



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Park Slope Collegiate

Middle-High School K464

**237 Seventh Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11215**

Principal: Jill Bloomberg

**Date of review: May 13, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Maribel Hulla**

The School Context

Park Slope Collegiate is a school with 408 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 38% Black, 38% Hispanic, 10% White, 8% Asian and 6% other students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. 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

The principal has established a distributive leadership structure that ensures the vast majority of staff engages in ongoing grade level and content area inquiry-based teacher professional collaborations.

Impact

The embedded collaborative structure empowers teachers, promotes school-wide instructional coherence aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts, and supports progress towards learning goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet regularly in grade and content specific teams and use collaboratively developed protocols to analyze curricula and student work, engage in shared reflection, and develop action plans to address the next steps. For example, in the 9th grade teacher team meeting teachers used the “Looking at Student Work Protocol” to review a student’s research paper on “a question I have about the world.” The teacher who led the meeting distributed the agenda, explained the protocol and asked her colleagues if they needed clarification. Teachers read and discussed specific noticings about the research paper and supports for this student and others like him in their classes. Teachers decided that more work was needed when writing counter claims. Each content specialist teacher shared how they would implement a strategy to support student understanding of counter claims. Specifically, the math teacher stated “in math we don’t do counter claims but I will support students by having them solve a math problem then write how they would be able to solve it differently and why their way is better.” The other content teachers stated they would review concept maps and support students by using articles during their Socratic seminar lesson to show claims within the articles.
- Agendas and minutes of all instructional meetings are shared via grade meetings, ensuring coherence and shared accountability for school-wide improved instructional practices. Specifically, professional learning time is organized around three study groups, Layered Curriculum, Academic Mindsets and Self-Assessments and Structures. Even though teachers participate in one study group they learn about all at their grade meetings where they specifically discuss how to implement strategies into their unit plans. Specifically, several teachers shared the impact of understanding and incorporating layer curriculum activities to their units. The history teacher described how he layered his unit on World War I, by including a variety of choices for students to show their understanding, such as creating a visual choice, using a graphic organizer to organize their thoughts, using bullets and/or a writing piece. An English teacher shared she had students display their understanding in the novel Like Water for Chocolate, by giving them a choice to write a letter to the author, write a restaurant review or write a song.
- A distributive leadership structure is embedded as part of the school culture and high expectations. Teacher leaders assume a leadership role in supporting colleagues in instructional decisions that impact curriculum development. Teachers affirmed that they have a significant voice in instructional decisions, “we are a community and we going to move the school together.”

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Teacher practice across classrooms reflect unity around school beliefs regarding how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. In addition, the principal has developed structures to strengthen instructional practices in implementing scaffolds and in the use of questioning and discussion techniques. The implementation of practices varies across the classrooms.

Impact

Although instructional practices reflect a common set of beliefs and teachers provide multiple supports to engage all learners, these supports are not always strategically planned. Thus, some students do not have the benefit of high quality supports and extensions that give them access to challenging and rigorous tasks that promote peer to peer discussion and full engagement in and ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Across a number of classrooms observed, lessons followed the workshop model, providing students with a structured do now, mini-lesson, and guided, independent and/or group practice. Though lessons were aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts, instructional practices varied in classrooms visited. For example in a sixth grade ICT ELA class students were engaged in an independent poetry writing task that reinforced skills taught in a mini-lesson and prepared students with developing an ABAB rhyming poem based on a topic of their interest. Teachers walked around to support students and ensured they were on task. However, in a history class, students all read the same newspaper article clippings and answered the same questions when comparing and contrasting an article from the New York Post versus an article from the New York Times as part of their “Do Now.” For independent work students read and annotated excerpts from Howard Zinn’s A Young People’s History of the United States, then they answered leveled questions to prepare them for an open forum discussion.
- Many teachers provided multiple entry points for English language learners and students with disabilities as well as learning extensions for higher achieving students. However, in a sixth grade math class students with a “Teaching point: Today we will practice graphing equations,” the mini lesson, and group practice did not provide sufficient support to ensure that all learners in the class mastered the skill of solving and graphing equations, as evident by a number of students in the class expressing uncertainty.
- In an ELA class observed, students were given opportunities to demonstrate their thinking by deciding “How can the multi-genre format enable them to explore their chosen careers in a different way than just writing in one genre.” Students made real world connections to careers they were interested in such as neurologist, basketball player, and teacher. Students were given a guide to support them with their genre writing called, “Requirements for Genre Pieces.” The guide was reviewed and then students were given the opportunity to choose the specific genre writing they would like to work on. As another support the teacher gave each student a rubric for the specific writing genre they chose to create. For example, a student who was going to write to an editor received the handout on “Creating a multi-genre letter to the editor” which included, characteristics/rubric based sample writing, a curriculum link and a newspaper connection.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Administrators and teachers strategically make curricula decisions that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. Teachers use relevant data and student work to make adjustments to curricula and tasks that ensure high levels of cognitive engagement for all learners.

Impact

Lessons and task are collaboratively created and planned resulting in coherence across grades and content areas and promotes college and career readiness for all learners including, English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs), with opportunities to demonstrate high levels of thinking through rigorous curricula, cognitively engaging tasks, and rich discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal and teachers have developed a form to assist with planning called, "Eleven Steps To Curriculum and Lesson Planning." This guide is utilized by teachers across the grades and content to coherently develop daily lessons to meet the needs of all learners, including ELLs and SWDs. Teachers also include the Layered Curriculum model in their lesson plans, a three layered model of differentiation (layered a, b, or c). Specifically, in an Algebra I, 9th grade lesson on "systems of equations and sequences," layer A students would "develop and write sequences from recursive equations and vice versa." Layer B students would "find different terms in a sequence." Layer C students would "identify a sequence generator." Students would also solve equations by graphing, substitution, and elimination. Students have the opportunity to work with a peer at his/her layer level as well as a different layer level.
- