



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Kosciusko School

Elementary School K274

**800 Bushwick Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11221**

Principal: Maritza Ollivierra-Jones

**Date of review: January 28, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Lillian Druck**

The School Context

The Kosciusko School is an elementary school with 582 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 13% Black, 84% Hispanic, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 21% English language learners and 12% 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 91.3%.

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	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	Well Developed
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	Celebration	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Teachers across the school participate in inquiry-based collaborative teams that use highly effective protocols to analyze classroom practice, examine assessment data and assess student work.

Impact

The school's collaborative culture of professional learning strengthens instructional capacity, and contributes to school-wide curricular coherence and increased learning for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The English as a second language (ESL) teacher team conducts collaborative walkthroughs in order to gather low inference notes related to the team's inquiry focus on the use of scaffolds to support student engagement and discussions. Following each visit to a classroom, teachers share "glows and grows" related to the strengths observed in the classrooms and next steps to inform their practices.
- Teacher teams examine the standards below and above the grade level they teach. During an interview, teachers stated that this process helps them plan instruction that focuses on skills that students did not master in earlier grades in order to close learning gaps in their current grade. For example, in grades Kindergarten to 2, teachers identified learning gaps in decoding skills which led to the use of readers to promote mastery of grade-level skills.
- Teacher teams engage in data analysis periods on a weekly basis to examine student work, review assessment data, and discuss instructional implications. During an interview, teachers stated that inquiry shares, collaborative learning walkthroughs and teacher-led committees provide opportunities for building instructional capacity and sharing classroom strategies to improve learning outcomes for students in the lowest third subgroup on each grade.
- Teacher teams use the Tuning Protocol from *The Power of Protocols* by Joseph McDonald, to examine student work. In examining student work in math, teacher teams identified deficiencies in the solution of multi-step word problems. They incorporate a problem of the day related to real life situations, during the beginning of the first period across all grades, in addition to their daily math lessons.
- Teacher teams deepen their work on student-to-student discourse by analyzing academic tasks to ensure they promote discussion and provide opportunities for students to justify their responses. For example, teacher teams incorporate academic tasks that require students to elaborate on the remarks of others, ask questions to check for understanding, explain their ideas and link their comments to the remarks of others.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Strategic entry points in lessons and high quality supports for English language learners and students with disabilities vary across subject areas. Student discussions that lead to ownership of the learning process are not fully embedded across all classrooms.

Impact

Across classrooms, teaching strategies engage students in demonstrating higher order thinking and participation, yet do not lead to student ownership and high-level extensions for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Video clips, data driven grouping of students, scaffolds and multiple entry points such as graphic organizers, manipulative materials, visuals, math boards and highlighters promote higher order thinking, as noted in partner talk and small group conversations when solving word problems in math and while working on science tasks.
- Lessons did not incorporate student choice to maximize learning and further engage students in topics that fully capture their interest. For example, higher performing students stated that when they finish assigned tasks before the end of the work period, they complete additional work from the “early finishers” folder or read a book while peers complete their work.
- In two early grade classes, time allocations for independent work did not provide ample opportunities for students to use academic vocabulary or engage in discussions with peers to increase their thinking skills. For example, students remained in the meeting area for an extended period of time while volunteers completed math exercises as the rest of the class observed. In another class, students waited for peers to complete assigned tasks before moving to small group activities.
- Teaching strategies to foster higher order thinking were observed across classrooms. In two classrooms with groups of English language learners, teachers verbally explained academic tasks to beginner students in their native language. However, the tasks and additional resources were not available in the native language for students to refer to during independent work.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and teachers align curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), integrate the instructional shifts and consistently utilize multiple resources to emphasize rigor in their learning tasks.

