



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

PS 316 Elijah Stroud

Elementary School K316

**750 Classon Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11238**

Principal: Olga Maluf

**Date of review: January 22, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Kristine Mustillo**

The School Context

Elijah Stroud is an elementary school with 354 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 76% Black, 16% Hispanic, 7% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 8% 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 93.0%.

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	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	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

All teachers are engaged in professional collaborations focusing on student achievement for all learners. Teachers examine student work and assessment data along with learning standards, to improve instructional coherence and strengthen teacher practice.

Impact

Throughout the school, professional collaborations facilitated by teachers and administration are resulting in strengthened instructional capacity, improved student work quality and improvements in performance levels and mastery of goals for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly in grade and vertical bands, to plan for Common Core Learning Standards alignment and integration of the instructional shifts across the curricula. Consistent across classrooms and in kindergarten through 5th grade were opportunities for students to write and engage in conversation around their thinking. Students were consistently asked to use evidence to support claims and opinions and have noticeably adopted discussion stems to facilitate their conversations. As a result, the school made notable gains in English language arts and math, particularly in 4th grade, where over 60% of students performed at levels 3 and 4 and 50% of students with disabilities performed at or above grade level. City-wide averages for students with disabilities are 8.4% proficiency in English language arts and 11.4% proficiency in math.
- Teacher teams analyze student work and data to find trends in performance. Teachers use this information to modify classroom practice, instruction and tasks. In grade 2 teachers worked to align their units of study and the tasks contained within to align to the language and the asks of the performance based assessments, resulting in improved student performance on interim assessments. Students were better able to respond to the question and use text based evidence in their responses.
- Several teachers have participated in the Teacher Leadership Program over the past two years. Teachers facilitate professional development sessions and lead school committees, including the professional development committee. These sessions use teacher feedback and school data to plan adult learning opportunities to increase teacher capacity and impact student learning. Teachers also support other teachers in developing their facilitation skills learning to increased leadership capacity throughout the school. IN addition to facilitating team meetings, teachers lead lunch and learns based on their strengths and interests. A teacher led a lunch and learn on using Pinterest to access project and classroom organization ideas. Special education teachers have held sessions to share Universal Design for Learning strategies with their general education colleagues.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies reflects coherence around a set of beliefs regarding how students learn best and provide multiple entry points to support students in high level work products and discussions. Across classrooms, student work products and discussion reflect high levels of student participation in tasks and discussions,

Impact

Teaching strategies offer high quality supports and extensions to ensure all students, especially higher-level students, engage in meaningful and challenging activities regularly. However, these strategies are not yet consistently strategically planned or allow students to take ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices were aligned to the curricula and reflected the articulated belief that students learned best when engaged in collaborative experiences around rigorous tasks. There was evidenced of tiered math with challenge questions. A grade 3 math class had students working in four groups to solve division problems using repeated subtraction. The numbers presented to each group varied in complexity requiring higher levels of regrouping. The challenge activity asked students to create additional division problems using the same number.
- There were multiple opportunities for students to engage in conversation with their peers around tasks. Accountable talk stems were utilized along with graphic organizers to take notes prior to conversations. In a 4th grade English language arts class, the teacher read aloud from a novel, stopping at points to give students the opportunity to take notes on a graphic organizer. The prompts for students were not strategic enough to extend their thinking. Student notes revealed similar and low level responses, one word and short phrases, which limited their ownership over planned follow up conversations, requiring heavy teacher prompting and direction.
- A 2nd grade class was reading *Alexander Who Used to be Rich Last Sunday* and working on character analysis. The lesson focused on using text based evidence to support student assessments of Alexzander's traits. Student groups had access to leveled organizers, some containing word banks and visual supports and others requiring more independence and inferring. However, in most classrooms students were working on like tasks with general access to organizers and visual aids, as opposed to strategic planning for supports and extensions for different student groups.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across grade and content, lesson and unit plans are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards to ensure the promotion of college and career readiness for all students. Instructional shifts are embedded in curricula tasks emphasizing rigor throughout the curriculum to engage all learners and allow them to demonstrate their thinking.

Impact

All learners, including students with disabilities and English language learners, are provided access to rigorous tasks that address academic skills, as well college and career readiness behaviors, including organization and perseverance.

