



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2014-2015**

**The Montauk School**

**Intermediate School K223  
4200 16 Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11204**

**Principal: Andrew Frank**

**Date of review: February 4, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Karina Costantino**

## The School Context

Montauk Intermediate School is an intermediate school with 950 students from grade six through grade 8. The school population comprises 5% Black, 27% Hispanic, 8% White, and 58% Asian students. The student body includes 52% English language learners and 48% 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%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The school has embedded high expectations in the very fabric of the building from parents, students and staff to meet all student and teacher goals. The principal has developed a number of opportunities for the school to be partners with parents to support their children reaching their goals.

### Impact

The school sets high expectations and has built a system of accountability for students and teachers to meet them while providing supports to staff, students and families to achieve those expectations that prepare students for the next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- Administration observes teachers using the Danielson Framework with the expectation that teachers will use all soft and hard data to inform their practice. The staff has developed into reflective practitioners who assess both the students and themselves. For example, teacher teams meet to discuss questioning and discussion techniques, then create inter-visitation schedules to monitor strategies in practice. Advance teacher observation report data show an improvement in this component.
- School leaders set high expectations and a system of mutual accountability for teachers during pre-and post-observation conferences and ongoing Danielson-based professional learning opportunities. Professional learning opportunities include curriculum planning and preparation, and using questioning and discussion techniques during the lesson.
- According to the Learning Environment Survey, 95% of the parents indicate that the school keeps them informed about their child's academic performance and 91% of the parents indicate that the school does an effective job of communicating to them and their children what they need to do to prepare them for college, career and success in life after high school. Guidance counselors participate in the monthly parent association meetings by leading a group activity for students and their parents. This practice enables parents to support their children at home.
- Students indicate that their teachers have high expectations, set the bar high and provide them with a number of strategies including peer revision and conferencing that they can use to achieve success. In addition, students indicate they are learning organizational skills and work habits, such as note taking and time/project management which will aid them in succeeding academically, socially and in their chosen careers. The school organizes articulation trips to high schools, holds meetings with students and families on the Specialized High Schools' entrance exam and provides college campus tours each spring for 8<sup>th</sup> graders so that they may get a sense of the college atmosphere and raise college and career expectations.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

Across classrooms, teacher practice is aligned to the curriculum and demonstrates a belief about how students learn best. However across the vast majority of classrooms teaching strategies do not reflect strategic multiple-entry points, particularly for English language learners (ELLs).

### Impact

Teaching practices are informed by the tenets of the Danielson Framework. As a result of the lack of the vast majority of teachers providing multiply-entry points into the curriculum, not all learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks, nor are they demonstrating higher-order thinking skills in all student work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- Differentiated handouts and supplemental materials help to provide students with multiple-entry points for the school's diverse student population. For example, the use of SMARTboards in some classes to convey visual representations of words and letter sounds aid in student English language acquisition and in defining complex vocabulary. However, scaffolds and supports for ELLs and special education students were not seen across the vast majority of grades and subjects.
- In the school's Collaborative Team Teaching classrooms, special education students have the support of two teachers who meet and discuss goals, strategies and assessments to move the students forward. For example, in 7<sup>th</sup> grade math, teachers worked with small groups of tiered students using scaffolds including manipulatives to solve multi-step word problems. However, multiple-entry points are not yet integrated strategically and not all students were demonstrating their thinking. For example, in a grade 7 English as a second language class, levels of student engagement were mixed during peer collaborative activities on identifying textual evidence.
- A variety of strategies, such as turn-and-talk, multimedia presentations, and the use of Brain Pop, an online core-subject instructional video platform, promote high levels of student thinking and participation. For example, in a grade 8 English class, student choice board activities are provided for advanced students. However, strategies to push advanced students and assignments that provide extensions to the curricula were not seen across the majority of classrooms.
- In some classrooms, student-to-student discussions were heard. For example, students discussed the writing of a compare and contrast essay, use of fraction mode comparison to identify equivalent fractions, and use of textual evidence to support claims and counterclaims. However, in the majority of classrooms equity of voice among students and teachers was mixed with some lost opportunities for non-volunteers to participate during class discussions along with short wait-time provided between questions, thus limiting student thinking and participation.

## Additional Findings

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers create rubrics grading policies and common assessments that are aligned with the school's curriculum and demonstrate a clear picture of student progress across subgroups, grades and content areas.

### Impact

School assessments provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement across grades and subjects. The school strategically makes adjustments to meet all students' learning needs, including ELLs and students with disabilities to ensure there is a clear portrait of student mastery.

