



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The School of Integrated Learning

Middle School K354

**1224 Park Place
Brooklyn
NY 11213**

Principal: Monique Campbell

**Date of review: March 20, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Debra R. Lamb, Ed.D.**

The School Context

The School of Integrated Learning is middle school with 226 students from grades six through eight. The school population comprises 81% Black, 14% Hispanic, 1% White, 3% Asian, and 1% other students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 26% special education students. Boys account for 60% of the students enrolled and girls account for 40%. 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	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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Focus	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports and extensions into the curricula. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and ownership.

Impact

All learners, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs), are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- In math, students are being taught to write evidence-based explanations of their mathematical thinking, including procedural and conceptual writing about number sense, algebra, geometry, as well as developing logical reasoning. For example, the learning objective for a grade 6 lesson was “Students will utilize the CER (Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning) protocol to solve and justify solutions for real-world applications.” The teacher posited that using this protocol students would “have a structured format that they could use to brainstorm during the problem-solving process. This would assist students with the decoding of multi-step word problem as well as solidify conceptual understanding and computational fluency.” The lesson plan also listed the Common Core standards addressed, prerequisite skills; and domain specific vocabulary. Following guided practice, a preliminary task, and a short formative assessment, students engaged in one of three tiered activities at five different stations. Students had a choice of tools and methods to solve math problems. For example, students at one station were tasked with finding the volume of a rectangular prism using modeling with unit cubes or algebraic reasoning. Students at another station had to write and solve single-step equations involving addition and subtraction using “inverse operations.” While at the stations, students asked each other challenging questions. Student leaders wore sashes from each of the school’s houses to identify them as students who have a strong understanding of the big idea and could help other students. While students worked, the teacher circulated with a checklist noting student questions and concerns.
- The grade 6 math lesson plan described above lists differentiated objectives with justifications for six of the 21 students present based on their non-mastery of standard-specific tasks. These six students have special needs—one ELL, two SETTS (Special Education Teacher Support Services), and three struggling general education students. The teacher determined that two of the students “could meet the learning objective with minimal support”; one student was “approaching mastery in conceptual understanding but needs framing for his writing”; and three students deemed “far below mastery and needs concrete examples to gain conceptual understanding.”
- Groups of students in a grade 6 ELA class were using the TP-CASTT (Title, Paraphrase, Connotation, Diction, Attitude, Shift, Title again, and Theme) protocol to analyze the figurative meaning of five different poems and respond to a short response question.” Responding to a guided discussion question about the Langston Hughes poem “Dreams,” a student said, “With a dream, you have an objective; without a dream, you lack purpose.”

Area of Focus

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the Common Core. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students upon whom they are focused. Distributed leadership structures are embedded within this school.

Impact

The instructional capacity and practice of teachers has been strengthened by team participation and the overall ELA achievement of SWDs has experienced small increases. There is effective teacher leadership and teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Team members have roles, including facilitator, timekeeper, and recorder of minutes. In their last meeting the ELA teacher team collaboratively decided to see if students adding bullets to their writing would have a positive impact. The team also decided to look at student work from only the medium tier of student performance rather than both the medium and low tiers. “In the beginning, we focused only on students who were struggling,” said a teacher. The focus question of the meeting was “How do students in the middle tiers of the performance continuum use bullets in the writing prompts?” Teachers reviewed samples of student work from mixed grades to inform curricular and/or pedagogical adjustments. Using a discussion protocol, teachers discussed their noticings about student work. The demonstration teacher facilitating this discussion asked, “What do students understand from the task and what comes easy for them?” One team member said, “The student started the essay with improper introduction—only one sentence. Transitional phrases were used but they were not very sophisticated and the evidence cited was not relevant.” Teachers discussed whether student work reflected students’ use of strategies consistent with the writing acronym “RACE,” which stands for Restate the question, Answer the question, Cite evidence from the text, and Explain and elaborate on your response. A “reflection protocol” for looking at student work developed by the ELA department team captures “Three very important points (VIPs), two questions I am considering, and one important next step for me.” The VIPs from this meeting were to memorialize their thinking and pedagogical learning process; to ensure that the strategies employed are research-based; and to have clarity about the data-driven focus of their inquiry process.
- “We do move SWDs during class reorganizations,” said a teacher regarding special education services. There has been an increase in special education referrals though there have not been any decertifications of SWDs. The school has, however, been able to mainstream one 7th grade SWD for 6th period mathematics and has moved another student from an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) to a general education class with access to SETTS.
- Teachers serve in a variety of leadership positions within this school, including grade leaders, teacher ambassadors, lead teachers, demonstration teachers, peer instructional coaches, and one as a curriculum coordinator. Many of these leaders serve on the principal’s cabinet, the school-wide instructional team, and the school leadership team, and regularly turnkey professional development for their colleagues.

Additional Findings

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 and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in curricula tasks and are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects.