Impact

The school's standards-based, coherent curricula offer varied experiences that support students' learning, foster critical thinking and promote college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) and Hess' Cognitive Rigor Matrix to create academic tasks that promote higher order thinking skills across grades and subjects. For example, lesson plans and curriculum maps included differentiated text-dependent questions, close reading activities and interdisciplinary planning across grades.
- The Science Technology Engineering Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) initiative involves each grade in partnerships that enhance students' content knowledge and experiences in selected areas of interest. For example, a partnership with Salvadori engaged grade 5 students in a bridge building project that incorporated engineering, mathematics and science content knowledge skills.
- Teachers use the New York State Social Studies Framework and the New York City social studies and science scope and sequence, to plan Common Core aligned lessons. The school uses the Houghton Mifflin program for social studies and the Harcourt Science program across grades to plan lessons that integrate literary skills aligned to the English language arts (ELA) instructional skills.
- Across grades, teachers use Ready Gen for ELA, Go Math, Foss and Harcourt science, and Houghton Mifflin social studies programs to support classroom instruction. These materials and related resources provide consistency and coherence of instructional strategies across grades as noted in lesson plans and curriculum maps across subjects.

Findings

Across all grades and subjects, teacher use assessments, rubrics, and grading policies aligned to the curricula to acquire an accurate understanding of student learning toward grade-wide and subject area goals, track student progress and make well-informed instructional decisions for all students.

Impact

Across classrooms, teachers make effective adjustments to curriculum and instruction. Aligned assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback so that all students demonstrate increased mastery towards meeting academic benchmarks and learning goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Early childhood grades use Rigby running records to assess and monitor students' reading levels. Teachers use the data to plan small group instruction focused on decoding and comprehension skills. For example, teachers use decodable readers to ensure mastery of phonics skills so that students successfully reach their next reading level.
- Teachers use data from quick checks in math, reading checklists, end of unit performance tests and exit tasks to make adjustments to units of study and daily lessons. Adjustments include grouping of students to re-teach a skill, introducing an instructional strategy to close a learning gap, or providing additional practice of target skills through homework and class work.
- Teachers use curriculum aligned rubrics to assess student writing. In addition, they include "glows" and "grows" to highlight students' strengths and to recommend next steps for students to improve their writing. For example, glows such as, "your quotes support your main ideas" and grows such as "make sure your sentences include a subject (who) and a predicate (verb)" help students increase mastery in their writing.
- Teachers analyze social studies and science pre-assessments to plan for revisions and modifications based on students' needs. The data from the assessments help guide curricular and instructional adjustments. For example, the vertical teacher team indicated that teachers plan small group instruction and incorporate assessment questions focused on the skills and benchmarks that students are required to meet in each subject area.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders utilize a wide array of strategies to communicate and provide effective supports that embody a culture of high expectations. The school implements a range of venues that promote a positive partnership with families and engages them in supporting their children's progress.

Impact

High expectations communicated through verbal and written school-wide systems support an inclusive learning environment where accountability is mutual and reciprocal among all staff members. Family partnerships enhance student progress towards college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's professional development plan, meeting agendas and school calendars reflect the communication of high expectations for staff, family engagement and professional work. Collaborative walkthroughs conducted by the vertical team focus on questioning, student discourse and engagement in the classrooms, and are tied to the elements of the Danielson Framework.
- Parents stated that they enjoy participating in the "Day in the Life" school-wide events conducted in the fall and spring. Families appreciate the opportunity to visit their children's classrooms and learn about ways to support the school's instructional focus.
- Monthly "Coffee with the Principal" sessions engage guest speakers from community based organizations, local organizations and other presenters from various agencies in presenting workshops on anti-bullying, college and career readiness, Common Core Learning Standards and other topics that support the school's high expectations for student achievement.
- A homework drop-in program offered three days a week, provides support for children with homework, school projects and other academic activities. Parents pointed out that these sessions helped them learn more about the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and how they can further support their children at home.
- Parent workshops on The Framework for Great Schools communicated the model for school success and reinforced expectations connected to college and career readiness. In addition, parents stated that workshops on math and ELA inform them of grade specific expectations and help them understand their children's progress in attaining grade benchmarks.