### Supporting Evidence

- All assessments are aligned to the curricula in overarching assignments and throughout the daily delivery of lessons as in exams, quizzes; exit slips homework, conferencing and class discussions. Teachers use existing assessments attached to the existing curriculum and create their own assessments throughout the content areas, where needed. Teachers meet on grade and subject to monitor all assessments that help them to adjust their units of study and lesson plans based on the trends. The data gathered from these sources is reviewed by the cabinet and coaches to inform the teachers, who then make adjustments to their planning and practice during their grade and team meetings. As a result, the use of common assessments provides actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers so that all students demonstrate increase mastery. For example, in 7<sup>th</sup> grade English writing, actionable feedback included the need for students in their second revision to summarize their arguments in a concluding paragraph and explain the evidence cited in the essay.
- Teachers adjust curricula based on data analysis. For example, teacher teams cross referenced student results from 8<sup>th</sup> grade math and English state exam item analysis with Measures of Student Learning (MoSL) assessments and noted common student missteps including students struggling with completing the second step of multi-step word problems and the effective use of counterclaim. Next, teachers adjusted curricula and instruction to include more lessons on multi-step word problems and provide students with examples of exemplary argument writing. Teachers next created additional units and designed student checklists to use when solving multi-step problems. Preliminary classroom data show a gain in student progress in multi-step word problems.
- The Data Team at the school is represented by assistant principals, the data coach, the literacy coach and a teacher representative from each subject area. This team looks at all data twice a month to analyze data and identify at risk students. As a result of this, the data is then shared with teacher teams so that they may make adjustments in curricula and instruction. For example, using the data teachers in some classrooms created data-based flexible groups for students to work.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

Curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

### **Impact**

The school ensures that curricula is coherent across grades, promotes college and career readiness and is accessible to a diversity of learners. However, rigorous habits and higher order skills for advanced students are not yet emphasized in units of study across grades and subjects

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Curriculum maps denote access points for English language learners and students with disabilities. For example, supports for English language learners include use of manipulatives, individualized pacing, iExcel adaptive technology, visual-rich word walls, and Native language translated materials to increase student comprehension. Special education scaffolds in English curriculum list cause and effect graphic organizers, adapted texts, PowerPoints, vocabulary flash card rings and film excerpts. These supports aid students in task comprehension, thus allowing for higher levels of engagement, deeper understanding of levels of meaning in a text, language conventions and knowledge demands. However, curricula do not provide consistent access and opportunity for advanced students to demonstrate their thinking.
- A Depth of Knowledge critical thinking verb is embedded in each lesson's essential question. In some lessons this consistent use of language, encourages students to analyze, explain, assess, and construct their responses. However, this level of detail was not evident across all curricular planning documents.
- Teacher teams have redesigned units of study to ensure access for all students including students with disabilities and English language learners. For example, modifications to a unit on "Survival" include an adaptation of "The Story of Keesh", an abridged version of *Life of Pi* and several detailed scaffolds and supports including additional time to deconstruct vocabulary and use manipulative visual aids to represent complex conceptual understandings. For example, the use of dominoes is listed as a potential activity to illuminate the cause and effect relationship.
- A rigorous arts program at the school follows the Blueprint for the Arts reflecting a deepening of student understanding while connecting all artwork to literacy, particularly helpful to the English language learner population.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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**Findings**

All teachers are engaged in inquiry based, structured professional collaborations which systemically analyze key elements of teacher practice building distributed leadership practice among teachers.

**Impact**

This results in school-wide instructional coherence and effective teacher leadership where teachers have an integral role in making key decisions that affect learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams are designed to promote the implementation the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts, as well as the Citywide Instructional Expectations. Teachers meet at least once per week in teams by department or grade level to discuss, analyze and improve upon curricula through the lens of analyzed data and the study of student work. Interdisciplinary teams work together to discuss students in an inquiry setting, noting strengths and challenges for various subgroups of students. The philosophy of teaching is to teach to the whole child. The teams operate by protocol.
- Data from student work informs all the teams to create effective curricula based on trends from analysis of student work and assessments. In addition, the teams look at what extensions can be provided for ELLs, students with disabilities, and advanced students so all groups are challenged. Once a trend has been identified, the teams look at ways to move all students through the mastery of content. They also target instructional support for identified students including ELLs and students with disabilities. For example, instruction and non-fiction materials about the Inuit people were provided for students to provide background knowledge for an anchor text.