Impact

Coherence exists across grades and subjects that promote college and career readiness. All learners, including ELLs and SWDs, must demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's math curriculum is pulled from a variety of sources, including but not limited to the state's EngageNY website, *Connected Mathematics Project 3 (CMP3)*, the *Big Ideas Math*® program, and *LearnZillion*. Scholastic's *Common Core CODE X™* program is used, supplemented with *Expeditionary Learning* and the College Board's online *SpringBoard*® program. The school is in its second year of designing their own social studies curriculum. The science curriculum is currently being aligned to the Common Core and state science content standards using the backwards-planning process. Content is pulled from varied sources, like EngageNY, Glencoe's *New York Science Textbook*, and *Urban Advantage*.
- During grade-level meetings, teachers use the knowledge they gleaned from an Understanding by Design® (UbD™) training received a couple of years ago to engage in backwards planning of curricular modifications. "Most curricular changes are enhancements rather than full curricular alterations," said a teacher. "We start off with the task in mind. Pacing is altered as needed based on gaps revealed through benchmark assessments. Microsoft word formatted copies of curriculum maps are emailed to each teacher. Questions intended to prompt critical thinking are aligned to the curricular units for each grade. For example, the current ELA curricular units and essential questions in each grade are as follows: Grade 6, Unit 4: "Cities of Gold," Essential Question: "Why does place matter?" Grade 7, Unit 4: "Your Vote, Your Rights," Essential Question: "How do people express opinions in meaningful ways?" and Grade 8, Unit 4: "The Challenge of Heroism," Essential Question: "What defines a hero?" A list of supports for ELLs and SWDs accompanies these units, such as providing extended time and unpacking questions.
- "The phrase 'productive struggle' is a buzz phrase here to describe rigor," said a teacher. "For us, it means engagement, voice, differentiation, time on task, students feeling challenged, and toughing through a task." When asked whether their schoolwork was hard or easy, a student responded, "It's typically hard. Teachers hold us to high standards. They don't like us to get too comfortable, so they take us two steps further than one." "We start off with something they know," said another teacher about curricular planning for SWDs. "Students tend to write what they know." At a Parent-Teacher Association meeting, parents were given a math problem to take home by the math grade leader during a presentation on the Common Core. A parent stated, "It took me a week and finally the teacher had to walk me through it. One problem had four steps, A through D. It showed me what my child goes through." Another parent said, "I sat in on a social studies class. I hate social studies, but I got into it so much!" Another parent talked about receiving progress reports every semester before receipt of her child's report card. Her child said to her, "We did a pre-test and these are the areas that I'm good at and here's what I'm working on."

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. Teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding

Impact

Actionable and meaningful feedback is provided to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs and students are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Rubrics are provided to students at the beginning of a unit so that the student knows the expectations for learning. When students were asked how they know if they're doing well, a student responded, "I know if I'm learning based on my grades and feedback from teachers us; we have a six-trait rubric for scoring." Teacher feedback is in the form of "glows" (strengths) and "grows" (next steps). For example, feedback to a student on a math task was as follows: "Glow: Great work on this task. The work shown demonstrates both a procedural and conceptual understanding of solving real-world problems applying percentages." and "Grow: Always ask yourself, 'Does my final answer make sense?' In Task 3d, you set up the correct equation but obtained a value of 6 instead of 600 when solving. You could also avoid this error by substituting your value into the original equation."
- A school-wide writing benchmark was administered in September 2014 and one week ago in March. The benchmark that was purposefully aligned by the school with its Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) initiative goals. The assessment required students in each grade to do on-demand writing after reading articles on bullying and cyberbullying. The articles were differentiated by grade. The assessment addressed writing from sources, citing evidence, and supporting a position with relevant evidence. Students in grade 6 responded to the question, "Cyberbullying: Why should I care?" Students in grade 7 wrote essays responding to the question, "Can you make a difference in cyberbullying?" Grade 8 students wrote responses to the question, "Do you think bullying is everybody's business?"
- Teachers use data from recent benchmark assessments, unit pre-tests, Amazon's *TenMarks* online assessments as well as other formative assessments, like the stop-light method using red (I'm stuck), green (I got it) and yellow (I almost got it but I'm struggling with....) cups as a quick check for understanding and to modify and differentiate instruction. Based on assessment data, the teacher of a 7th grade U.S. history class attached a completed "Class Profiles" to her lesson plan that classified students by the following color-coded levels and provided action steps for that lesson: "Red: Push-able 1; Yellow: Push-able 2, Slip-able 2 and Solid 2; Green: Push-able 3, Slip-able 3 and Solid 3; Blue: Push-able 4, Slip-able 4 and Solid 4." For example, action steps for students in the levels 3 & 4 and would receive Regents preparation and have access to study hall for independent study.

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 provide training. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students, and provide clear, focused, and effective feedback and guidance supports.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability for high expectations exists within this school. Students, including high-need subgroups, own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's motto is "Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow." The school's theme is "Together We Build a Successful School, Child by Child." The school's credo is "Follow the Rules. Make Good Choices and Learn Something New Everyday." The school structure is divided in a house system named after Ivy-League universities, Harvard, Princeton, and Columbia. A "Teacher Handbook" outlines high expectations for such practices as professionalism, instruction, discipline, recordkeeping, and classroom maintenance.
- When asked, "What would make your school even better," a student responded, "If we keep pushing forward; our job is never over. For example, we 7th and 8th graders are taking Regents so that we can take less courses in high school and Advanced Placement courses in college."
- One guidance counselor supports teachers in writing IEPs, developing student goals, and working with teachers to differentiate instruction. She also conducts professional development and does crisis counseling. The school has had several suicide issues this year. The guidance counselor also serves as the liaison for the school's high number of foster children and students receiving services from the Administration for Children's Services. She coordinates the school's career day and high school night.