



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Bay Ridge School for the Arts

Elementary School K264

**371 89th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11209**

Principal: Patrice Edison

Date of review: January 30, 2015

Reviewer: Debra R. Lamb, Ed. D.

The School Context

The Bay Ridge School for the Arts is an elementary school with 467 students from Pre-Kindergarten through grade 4. The school population comprises 3% Black, 34% Hispanic, 48% White, 13% Asian, and 2% other students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 17% 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 94.7%.

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	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	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	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	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	Focus	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks, and are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects.

Impact

Coherence across grades and subject areas promotes college and career readiness for all learners. All students, including English language learners and special education students must demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses *Expeditionary Learning* in grades 3-5 and *Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA)* in kindergarten through grade 2. The *Math In Focus*[®]/*Singapore Math*[®] program has been utilized since the school's opening in 2010. The multi-sensory *Orton-Gillingham* approach to reading instruction and resources from the State's EngageNY website are also incorporated into the school's curricula. An emphasis for the school is on the idea that less is more, with fewer units/topics in exchange for focusing deeply on those concepts that are stressed in the standards. Each grade focuses on 3-4 units per year. According to the principal, "*Expeditionary Learning* does well in short responses, however teachers are working on putting some longer response pieces together." The school has dedicated a great deal of time to revising the writing components of their curricula as the programs used did not have a lot of writing embedded. *Expeditionary Learning* units have also been re-sequenced to ensure that students have exposure to a variety of genre before spring testing. Exposure to a range of topics is also one of the school's priorities when developing/modifying their curricula. For example, a biography of important Americans is a monthly focus within the social studies curriculum. Additional text resources are used, such as *Accessing Complex Texts* by Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey.
- The school uses the web-based *Atlas* curricula mapping system by Rubicon International as a repository for their units of study, which are updated to include changes to the plans and activities of each unit based on the needs of students in their classes as teachers move through the year. The English as a second language (ESL) teacher incorporates strategies within instructional programs for English language learners. *Atlas* notifies school administration whenever a teacher modifies a unit. School leaders are encouraging more teachers to upload their lesson plans and assessments to *Atlas* as *Atlas* enables the curricula units across content areas to be written in the same language and format.
- The school places a strong emphasis on fully integrating the arts across each content area. Using the curricula maps on *Atlas*, the music teacher created such thematic units as multicultural music aligned to the grade 2 unit on immigrants, and the music of Beijing aligned to the grade 3 unit on countries. The theatre teacher incorporated genre studies into her curriculum, such as teaching students in grade 1 about the practical use of masks in addition to their performance-based uses. Students keep *Thinking Logs* in which they document strategies they used to answer questions. The principal stated that, "Our focus for college and career readiness is pushing students to be independent learners."

Area of Focus

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

Teacher teams consistently analyze data and student work for students on whom they are focused. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has resulted in improved teacher practice and progress towards goals for groups of students. Teachers have built leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Following their completion of a multiplication unit, discussion during a grade 3 teacher team meeting focused on the next unit to be taught from *Math In Focus*[®]/*Singapore Math*[®] Lesson 19.1—Area and Perimeter. Strategies for motivating students were discussed, including the use of Cheez-It[®] crackers as manipulatives for an area and perimeter activity. A review of notes from prior meetings of this team reflects a focus on curricular and assessment activities, such as creating lessons/worksheets, learning activities, rubrics/checklists, pacing/norms for units, instructional and intervention strategies, and state test preparation. This team meets daily during common planning time, including grade-level inquiry meetings on Tuesdays, and professional development time on Thursdays. The principal stated, “This is the first year that administrators were able to provide teachers with daily common time”. An agenda for the art teachers’ team meeting reflects a discussion of links to other curricula in the school, grading policies, and a discussion of studio work class rosters, hall passes and room assignments.
- Lesson study and inter-visitations coordinated by teacher teams have enabled teachers to share and refine pedagogical practices across grades and subjects. These practices have contributed to an increase in effective and highly effective teacher ratings, particularly in Domains 1 and 2 of the Danielson Framework for teaching rubric.
- Teachers stated that “Inquiry is sitting with your colleagues and looking objectively and respectfully at student work for the purpose of getting and giving suggestions to each other”. “I can’t imagine not having people to bounce ideas off...every year I find something—practices and assessments—that has helped me,” said a teacher. Teachers serve as teacher leaders and as facilitators, presenters, and recorders for their teacher teams. Paraprofessionals benefit from a two-session professional development series attended by a colleague on best practices for managing difficult behaviors. “Professional development is more relatable when it’s delivered by peers,” said a teacher. “It creates a nice environment where you can share what you know. You also know who is strong at something, and you can use them as resources.” For the second consecutive year, teachers are also taking the lead on the implementation of studio time, where students are provided with opportunities to choose areas of enrichment offerings/clubs.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of belief about how students learn best. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

