Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Dr. Betty Shabazz

Elementary School K298

85 Watkins Street
Brooklyn
NY 11212

Principal: Jonathan Dill

Date of review: March 25, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Mauriciere de Govia

The School Context

Dr. Betty Shabazz is an elementary school with 271 students from prekindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 66% Black, 27% Hispanic, 2% White, and 5% American Indian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 88.4%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
To what extent does the school…	**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		
To what extent does the school…	**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**	**Proficient**
Systems for Improvement		
To what extent does the school…	**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:	Proficient

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the staff and have a system of holding staff accountable. School leaders and staff consistently communicate high expectations to the parents and students that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact
School leaders' high expectations result in staff awareness of school-wide instructional expectations. Parents receive information that helps them understand their children's academic progress and students receive supports that prepare them for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate high expectations through Tuesday's professional development sessions on topics such as Danielson Framework for Teaching, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Curriculum, running records, lesson planning, scaffolding supports, and the school's instructional focus of identifying evidence in argument. School leaders hold teachers accountable for these instructional expectations through written reports from informal and formal observations and teacher mid-year conferences to discuss teacher goals aligned to the Danielson Framework.

- School leaders and staff communicate curricular expectations to parents through events such as curricula night and parent workshops on topics of Common Core Learning Standards and what to expect on the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) and math exams. Furthermore, the curriculum newsletter that is sent home bimonthly and the Parent Backpack Guide to Common Core Learning Standards keep parents informed on academic expectations.

- School leaders and staff communicate behavioral expectations to students through the Citizenship, Pride, and Respect (CPR) Program where students receive lessons on character education and points for making positive choices. Students are expected to sign a CPR contract that outlines CPR expectations. Furthermore, the teachers communicate academic expectations to students through goal-setting conferences with students where learners must create academic goals and discuss how they plan to achieve the goals. During the student interview, students were able to articulate their academic goals, action plan to achieve the goals, reading levels, steps to prepare for the next level, and expectations for college. One student said, "We must always support our opinions with lots of evidence in our daily writing. This is preparing me for college because in college you must do the same type of writing." A second student said, "I must read every day by going to Raz Kids, (an online reading program), to improve my reading level."

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing

Findings
Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry point into the curricula and student work products reflect uneven levels of student thinking and discussions**.**

Impact
Students have limited opportunities to ask questions and engage in challenging tasks that present opportunities for higher order thinking discussions and rigorous work products.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade 2 and 3 self-contained English Language Arts (ELA) class, students were in two groups. The grade 3 students worked on finding the main idea as they read "Life in My Village" by Maahe a nineteenth century Cheyenne Indian. The students were observed discussing the main idea and supporting details with their peers. The teacher and paraprofessional assisted the students by asking questions about the details in the text. However, the grade 2 students were using iPads to review phonic skills on Starfall, an online learning program. The student discussions were about sharing the use of the iPad rather than the content of the lesson. This demonstrated that discussions that reflect high levels of student thinking and participation are an emerging school-wide practice.

- In a grade 3 class, there were supportive charts on "Quoting Passages from a Text" and "How to Answer Short Responses" posted as students worked in groups to write an extended response to a passage. Students were given an exemplar to refer to along with a rubric. One pair of students engaged in a discussion was heard saying, "Check off that bullet because we answered it we have to prove the answer like the writer did there. We can use RAPS (restate, answer, prove, and sum it up)." Another group of students was seated with the teacher who asked questions such as, "What is the question asking you to do?" Students struggled to answer the question and the teacher had them look back at the passage. Other pairs of students worked independently with little discussion. There was an ELA teacher in the classroom working with the students on Starfall. In this group there was also little discussion and more focus paid to the program than the content.

- In a grade 2 classroom, students worked to identify and demonstrate an understanding of bonus letters using the Wilson program. Students had whiteboards and letters to make their words. The teacher asked the students to tap words and letters for various sounds. When a student created the word "shil", the teacher pointed out that it wasn't a "real word." The students struggled to organize the letters and the teacher repeated the same questions and requests of the students without an opportunity for partner discussions.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
School leaders and teachers ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits.

Impact
The school's curricular decisions result in all learners, including, students with disabilities and English language learners, having exposure to tasks that promote college and career readiness and accentuate higher-order skills.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal stated that teachers consider multiple entry points when planning and emphasize the use of vocabulary and building math fluency when they incorporate the instructional shifts. A review of lesson plans revealed that teachers reference the standards and connect them to learning objectives and tasks. Teachers are also focused on academic vocabulary, the use of Depth of Knowledge to ask higher order thinking questions, close reading tasks, and teaching in the workshop model where there is a mini-lesson, guided practice, and independent practice.