Supporting Evidence

- The school approaches curriculum development with the mindset that they are the first steps along a sixteen year continuum for students. Regular collaborative planning takes place among teachers, teacher specialist and support staff. In addition to weekly grade level planning, teachers participate in vertical planning each Monday in collaboration with the campus middle school. Planning includes attention to academic skills as well as personal skills that support learning and student success.
- The school utilizes Ready Gen and the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project for the foundation of their literacy curriculum. Using Common Core Learning Standards and aligned assessments, teacher teams make adjustments to curricula to integrate the instructional shifts. Units incorporate a greater balance of fiction and non-fiction text in order to build student knowledge through content rich non-fiction and informational text. Opportunities for students to write and engage in discussion using evidence from text were present across unit plans. Junior Great Books are also utilized to support student engagement with complex texts and academic vocabulary.
- The school utilizes Go Math as the foundation for math instruction. Teacher teams utilize Think Central to plan for differentiated instruction and multiple entry points so that all learners, including students with disabilities and English language learners, can demonstrate their thinking. ST Math, Activate and Success Maker are accessible to students school-wide and support focus, coherence, deep understanding, application and dual intensity. Teachers use backwards planning to strategically embed on-line learning opportunities within units of study. For example, before entering fraction units, teachers review Common Core Learning Standards to determine what prior knowledge students and also what misconceptions students might encounter along the way. Teachers utilize on-line learning programs to front load information, provide leveled practice and provide multiple representations of information.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across grades and classrooms, teachers use common formative and summative assessments, aligned to Common Core Learning Standards to make instructional decisions around planning and practice and provide a clear picture of student progress.

Impact

Analysis of assessment results leads to actionable feedback and next steps for students, teachers and parents so that all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, demonstrate mastery of content.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers have developed Common Core aligned rubrics to support writing across the content areas. Rubrics are used to set the standard for students along with sample work products. Student use rubrics to self-assess and give peer feedback through their writing process and confer with teachers when receiving a final grade with feedback. Teachers also use this feedback to plan for future instruction for students and groups of students. Teachers noticed that students in the upper grades were struggling to use high quality evidence to support their claims in persuasive writing pieces. Teachers built in lessons to have students evaluate primary and secondary source information, thinking on the interests of the authors as they make claims. Teachers also worked with students on understanding political satire.
- The school tracks student reading levels and progress on performance based assessments school-wide. The results of these assessments are used to determine Response to Intervention service plans, inform student groupings and instructional decision making. The school has used this information to increase supports in emerging literacy to early childhood students resulting in increased fluency and comprehension on grade level texts. 90% of students in kindergarten and first grade are on level. Results have also been used to align classroom tasks to performance based assessments leading to improved student performance on interim assessments in both English language arts and math.
- Teachers in grade 5 noticed that students were struggling with synthesizing information from multiple texts within their writing. This was not a skill embedded within the Ready Gen curriculum. Teachers utilized Junior Great Books and planned for increased opportunities in this area throughout English language arts the curriculum. Teachers also co-planned with support staff and coaches, as well as participated in inter-visitations to expand scaffolding and delivery options to support the needs of different learners.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school consistently communicates high expectations, aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, to staff, students and parents that lead to multiple opportunities for collaboration and support towards student progress. School leaders offer professional development and ensure there is a system of accountability across the entire school community to provide ongoing feedback to families regarding the school's expectations.

Impact

There is a mutual accountability among school staff and families leading to college and career readiness for all students. Structures are in place to ensure effective communication that fosters a culture of high expectations across the entire school community.

Supporting Evidence

- High expectations for staff are communicated through the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Staff spent time deconstructing the rubric and discussing what each competency looks like in practice. In addition to observation and feedback cycles, the professional development team plans for learning opportunities based on teacher feedback and school goals. Peer observation is used to support teachers in strengthening their practice. New teachers receive mentoring and participate in a monthly support group facilitated by administration, coaches and peers. This collaborative approach to teacher development results in shared accountability for instructional practice.
- Administration holds one-on-one meetings with teachers following each observation. Conversations among administration and teachers include a focus on teacher practice and the impact it is having on student performance, making direct links from instructional decision making to student progress. For example, in noting a number of students in one class were creating stronger writing responses, teachers in that class were asked to share practices that led to improved quality in student work products. Teachers also flip classrooms if teachers have demonstrated strengths in teaching certain skills and strategies.
- The school holds curriculum nights at the beginning of each year to introduce parents to the expectations at each grade level. A summer introduction is held for parents who are new to the school to explain the importance of early childhood literacy development and their role in supporting students at home. Parents receive communication daily through a "communicator folder" and have the opportunity to meet with teachers weekly, by appointment. Progress reports are distributed between each marking period so that parents are informed on student progress towards goals.
- The school has a Learning Leaders program through which parents are trained to support early childhood students in their literacy and language development as well as their social emotional needs. The school has a class parent program which has increased parental access to student learning and classroom events. A number of workshops take place for families, including Common Core Learning Standards, English as a second language, Computers, Science, and Health. These workshops are led by both parents and teachers.