the Foreign Language Fair, the Career Fair, Multicultural Week, and the Shakespearian Festival. All students have the opportunity to submit projects and independent studies that push their thinking in an area of their choice.
- All teachers, including teachers of students with disabilities and English as a second language teachers, plan together to develop Units of Study. As a result the common practice of chunking text and identifying vocabulary, based on student needs identified in data results, provides access to the curricula for all students, increasing students' lexile levels.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Informed by the Danielson Framework, all teachers have common beliefs about how students learn. This provides them with a structure to develop engaging lessons and students producing meaningful work products that evidence student independence.

Impact

Although, across classrooms there is a visible coherence and alignment of teacher strategies, which consistently provide multiple entry points so that all learners are challenged, this was not seen in the vast majority of classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers approach lessons with essential questions, providing students the opportunity to give their wonderings about the topic being explored. In addition, in many classrooms visited, the teacher took on the role of facilitator allowing the students to talk to each other and then bringing them back at the end of the lesson to arrive at overall conclusions. Teachers develop lessons incorporating Shared Inquiry Discussion, student led discussion, where the teacher speaks only to facilitate and direct the conversation, and where students construct knowledge themselves. Students have the opportunity to read and annotate sources to help them research, formulate and present their findings.
- Students use Close Reading Strategies across subjects to better understand and unpack the text. Teachers design lessons for Students with Disabilities and English language learners to break down complex texts into manageable chunks, to be transparent in expectations, and provide anchors, models, and rubrics for every assessment.
- Across classrooms, students use exemplars and student rubrics providing clarity around expectations which leads to a clear understanding of what they are expected to do. In addition, students use peer assessment based on the rubrics. In the student meeting, students were able to articulate how they own their classrooms by directing their own learning and this is reflected in their discussions and student work products.

Additional Findings

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|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Quality Indicator: | 2.2 Assessment | Rating: | Well Developed |
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Findings

All assessment that is aligned to the curriculum across subjects and grades drives instruction based on student need and identifies trends throughout the school.

Impact

The school uses data to have a clear understanding of student progress toward goals and inform curriculum and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers monitor progress of students within each unit of study through frequent use of checklists, rubrics, student self assessments, peer assessment, exit slips, thumbs up/thumbs down, conferences, and in class assessments. Pre- and post- assessments, the KWL(What students know; What they want to know and What they have learned chart), short quizzes, unit tests, and on-demand writing pieces, identify strengths and areas for improvements to effectively group and differentiate for students.
- Teacher teams in their professional learning communities consistently analyze the Measures of Student Learning (MOSL), pre- and post-tests, and writing tasks, to compile an item analysis to identify deficit areas and consequently make necessary adjustments to the curriculum. In a team meeting visited where teachers were looking at student work, the teachers were looking at an English language learner who has just tested out of support and the way she responded to a writing assignment. After following a protocol for discussion, teachers discussed those areas that might present challenges for her and how they could best address them. They then developed a template to use with students across the grade with the same challenges.
- All teachers conference with students to establish learning goals and plans for improvement. The final goal is for students to be empowered to always reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement through an understanding of the steps they need to take to accomplish their goals.

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| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Well Developed |
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Findings

Dyker Heights sets high expectations for teachers, students, and parents, providing the necessary supports to establish clarity around student goals.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability through communication and clear expectations enables students to achieve their goals.

Supporting Evidence

- The teachers provide progress reports on assessments, conference with students on writing pieces and in class assessments, discuss Achieve 3000 results by identifying their lexile levels, and share an understanding of next steps to improve performance. In addition, they participate in grade assemblies with the assistant principals and guidance counselors to ensure that students understand their learning goals and next steps to be college and career ready.
- The parent coordinator with content teachers holds workshops to assist parents in supporting their children’s education at home. These include Social Studies and Science Fair projects, Preparing for the English Language Arts and Math State exams, and helping parents of the English language learner understand the New York State English as a Second Language Assessment Test (NYSESLAT) exam. Additionally, the parent coordinator collaborates with the principal and guidance counselors to provide workshops to parents throughout the year in how to become actively involved in the decisions of their children’s education. During the parent meeting, the parents indicated that the principal had an open door policy and provided them with many opportunities to be partners with the school.
- Through the use of rubrics and teacher and peer feedback, students are able to articulate the standards they are learning, why they are learning it and next steps to improve upon their performance. The students are very well aware of what they need to be admitted to the high school of their choice, which they indicated during the student meeting. They feel the school empowers them to create their own destiny, providing them with a great deal of support along the way. In addition, the school has an afterschool Book Club, Photography Club, Junior Fellows and Arista to celebrate service and achievement.
- High expectations are communicated through school wide e-mails, postings/charts, school website, faculty/departmental conferences, teacher team inquiry meetings, professional learning communities, pre- and post-formal and informal observations, facilitator meetings, common planning periods, and progress reports sent home to families.

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

All teachers participate in structured professional collaborations which use an inquiry approach and lead to developing distributive leadership among staff.

Impact

As a result of professional learning communities and inquiry work, the teachers have improved student outcomes through their improved practice.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher Inquiry Teams and Professional Learning Communities meet to look at student work and develop lessons aligned to the Common Core State Standards for each unit of study relative to Scholastic Code X and Go Math. Teacher teams develop interpretive questions for each unit of study that encourage student-led discussion and inquiry, share effective, rigorous instructional practices that address the standards, and design an end-of-unit writing performance task with attached exemplars, peer and self-evaluation checklists, and rubrics. Members of the committee share best practices, evaluate student work and assessments, identify deficit areas, and modify curriculum maps. In addition, they set department goals across content areas, and share feedback from intervisitations. All meetings have agendas and minutes which memorialize teachers' processes and discussions and identify next steps.
- During the eighth grade inquiry meeting observed, teachers were discussing a student who was a former English language learner. Using a protocol, the facilitator reviewed the task which was to look at the student's piece of writing and analyze what the student did based on the rubric provided. As they unpacked the student writing they began their discussion with what the student was able to do and then discussed the challenges. Their discussion then centered on what the teacher could do differently to better address the needs of the student and what that would look like in teacher practice, really delving into a true inquiry approach where teacher practice effects outcome.
- All teachers attend professional development in the school and through opportunities provided by the network. They are then expected to turnkey for the rest of the staff. In addition, classrooms are set up as lab sites for intervisitation among the staff. This has led to distributive leadership of teachers across grades and content areas