



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Eileen E. Zaglin School

Elementary School K225

**1075 Oceanview Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11235**

Principal: Michael Cosmai

**Date of review: March 9, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Steven Chernigoff**

The School Context

PS 225 is an elementary school with 969 students from grade Pre-K through grade 8. The school population comprises 3% Black, 37% Hispanic, 41% White, and 18% Asian students. The student body includes 38% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92.7%.

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	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. These teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work.

Impact

Teacher collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers and resulting in improved progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams analyze how well students are learning to incorporate evidence in argument, which is a school-wide goal. Fourth grade teachers assigned students to write an argument/opinion essay from the point of view of a patriot during the American Revolution. The fourth grade team analyzed the results of this CCLS-aligned task from Core Knowledge, discussed and took notes on how well students cited evidence from the text upon which the activity was based, and then devised strategies for helping their students improve this essay and what the teachers would need to teach better in the next unit.
- The second grade team noticed that a number of students across classes were having trouble with handwriting. They decided that those students needed to use different types of paper, with colored lines and bold text to guide them. The fifth grade team recognized that in math, students needed more concrete manipulatives, pictorial representations and even video lessons to help master fractions. Student mastery increased on the next assessment.
- The fourth grade teacher team decided to use the same graphic organizer with all their ELLs but with a different text, and then gave an informal assessment of how well the students did. Teachers assessed the efficacy of that scaffold and of the strategy in general for their ELLs. They noticed that many students improved in their ability to cite evidence because of it and are promoting the use of the graphic organizer throughout the grade, and especially to students with disabilities (SWDs).

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best. School wide, student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Teachers are working on improving students' writing and citing evidence in English classes but there is less consistency in other subject areas, and in student discussions and work products.

Supporting Evidence

- In a 7th grade English class, the students read an article related to the class book *A Long Walk to Water* and cited evidence to support their opinions. The teacher asked, "Why is cattle mentioned so much [in the book] and how is it important to understand [the character] Salva?" A student responded, "Cattle is important in the Dinka culture," and another said, "I agree with [him] because according to another article we read, Sudanese tribes say they have a mystical link and spiritual connection to cattle." The teacher continued asking about Salva and a third student read on page 2 that, "Salva was well aware how lucky he was to go to school." Then a fourth student commented that that quote, "Shows Salva doesn't take school for granted." However, interactions like these were inconsistent across classrooms.
- In an 8th grade math class the questioning was inconsistent. The Teaching Point on the board was "Does [sic] all systems of equations have solutions?" The teacher asked leading questions like, "So the solution is...Are you sure?" and "Everyone good?" But in a 5th grade math lesson, the teacher had the students solve a problem and then asked, "Why would the answer [of 4/6 of 12] be the same as when you found 2/3 of 12?" One student replied, "4/6 simplified is 2/3." Then the teacher said, "Work with a partner to come up with a good way to explain this [concept] in words." The students discussed with their partner and wrote answers in their workbooks as the teacher circulated to assist them.
- Student work products were of uneven quality. The school-wide writing assignment was evident in every classroom and included a variety of drafts and substantive feedback from the teacher, peers and the writer him/herself. But work posted in other subjects, where available, did not always have rubrics attached or actionable teacher feedback attached.

