



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Gateway School

Intermediate School K364

**1426 Freeport Loop
Brooklyn
NY 11239**

Principal: Dale Kelly

**Date of review: March 13, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Heidi Pierovich**

The School Context

Gateway is an intermediate school with 341 students from grade six through grade eight. The school population comprises 72% Black, 23% Hispanic, 3% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 93%.

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	Additional Findings	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	Focus	Proficient
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	Proficient
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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

4.2 Teacher Teams

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Established inquiry-based collaborative practices promote the achievement of school goals, the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards, and strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers. Further, defined leadership structures enable teachers to have a voice in key decisions that promote improved pedagogy and shared leadership with a focus on improvement of student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet on Mondays each week. Teachers use the “Student Learning Inquiry Process”, a protocol and form for looking at student work and analyzing data. During a teacher team meeting teachers had analyzed the fall benchmark and determined that students were quoting directly from the text instead of paraphrasing. To that end, they designed lessons to teach students to paraphrase using short songs and now analyzed student work to determine next steps. After conducting the protocol, they determined that students were not paraphrasing but instead summarizing and so teachers created new scaffolds graphic organizers and a few instructional strategies to employ when reteaching.
- Teacher teams upload agendas and team notes to Google.docs making the process transparent to each other. Administration reviews the agendas and notes, providing feedback to teams and holding them accountable through classroom observations. Teachers described how they learn from each other and share best practices. For example, a science teacher discussed how she works with both the math teacher and English language arts (ELA) teacher to coordinate and reinforce mathematical processes of scatterplots while also incorporating citing evidence using the schoolwide paragraph structure, Restate the question, Answer the question, Textual evidence explain, Textual evidence paraphrase, and Summarize, or RATTs.
- Administration ensures distributed teacher leadership through teacher created, designed, and delivered professional development sessions. Teachers stated that they would even like to meet more days during the week for professional development, as it has been so beneficial to their growth. Additionally, there is a peer instructional coach and a demo-teacher, who both support teachers in implementing the instructional shifts and the Common Core, as well as the Danielson Framework for Teaching. There is a strong sense of collegiality as teachers feel they have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning and strengthen instructional capacity of teachers.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

Impact

Common assessments, well aligned to curricula, provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement and result in informed adjustments to curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses common rubrics and assessments aligned to their curricula, which is a strategic use of a combination of CMP3 and Go Math, as well as Codex. Teachers use common assessments in all subjects including art, and analyze the results to adjust curricula and instruction. Teachers had just implemented the Measures of Student Learning (MOSL), and are using the analyzed results to determine the implications for teaching and learning.
- Student work is aligned to a rubric and the feedback to students is actionable, supporting students in knowing their next steps. For example, "You did an effective job in answering the prompt correctly. Your textual evidence did support your answer and also shows you understood the text you were reading. In the future pay attention to how you introduce the author's words in terms of paraphrase." Students said that teachers usually peer-edit or peer score our work and hand it in, afterward the teacher returns the work with comments on how to improve. Not only was this observed in core classes, especially English language arts, but also in art, where students reflected on their own work and determined areas of improvement. Students and parents explained that they often use the online grading program, called Skedula, to find outstanding assignments, grades and scores.
- Teachers use multiple sources of data, including daily formative assessments to determine flexible groups for student classwork. Many teachers also use pre- and post-tests. For example in a math class, a teacher gave a pre-test at the beginning of a unit where the average was 26% and conversely, the post-test results revealed an average of 78%. Teachers use MyOn, an online reading program to determine baseline scores and intermittent benchmark scores to show student growth in reading levels. Students were aware of their reading levels. One teacher is part in the classroom and part as a data person, whereby she pushes in to classes to support MyOn and to cull together the data.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

