



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 214 Michael Friedsam

Elementary School K214

**2944 Pitkin Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11208**

Principal: Sharon Mahabir

**Date of review: March 31, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Heidi Pierovich**

The School Context

Michael Friedsam P.S. 214 is an elementary school with 985 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 13% Black, 35% Hispanic, 2% White, and 50% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 8% 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 92.0%.

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	Additional Findings	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	Focus	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	Additional Findings	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	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

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

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations and there are distributed leadership structures in place.

Impact

The inquiry-based collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards to strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers. Teachers have established leadership capacity such that they have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers have a renewed focus on inquiry that they stated helps them plan together, revise curriculum maps, share data and determine next steps in a collegial environment. During the early fall months, teachers met to revise curricula, aligning it to the adopted programs of ReadyGen and Go Math, and adapting it to meet the needs of their students. Teachers stated that the result of the inquiry is a cohesiveness of curricula across grades, with a focus on implementing the instruction shifts from the Common Core Learning Standards.
- Teachers stated that they learn from each other as they share best practices and intervisit classes, using the additional teaching periods that are embedded in the master schedule for this purpose. Teachers also stated that they have conducted walkthroughs of each other's classes during professional development after school to discuss and calibrate classroom environment, sharing methods of creating learning progression charts and differentiation of tasks to support student learning.
- Teachers stated that they have a voice in key decisions, including their own professional development. They created and conducted a survey to determine areas that staff wanted further support, and develop and deliver much of the professional development or are permitted to attend outside sessions and turn-key it to their colleagues.
- Teachers use protocols for looking at student work and grade teacher leaders facilitate the work. A newly appointed data specialist supports grade team leaders with data, which is an area of growth. Teachers meet in common preparation periods per grade level weekly, as well as meeting informally.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are loosely aligned with the school's curricula. The school inconsistently employs common assessments across grades.

Impact

The loose alignment of curricula to assessment provides limited feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Although the school has common assessments in place the results are inconsistently used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- There is an inconsistency in the assessments used and how the results are analyzed to inform instruction and pedagogy. Teachers do use the Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) for baseline and mid-year data. Yet, there is an inconsistency of common assessments for reading. Lower grade teachers use Reading A-Z, Journeys, or Raz-Kids, while upper grade teachers use Fountas and Pinnell or Scholastic Reading Inventory. Additionally, there is an inconsistency in the use of running records to track student reading comprehension and growth. There is evidence some teachers use the quick checks in math. The academic intervention service (AIS) teachers who employ Reading Recovery had a depth of student data to demonstrate how students improved and even how students tested out of academic intervention services. Yet, most teachers use a tracking form for a class-at-a-glance, some teachers were unable to demonstrate how this data is used to revise and adjust curricula and instruction.
- Teachers use or create rubrics, checklists, and grading policies. However, the expectations of use of student work to inform future work through feedback is inconsistent. Student work is either kept in a portfolio, regardless of whether it is selected or not, in student notebooks, or both with some students speaking to all three options. Students were unsure as to why some work is posted on bulletin boards or placed in portfolios.
- When asked what students do with the feedback they receive from the teacher, some said it helps them to improve toward the assignment or task, and some said that there is no connection. Much of the feedback on student work has the rubric connected. However only some student feedback is actionable. For example, some feedback entailed a sticker which said "Nice!" or "Great!" or "Terrific Work!" Some student work had check marks, scores, or teacher comments such as, "Great Job! Very creative!" and "Fabulous job! Keep up the great work!" Additionally, some feedback contained a sentiment of congratulations and a suggestion such as, "Wow! Great job! Let's add more details and indenting" and "Fantastic introduction. Great details. Let's work on adding more." When asked, the student was unsure what made the introduction fantastic and what he needed to add more or what to do next time he writes an essay. On the other hand, other work had feedback at the bottom of rubrics stating what was or was not included, "You did ask and answer questions correctly, but I wish that you had answered in more detail. You also did not provide a conclusion" and "You posed interesting questions and were able to answer them clearly and with details from your research. You are ready to do research from other sources" and "You were able to inform the reader about the rain forests but remember that specific details and examples are important when writing an informative essay. Your voice did come through."

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and content standards, while emphasizing rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects for all students.

Impact

The coherent curricula while engaging and rigorous, also promotes college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricula documentation demonstrates alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts, embedding college and career readiness skills for all students. For example, a fifth grade math lesson plan asks students to use unit cubes to build solid figures. The lesson includes alignment to the areas of focus for the Danielson Framework for Teaching, including ensuring that activities permit student choice, students monitor their own understanding, and students have an opportunity for reflection.
- Each grade has a pacing calendar which encompasses English language arts, math, social studies, and science. The assessments for each unit are also calendared. Further, there are 'catch-up days' embedded to support reteaching and differentiation.
- Unit maps use a consistent template and include big ideas, essential questions, the Common Core standards, skills and strategies as well as knowledge, demonstrating that the standards were unwrapped, key vocabulary, assessments, activities, with some hyperlinks from the DropBox online document warehouse to resources for the SMARTboard. An alignment to the adopted curriculum, GoMath and ReadyGen is evident as well as adaptations made to meet the needs of students, which is evident in differentiated tiered activities, instructional strategies, and resources. The GoMath maps consistently demonstrate higher order skills and rigorous habits for all students. While the social studies units demonstrate original creation and revision dates, there is little demonstration of the alignment to the New York City Department of Education Scope and Sequence.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	---------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best, through student discussion.