Teaching practices are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. All learners, including English language learners and special education students, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's 2014-2015 instructional focus is that all staff and students will engage in a whole school initiative to increase growth in mathematics for all students and to build mathematical thinking through a focus on questioning and discussion in the classroom. The principal stated, "Our questioning and discussion focus has led us to look at what kinds of questions we're asking, why, and how we're encouraging student response." During observations of teachers, instructional supervisors keep tallies of the questions posed by teachers.
- Teachers use standards-based *I Can* statements as student-friendly learning targets for each lesson, as well as to judge student mastery. In a self-contained bridge class with students in grades 1 and 2, the *I Can* statements are differentiated by student. Six students will focus on "I can use ordinal numbers to tell the order (position) of things", and one student will focus on "I can count on to add/I can count back to subtract/I can use strategies to make it easier to add and subtract." Students use play money that they have earned for good behavior over the past two weeks to buy things from the class market. One by one, the students go to the market while other students engage in extra-practice counting activities in small groups with paraprofessionals while waiting to be called. The teacher works with one student at a time on the carpet with baskets of items labeled 50¢, 8¢, 7¢, 6¢, 5¢, 4¢ and 3¢. The principal stated, "We've de-certified a number of students, have moved kids from more restrictive settings, and have started mainstreaming students for particular subject areas".
- Teachers promote higher-order thinking and discussion within their lessons through the use of open-ended questions. A grade 4 integrated co-teaching (ICT) class was learning how to use diagrams to rename mixed numbers and fractions greater than one. Following a real-life example of a woman baking chocolate chip cookies using a recipe demonstrated on the SMARTBoard, the teacher asked students, "When might we rename fractions in the real world?", and "How do good mathematicians solve problems?" Students commented on the responses of their peers.
- In response to a question about whether their class work is hard or easy, one student said, "If you figure it out, then it's easy. I know what the details are and how they flow." Another student added, "It's hard but it's on my level." The principal said, "One of the things we're looking at is how well students are explaining how they are coming to an answer. Students are able to talk more about their thinking process than they were in September".

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress towards goals across grades and subject areas. Teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Actionable feedback is provided to students and teachers regarding student achievement. The results of common assessments are used to adjust curricula and instruction. Teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- A teacher-created checklist in a student's notebook noted, "On January 20, my teacher read my Math Log and this is what she saw." A four-point Likert-scale rubric follows, with checks for "My work is neat. I put the date on each page," "I wrote about my math learning," "I used examples in my entry" and "I can work on _____." Student reading levels mastery of math skills by chapter, and science investigations are regularly tracked. A student's critique of his assignment in math noted, "I think I got a 4 because I underlined important information and I showed a lot of math information." The school's grading policy was tweaked and effectively aligned with the district's grading policy for 2014-2015, and appears at the top of each report card.
- On a score report addressed to a student in her grade 2 class, a teacher's feedback noted, "On the Unit 1 Social Studies Quiz, you scored 74%. This quiz covered map skills, where we are from (neighborhood, borough, city, state, country, and continent), landforms, and natural resources and the environment. The class spent several weeks learning about these topics. We reviewed all the material before taking the quiz." The teacher added an asterisk next to an item and recommended the student review this skill. A score report addressed to another student communicated a score of 78% on a test that assessed place value to 100, skip counting, standard, word, and expanded form, greater than > and less than<, and ordering numbers based on value. The teacher's feedback noted, "Practice skip counting forwards and backwards."
- Teachers use a variety of formative assessments, including the English and math performance tasks, Fountas & Pinnell literacy levels to measure growth in reading, and those assessments incorporated in various curricular programs. The *CKLA* program has pausing points and mid-unit points to review, re-teach, or move on. Teachers also use conferencing notes that detail their observations of students demonstrating understanding of concepts and strategies. Students complete math logs and exit slips, which teachers use to make decisions about the next day's lessons. The principal shared, "When teachers felt that the programmatic assessments were not accurately reflecting what was going on in the classrooms, they tweaked them. Teachers loop with their classes for two years, so they know the strengths of their students beyond those reflected in formal assessments". School leaders review item analyses for the entire school, comparing performance data from beginning of the year with current data for the purpose of determining growth.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff, and have developed a system of training for those expectations. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness, and successfully partner with families to support progress towards those expectations.

Impact

The school has a culture of mutual accountability for high expectations as well as a system of accountability for high expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Class intervisitations across grade teams have recently begun with a focus on questioning and discussion and the gradual release by teachers towards student independence. Teachers talked about attending professional development regarding ways to assess students as independent learners, and mentioned visiting a grade 2 classroom where students were talking about everyone learning from their mistakes.
- The school implements the *Character Counts!*[®] program to ensure that students develop a growth mindset needed for success in college and career, including such personal qualities as persistence, resilience, determination, and understanding of themselves as learners. Students also earn plastic bugs as incentives for good citizenship and behavior, which can be exchanged for prizes. Classrooms have anchor charts posted that concretely address such topics as *The ABCs of peaceful problem solving*, *How to be a better listener*, and *Things you can say when someone is hurting your feelings*.
- Parents talked about having a direct line to each teacher through the SchoolMessenger[®] notification system. They receive communications from teachers that inform them of what their child will be learning as well as frequent progress reports. Homework packets are sent to parents on a weekly basis detailing the homework assignments for each content area. A parent stated that, "If we have quick questions, we can just write it in our child's notebook and we'll get a response." Parent members of the School Leadership Team described their participation in the development of the school's Comprehensive Education Plan, stating, "We broke into groups to answer questions about how we can make the school better". The school's special events are particularly valued by parents, such as Math/Science Night where some teachers dressed up like Albert Einstein, and the multicultural week held each spring.
- During two cycles of studio time, students self-select an area of interest from among a wide-variety of teacher-led offerings, including ballroom dancing, chess, collage card making, documentary film making, a comic book club, sign language, typing, and jewelry making. These activities culminate in a gallery walk or performance. Students serve on the school's journalism team, and actively contribute as writers/reporters to the school's inaugural newspaper, *The P.S. 264 Gazette*.