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

Impact

Purposeful decisions in curricula development build coherence in skill focus promoting college and career readiness for all students. Careful revision of academic tasks based on student data ensure that a diversity of learners, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, have access to the curricula and tasks that are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty use an online program, Atlas, to warehouse their curriculum planning documents. Teachers receive feedback from administration and teacher leaders on their curriculum planning documents and make changes accordingly. Staff uses this platform to make purposeful decisions to promote college and career readiness as well as coherence. For example, staff determined that CMP3 is a program that expects students to come with some prerequisite skills mastered and students needed support. To this end, staff supplemented Go Math with parts of CMP3, thus providing students with the instructional shifts and with the scaffolds to reach them. A partnership with Medgar Evers College provides thirty hands-on and engaging lessons for all students, helping connect them to college and career readiness.
- To ensure that all students have access to rigorous curricula, staff refines and adjusts curricula and instruction based on student work and data. During teacher meetings, teachers demonstrated across core and elective classes, adjust instruction based on student work. An English language arts teacher explained how she uses the writing process and drafts to help adjust instruction based on student work for all students but especially for struggling and English language learners. A math integrated co-teaching teacher (ICT) explained that he adjusts his lesson the next day based on exit tickets and student work samples of writing ratios from the previous day. An art teacher stated she revised the lesson after receiving student work in Sumi-e painting using India ink and brushes, whereby students did not demonstrate shading and brush strokes according to the rubric. After reteaching, student work samples demonstrate a vast improvement of technique.
- A review of curricula planning documents demonstrates an adaptation of Codex to support student needs through changes in the pacing to include ReadyGen and poetry. Staff determined that Codex did not include poetry and students need to know figurative language for the state exam, so to ensure this occurred, they incorporated a unit from Ready.
- Curriculum maps for social studies include the New York City Department of Education Scope and Sequence and note essential questions, content, skills, assessments, and standards. The math curriculum incorporates Go Math and CMP3, demonstrating essential questions, major standard, number of days, and a correlation to CMP3 activities and units. Science includes the number of days, Common Core standards, labs, learning targets and vocabulary.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

While across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best and consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula, discussion at the team level does not always focus on strategic provision of multiple entry points and extensions for English language learners and students with disabilities.

Impact

The consistent set of beliefs about how students learn best is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. All learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal stated that administration and staff believe that children learn best when they are able to construct their understanding through rich conversations with their peers, exemplified by responding to and extending each other's thinking and crafting questions to help each other deepen and elaborate on their thinking, in a student centered learning environment. This was observed in five of eight classes these student-centered classes with rich and rigorous conversations with their peers using accountable talk stems. In several classes, teachers tracked student responses as a method of conferencing and determining adjustments to instruction and flexible grouping. In some classes the platform for discussion was opportunities for turn-and-talk whereby students answered a posed rigorous question. For example, in an English language arts class students had several opportunities to turn-and-talk answering questions such as, "Explain in your own words what alliteration is," and "How can creating a poem using repetition have an impact on its meaning?" Other classes had students sitting in groups where they solved questions or problems, such as math problems determining slope in real-world examples, "If you work five years at XYZ company how much would your annual salary be based on the scatter plot?"
- Not only do students have opportunities to turn-and-talk, but also to facilitate the class discussion, with the teacher as the guide on the side. By facilitating the class discussion, students work at the higher levels of the Depth of Knowledge (DOK). In the student meeting, several students stated that they really enjoyed facilitating class discussions and wanted to do it more often.
- Students were also provided opportunities to solve problems using manipulatives. This occurred in several classes including math and science. In a 6th grade math class students competed in their groups to collaboratively determine the highest product from the various solutions they could make using the same individual numbers and operations by using manipulatives and applying the order of operations. Concurrently the teacher worked with a small group of students reinforcing the order of operations using a tiered activity. In science students worked in pairs to complete a hands-on lab regarding the function of opposable thumbs. Students used duct tape to secure their partner's thumb before embarking on a series of tests determining if the partner could complete without the use of their thumbs.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff and provide professional development opportunities. Staff and school leaders consistently communicate the message of college and career readiness.

Impact

Clear messaging and established systems of training and accountability ensure that staff understand expectations and are held accountable by administration. Staff provides ongoing feedback to families to support understanding of student progress toward goals of college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- High expectations are evidence in communications regarding instruction, professionalism and other areas aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, the administration provides professional development opportunities on questioning and discussion, two areas of Danielson Framework that the school is focused upon this year. Teachers participate in professional development both at school and through outside partnerships, including the network, and then participants turnkey information back to the school. Administration threads the professional reading through the weekly staff memos where announcements of professional development are shared with staff and others.
- Administration holds staff accountable for those high expectations through a series of frequent classroom observations, feedback sessions, and professional development opportunities. Teacher observations demonstrate administrative actionable feedback that feeds the cycle of professional development.
- Parents expressed that they know what is going on in their child's class through mail, email, phone calls, class behavior system, Class Dojo, and the online grading system, Skedula. Through these venues, parents know if their child is missing assignments, demonstrating positive learning behaviors, or achieving goals. Parents stated that they are pleased with the constant contact from teachers, informing them both the negative and positive incidents. Parents know about the expectations of college and career readiness, as well as high school. They spoke about the college trips, the career day, workshops, and even the partnership with Medgar Evers College Pipeline Initiative where teachers attend math and ongoing professional developments, administrators receive coaching with the National Training Network, and parents attend bi-monthly sessions with their children. Additionally the school has partnered with their community-based organization, Creative Connections to help with working with students around college and career readiness.