- For math instruction, the school has selected Harcourt's Go Math! program. For English language arts instruction, the school has selected Pearson's ReadyGEN program and Teachers College Writing Project. These curricula are Common Core aligned. Additionally, teachers supplement the curricula with college and career aligned resources from EngageNY. These curricula integrate the instructional shifts as evidenced in the school's instructional focus of identifying evidence in argument across content areas. Teachers' lesson plans reveal planning and tasks that consider vocabulary development, building fluency in mathematics, and the close reading of non-fiction texts to support the instructional focus.

- Teachers' plans showed evidence that students with disabilities and English language learners are grouped for conferences according to accomplishment of tasks, teacher assignments, and students' assessed needs and performance. For example, a grade 5 Integrated Co-Teaching lesson plan revealed that the teachers and the paraprofessional planned that groups of students would be given an independent reading task once their performance was at a level 2 or above. A grade 3 plan, showed additional assistance and small grouping for the English language learners in the classroom.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing

Findings
Across classrooms teachers inconsistently use assessments, rubrics, and grading policies to check for understanding and provide self-assessment opportunities for students' learning.

Impact
The school's assessment practices limit teachers' ability to effectively make adjustments to meet students' needs resulting in students receiving limited feedback regarding their achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal expressed that the school is in the process of developing habits that encourage the use of data to drive instructional decisions in the school. This school year the school began using Google Apps for tracking and analyzing data. This system grants teachers access to school-wide data and impacts the work of curriculum planning and teacher teams. Teacher teams' agendas cite the use of data as evidence of how students are performing. For example, teacher teams use the *Math Data Reflection Template* that chronicles the direction of instruction based on students' performance.

- Teachers are beginning to use assessments such as Fountas and Pinnell, writing on demand, and end of the unit exams. Some students receive actionable feedback from these assessments. For example, a review of student work products displayed on classroom bulletin boards and in student portfolios revealed that some students receive actionable feedback on the writing on demand assessment that said, "Next time, please review your spelling, proofread your work, and add more details to support your claim." Other students receive less feedback. For example, on a student's science task, the teacher's feedback said, "Very good observation. I know you enjoyed your experiment, great job."

- Instruction is beginning to reflect checks for understanding such as the use of thumbs up, exit slips, conferring binders, questioning, and turn and talks. In a third grade classroom students were observed having a discussion about aligning their work to an exemplar to self-assess their performance. However, in other classrooms the evidence of checks for understanding was limited or non-existent. Students also were able to effectively communicate about their reading levels and understood where they were as readers and what they had to do to get to the next level.

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

Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based collaborations that align to the school's instructional focus. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have built leadership capacity and have a voice in instructional decisions.

Impact
The work of the teacher team is leading to teachers having opportunities to share best practices. Teacher leaders have input key instructional decisions that affect student learning school-wide.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of the schedule revealed that teacher teams have common planning time two to three times a week that brings them together to plan for instruction, inquiry, the Learning Partners Program (LPP), review assessments, or to receive professional development. Teachers confirmed that there are formal as well as informal structures for meeting. During a meeting with members of the LPP team, a teacher stated that they meet frequently, often during lunch and added, "It's a way for us to improve our plans and get ideas from each other." Additionally, teacher teams have meeting structures and systems in place to collect and prepare agendas, minutes, and next steps. These are shared with the administrative team. There are also templates and protocols for discussions such as the *Analyzing Student Work* template that indicates what standards the students are expected to accomplish, where they have been successful, what their learning gaps are and what academic challenges exist for them as a learner. This form also considers next steps, instructional adjustments, and student grouping needs.

- Teachers meet once a week to engage in inquiry teacher team meetings. During a grade 3, 4, and 5 inquiry team meeting, teachers were observed using an inquiry protocol to review selected student work products on geometry and measurement. The teachers discussed low, mid and high-level student work products. Teachers discussed students' strengths, struggles, and different ways to re-teach skills and deliberated on how they would re-teach finding the area and volume, assess learners again, and analyze the data in their upcoming inquiry team meeting. The teachers reported that the inquiry team meetings allow them time to engage in professional discussions where they hone in on specific math strategies that are needed for the upcoming New York State math exam.

- Teachers voiced that the principal has a "collaborative leadership style" that allows them to actively participate in the instructional as well as cultural structures that impact the school. Agendas revealed that teachers have turn-keyed Teachers' College professional learning, worked with and shared Metamorphosis Math, and participated in the Learning Partners Program. The latter has offered them the opportunity to plan, observe, and inter-visit with another school. Teachers also shared that the school leadership engages them in the culture and improvement of the school via professional development. A review of minutes revealed that the teachers discussed CPR (Citizenship, Pride, and Respect) and how it can be used to improve management structures in the classroom.