



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Elizabeth G. Leary

Elementary-Middle School K207

**4011 Fillmore Ave.
Brooklyn
NY 11234**

Principal: Mary Bosco

**Date of review: February 25, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Julia Bove**

The School Context

Elizabeth G. Leary is an elementary/middle school with 1269 students from grade Prekindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 35% Black, 14% Hispanic, 40% White, and 11% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 8% 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 95.8%.

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	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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school has established a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families and provides supports to achieve those expectations.

Impact

School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness and successfully partner with families to support student progress. Teacher teams and staff high expectations for all students' results in students, including high needs subgroups, own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- High expectations are clearly stated in the school's faculty conference notes: " Teachers and staff will use language to create a vision for students that inspires them to do their best work and be their best selves; construct questions that will help students stretch their thinking and probe new ideas; and listen to students in ways that help them become more reflective, thoughtful learners." Students track their academic goals using a template that is updated three times a year. A short term goal is created, followed by a plan to achieve that goal. Evidence is collected and recorded on the same template. Teachers and parents both sign off on the plans. These expectations were also reflected by students and parents. One student stated, "We rise to the challenge of the work, and the teachers help us while we do it." One parent with experience in college level expository writing stated that he saw these skills in his own child's writing.
- The school provides frequent professional development opportunities on a rich variety of topics. The menu of topics was developed with input from the staff based on a survey taken at the end of last year. Teachers also avail themselves of professional development from their network and independent sources to inform their practice. There is also regular and frequent opportunity for staff to share their knowledge with each other and with parents. Parents are offered and attend regular workshops as evidenced by the school's parent engagement calendar and feedback from parents. For example, the teachers and parents collaborate on a Family Literacy Day and Family Math Day.
- Parents stated that the school regularly communicates school expectations via email and text and that they have the ability to do the same. Parents reported that the school sends out student progress reports before each marking period and that these helped in addressing college and career readiness. The school administration and teachers reported this, as well.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The school approaches teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework, and is aligned to the curricula. Discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Pedagogical shared beliefs are evolving into discussions at team and school levels. Coherent teaching practices are emerging into student discussions that reflect high levels of student ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- Students collaborate with their peers to create group documents based on information they gather individually. In a seventh grade English language arts class, students articulated what they needed to accomplish this: “We need our notes, but we also need prior knowledge.” The school is working on enhancing the practice of student led discussions school-wide.
- Socratic seminars are evident in upper grades. Teacher use a variety of methods, such as poems and short stories to promote questioning and thinking. In a fifth grade social studies class, students were using the Socratic Method to explore the civil rights movement. Students developed a chart of opposing viewpoints based on an expository article. The charts were then used for students to fully participate in a discussion in which all students participated. The school is working on using Socratic Method school-wide.
- Across classrooms, student voices are heard. In a second grade English language arts class, teachers and paraprofessionals were facilitating groups of students who were comparing rural, suburban, and urban environments. Students were engaging in accountable talk. In a seventh grade social studies class, students were collaboratively annotating photographs by using previously recorded individual notes to create one group product.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school ensures engaging and coherent curricula in all subjects are accessible to a variety of learners and curricula align to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

School leaders and faculty ensure curricula promote college and career readiness for all students. All learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities have access to tasks that are cognitively engaging.

Supporting Evidence

- Last year, the administration and staff concluded that modifications needed to be made to an existing English language arts program to increase the rigor of the writing component. Similar modifications were necessary in the existing mathematics program. These modifications are evident in existing units and lesson plans.
- School created rubrics specific to the tasks that are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards. For example, in a seventh grade classroom, a rubric was displayed for a specific poetry task: writing a two-voice poem. Students understood rubrics and reported using them consistently. Students stated that the use of rubrics helps them to achieve the next level and that teachers use them when discussing college and career readiness.
- Instructional unit plans reflect teacher modifications that address the individual needs of the students in each grade. Teacher teams reflect this process by collaboratively making decisions based on authentic student work. These modifications allow for multiple entry points for all learners. For example, a kindergarten reading lesson provided strategies such as large word card and picture cards for students with varied needs.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school aligns assessments to curricula, uses ongoing assessment and grading practices, and analyzes information on student learning outcomes. Teachers' assessment practices reflect the use of students self-assessing their work products.

Impact

The school's assessment practices are resulting in students receiving actionable feedback that informs their next learning steps, and teachers using data to adjust curricula and make effective adjustments in lessons to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Evidence of students receiving actionable feedback is evident across classrooms visited. For example, in one fifth grade class, a student discussed that he had to work on identifying vocabulary as a result of a conference with his teacher. The teacher rubric-based feedback provided all learners with clear next steps: "Next time, please refer to the primary source documents in your writing." Students stated that they are given rubrics in advance of assignments and use these in completing the assignment.
- The school uses data obtained from assessments to inform practice and revise teaching. Through a program called Test Wiz, teachers can view each exam given in detail. Student achievement by standard is evident. Teachers stated that in addition to their efforts, the data specialist provides ongoing, detailed student assessment data that is then used to revise instruction.
- A review of student work products provided evidence of students self-evaluating their work products. A displayed math task had a student comment that read, "I know I need to work on vocabulary." In a kindergarten math class visited, students were deciding in pairs what needed to be placed in the correct part of a Venn diagram. Students were providing feedback on their own decisions, as well as the decisions of their partners. During the student interview, students stated that they engaged in peer and self-assessment regularly.

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

Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work including classroom practice, assessment data, and student work. Distributed leadership structures are embedded so that teacher leaders play an integral role in instructional school-wide decisions.

Impact

The work of the teacher teams are resulting in shared improvements in teacher practice and mastery of goals for groups of students. Teacher leaders have input into school-wide instructional decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teams meet regularly and are led by teachers. The teams meet during common planning time and on Monday and Tuesdays afternoons. The principal, assistant principals, and teachers all state that team meetings involve a vertical and horizontal collaboration. Based on surveys from last year, teams focused on improving vocabulary. Teachers create anchor papers that are then used to evaluate student work and inform teaching practice. Teachers stated that they have seen improvement as a result of their work on teams.
- In an observed meeting of the mathematics department, teachers were collaboratively and actively engaged in analyzing student work. The group leader rotates, and at this meeting, the leader was sharing three samples of work based on a previously identified student need. The group spotted and identified a trend that students were still having difficulty using the correct math vocabulary. Samples of student work indicated that children were substituting words such as “higher,” and “steeper” in place of the mathematical term, “slope.” The group decided to revisit the rubrics and focus on vocabulary.
- The administration stated that teachers have a great deal of input in curricular decision-making, and the teachers agree that they do. In addition to having input in revising the mathematics and English language arts curricula, teachers collaborated in creating the school’s instructional focus based on student data from the previous year.