



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 269 Nostrand

Elementary School K269

**1957 Nostrand Ave.
Brooklyn
NY 11210**

Principal: Jazmine Santiago

**Date of review: March 30, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Julia Bove**

The School Context

P.S. 269 Nostrand is an elementary school with 404 students in pre-kindergarten and grades 3 through 5. The school population comprises 89% Black, 7% Hispanic, 1% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.3 %.

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	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	Proficient

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 consistently communicate high expectations to the staff, resulting in a culture of mutual accountability using elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The culture of learning consistently communicates high expectations for all students and provides clear, focused and effective feedback. Students are given guidance to attain the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal communicates high expectations through a variety of methods. Parents receive progress reports during each unit that include strategies to help their children. The school also communicates its expectations through emails and regular face-to-face contact between administration, staff and families. High expectations are evident in teacher observation reports. In a majority of observations reviewed, teachers received feedback that reflected impact on student learning. Additionally, teachers were commended for implementing strategies that they had learned in professional development sessions and are provided with next steps.
- Through a monthly newsletter distributed to the entire school community, the school communicates its Habits of Mind program. The Habits of Mind program is geared to identify a set of 16 problem solving, life related skills, necessary to effectively operate in society. The program was chosen to help students prepare themselves for real life situations. The March 2015 newsletter focused on persistence: “In our school we promote persistence...through rigorous tasks that encourage students to work hard.”
- Students expressed that the school had high expectations for them. Teachers provide students with Grows and Glows on a vast majority of displayed student work. This is an ongoing process. One student stated, “They tell you what you exceed in and what you need help with.”
- Based on the school’s decision to use data to engage students in learning, students examine rubrics at the beginning of the year while baseline assessments are being graded. During this process students also examine exemplar pieces of writing with the teacher feedback given and compare this to the rubric to determine why the pieces are exemplar. Students own this process and use it to set goals as one student phrased it, “based on tasks embedded in the units.”

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Teacher pedagogy is developing from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best. Classroom practice is developing to meet the needs of all learners.

Impact

Across classrooms teaching practice is becoming aligned to the curricula. Student work products reflect uneven levels of thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- In a fifth grade classroom, students were reading to find the meaning of sulfuric acid by close reading the text for context clues, while in another classroom, students were simply underlining words. This was evidence of uneven expectations across classrooms.
- In a fourth grade math classroom, students were using fraction blocks to model how to subdivide candy bars. However, they all had the same task, and while they used manipulatives, the majority of students knew the correct answer without needing the blocks.
- In a third grade classroom, one group of students was reading a graphic novel about Paul Bunyan. They were to write the events that caused the formation of the Great Lakes. While the text was low level, the task was high level in that students were being asked to list figurative reasons for a geologic event.
- Student collaboration was uneven across classrooms. In a third grade mathematics class, students were engaged in a discussion on grouping: "That won't work; you need to add another group of 15." "O.K., let's try it." In most other classrooms there was an absence of student discussion.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards, Curricula and tasks are refined and planned using student work and data.

Impact

School leaders and staff make purposeful decisions in revising curricula to promote college and career readiness. Engaging curricula and tasks provide access to a diversity of learners, including English Language Learners and students with special needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers stated that they help each other revise curriculum maps and that the maps were “living documents.” One teacher stated that last week, she helped her colleague revise instructional tasks on fourth grade math and also stated that their decisions were driven by the Common Core Learning standards, rather than a specific program. An examination of units and plans reflect these revisions.
- In science and social studies, the scopes and sequences are realigned to match the texts of what students are reading in English language arts. The school augmented their existing Ready Gen reading program with content rich non-fiction books. Units and curriculum maps show these revisions.
- In math, the school disassembled a teacher’s addition from the GoMath! program and grouped sections together with other resources based on the needs of lesson planning. Teachers and administration also changed the order of the scope and sequence based on an examination of math standards from previous and subsequent years. For example, a third grade mathematics unit was redesigned based on the standards from second and fourth grades.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The school is in the process of aligning assessments to curricula. The school is also in the process of using student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the classroom level.

Impact

Assessments provide limited feedback to students. Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect use of ongoing checks for understanding. As a result, teachers inconsistently make effective adjustments to meet student's learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal stated that before a unit, teachers give a baseline assessment and then use the Tri-State Rubric to modify units based on the data collected. While curriculum maps do include high level tasks, the data are not being used consistently across a majority of classrooms. Quick checks for understanding were observed in only one room that was visited.
- A review of lesson plans revealed that teachers are planning formative assessments; however, there was little evidence of this in practice during classroom observations. In most of the classrooms visited, students were either working as a whole class or in groups. In a majority of classrooms, the purpose for the grouping was not clear. When asked why he was in a group, one student responded, "We need to work harder."
- Students stated that they do receive feedback; however this feedback was inconsistent across classrooms. Feedback on student work in a fourth grade classroom included comments such as, "Next time, be sure to cite evidence from the text." In a third grade classroom, student work had comments such as, "Next time look at the handout." Peer assessment was limited to yes or no responses.

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

Teacher teams are engaged in structured professional collaborations using the inquiry approach that focuses on student learning.

Impact

The work of a majority of teacher teams promotes the achievement of school goals and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Teams consistently analyze student data resulting in progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- The observed third grade English language arts team consisted of general and special education teachers. Teachers were using a protocol for looking at student work and began by taking low inference notes. After sharing out findings, teachers determined next steps: “students demonstrate a limited ability to go beyond the text. We need to focus on structure, main idea, and paraphrasing.”
- The school created a model classroom this year. This classroom serves as an observation center for teachers to visit and learn best practices. Teachers stated that modeling was very important because seeing something in action was the best way to inform their own practice. The principal also stated that there was an emphasis on modeling.
- This school serves testing grades 3 through 5. In order to improve continuity of practice, teacher teams have begun meeting with teachers at the neighboring early childhood school to share student progress and expectations, thereby creating a system of seamless articulation and student support as students move to the next level. The plan is to expand this model to other teams and to also meet with teacher teams at middle schools in the district.