Additional Findings

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

Findings

The school made purposeful decisions to align all curricula to the common core learning standards and content standards, and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Alignment of curricula builds coherence and promotes college and career readiness for all students, and cognitively engages all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- The school assessed its old curricula and decided to change literacy to Core Knowledge in grades K-2 and Expeditionary Learning for 3-8. For math the school uses Go Math in grades K-5 and CMP3 in 6-8. These curricula are aligned to the common core and are more rigorous, in comparison to the old ones. Teachers supplement the literacy curriculum with writing tasks and writing units of study that address the needs of all students through multiple entry points. The school is implementing the Teacher's College Units of Study in writing.
- Teachers use the tuning protocol to look at student work and identify the gaps in their schools. Based on data, teachers revisited and modified their units and lessons to do more modeling of writing and include additional checklists so that students self-assess their writing. Modeling and self-assessment helped the students improve on the mid-year benchmark that the school gave to all students.
- An 8th grade English language arts class had students learn about dramatic irony in four different groups, each with its own activity. One group watched a video of a "Twilight Zone" episode; another read and listened to Alanis Morissette's song "Ironic;" a third group read and discussed "The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin, and the fourth group read and discussed O. Henry's "The Gift of the Magi." Many of the students with disabilities and ELLs in the class were in the first two groups, which relied heavily on visual and auditory learning (the video and the song). These supports ensured that special needs students have access to a rigorous curriculum and are responsible for the same learning targets, and were highly engaged in the lesson.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

The school is developing its use of common assessments to measure student progress. Teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and self-assessment.

Impact

The emerging use of common assessments provides the school with an incomplete picture of student progress across grades and subject areas. Ongoing assessment of learning varies from class to class, which leads to some teachers making adjustments to meet students' learning needs, while other students' needs are not fully addressed across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses Schoolnet assessments in grades 3-8, Running Records for K-2 and the STAR reading assessment in literacy. The school uses data from these assessments to track student progress, but there is inconsistent evidence regarding whether all teachers in all grades use the data to adjust curricula and lessons to meet all students' learning needs.
- The school did a common writing unit and assessment in all English classes in all grades to help fulfill its instructional focus of citing evidence in argument. It had a three-step process: a baseline assessment, mid-unit writing piece and final assessment. Teachers graded the writing and analyzed the results in their grade-level teams. Teachers saw that students had difficulty with counter-arguments and so adjusted their lessons to target this skill. However, this is the only subject in which teachers are giving a common assessment, limiting opportunities for student learning in other areas and teachers' professional growth.
- In a second grade math lesson the teacher asked students to self-assess and give thumbs up or down if they understood the answer to a problem. But the teacher did not check to see if the students got the right answer and largely left it to the students to decide if they understood. In a third grade social studies lesson on the economy of Italy, the teacher showed slides of famous sites in that country and asked the students how tourism helps the economy. The teacher asked the students to turn and talk to a neighbor, but she did not circulate around the room to listen to students' conversations or ask them to share out what they discussed, thus limiting opportunities for learning.

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

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff, and to students and families, that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

Staff, families and students understand and are making progress towards high expectations. Teacher practice is improving and students are learning what they need to be able to succeed in middle and high school.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders regularly observe teachers in the classroom and provide actionable feedback on their practice. One teacher said, “Even if the observation is rated Highly Effective I still get good feedback.” Administrators expect to see their suggestions implemented and document whether it happens on successive visits to classrooms. The administration also communicates its expectations through a staff handbook, regular emails and memos, and in team meetings.
- Teachers requested, and the administration insists on a system of inter-visitations and mutual accountability. Teachers visit each other’s classes to observe specific Danielson components, document their learnings, review their findings with each other, and implement them in their lesson plans.
- Parents are well informed about their children’s progress through regular communication from the school. Parents have access to Engrade, which tracks’ students’ grades and attendance, and which allows parents to access the school calendar and newsletter. Both parents and students have access to it and receive messages from teachers, and send messages to teachers as well.
- February was “College and Career Readiness” month at the school. Middle school students visited local colleges. The elementary school hosted professionals of various types (health care, police, fire, etc.) to visit classes and tell students about what their careers are about. March began the “Leader of the Month” initiative. Teachers selected two students from each class to be honored at monthly PTA meetings for academic achievement and citizenship. In classrooms, elementary school teachers discuss with students what they need to learn in order to be prepared for middle school, and in grades 6-8 teachers discuss the expectations for high school. Teachers and administrators also give workshops for parents on the common core learning standards, preparation for state exams, preparation for middle and high school, and attendance improvement.