Impact

Teaching practices, reflect student thinking and high levels of participation, are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers employ the workshop model, providing time for students to practice. In a second grade class, students worked in their math workbooks to complete a practice page of clock faces, noting the time on the clock. As students worked to complete the page, the lesson changed to a reading lesson. The teacher asked students to recall a previous story they had read as a method to tap prior knowledge.
- Students used tiered activities in a third grade science class, after watching a short video and singing a song about gases, liquids, and solids. In data-determined groups, students used markers and chart paper to answer the questions on their differentiated task cards. Students determined their own roles and although some groups were more skilled at ensuring that they were on task, all groups discussed how to solve the task card. The leveled task cards had students represent the three states of matter at different levels of Hess' Depth of Knowledge. For example the level one task card asked students to draw an example of three states of matter, compare and contrast at least two differences and write a sentence about each state of matter. The level two task card had students draw an example of the three states of matter, compare and contrast at least two differences, and write a paragraph about each of the three states of matter. The level three task card asked students to draw, label, and explain the three states of matter, compare and contrast the different states of matter with at least four differences and write a paragraph.
- Most ESL students are in classes with two teachers, one ESL and one general education, to provide differentiation and support for all learners. In a fifth grade math class, students worked in pairs or small groups, with manipulatives to determine the volume of figures. A student asked the teacher a question and had the student pose her question to the whole class. Several students answered the question, using accountable talk stems to discuss, how they solved the volume. Students also had the opportunity to use a choice board to determine which three activities they would complete with their partners. In a second grade ESL class, students were at different stations. Five were on computers two were using a program called Imagine Learning and three were using Raz Kids. Eight students were doing individual vocabulary work, and the general education teacher briefly spot-checked in on their progress. Six students worked with the general education teacher to gain understanding of the short book, while another six students worked on the rug with the ESL teacher, answering comprehension questions and citing text.
- In a first grade self-contained class the students worked on the food pyramid to create a lunchbox of healthy food. They cut food pictures out of magazines, glued them onto the lunchbox, and labeled them. Students were able to discuss their selections and why they are healthy food choices. Also in an integrated class teaching the two teachers employed parallel teaching to support student understanding of plotting data to make a line graph. The teachers ensured that both groups received the same information and were ready at the same time to embark on small group work.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	------------------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff. Staff and school leaders consistently communicate high expectations regarding a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

School leaders provide training aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and have a system of accountability for those expectations. Staff and school leaders help families understand student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for staff through the cycle of observations using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Administration observes teachers noting implementation of the professional development sessions aligned to the focus areas of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, especially 3b, using questioning and discussion techniques, 3c, engaging students in learning, and 3d using assessment in instruction. For example, for 3b, using questioning and discussion techniques students answered questions that were open-ended and on the Depth of Knowledge levels 1-3, spiraling upwards to include compare and contrast as well as supporting arguments with evidence. Not only do the observations demonstrate references to professional development for alignment to curricula but also to conferencing at group tables and implementing instructional environmental checklist. Additionally, in teachers' observations intervisitations are noted, demonstrating the sharing of best practices through a system of accountability and transparency.
- Parents stated that teachers informed them that their children have shared their excitement about career days in class and how they investigate careers. Additionally, the parents and students agreed that students are prepared for selecting a middle school. To support students in understanding the selection process and to help students understand how middle schools differ, fourth and fifth grade students attended potential middle schools during tours and open houses. The parent coordinator and counselor have provided workshops to support parents in understanding the middle school selection process and the Common Core Learning Standards. Parents also stated that workshops have been informative and helpful for them to support their children to meet academic goals. Parents also shared how the staff and administration consistently communicate with them in their native language, via email, phone calls, texts and in-person meetings.
- School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for staff through the staff handbook, memos, and weekly administrative notes. The newly-assigned principal has established systems to ensure that the high expectations are clearly and consistently communicated. For example, she created an administrative cabinet who formally meet twice a week, but informally meet daily. To ensure that these high expectations are communicated to all, each assistant principal was provided grade levels or clusters to monitor and with whom to communicate. Additionally she created grade level teacher leaders to facilitate team meetings. Together the staff and administration collaborate to ensure that everyone is working toward achieving these high expectations. To that end, teachers in the upper grades provide all students with interdisciplinary projects focused on science, technology, and math (STEM), with trips to museums, participating in the Math Olympics, Space Exploration Study, and the self-contained classes participate in the District 19 STEM-lympics.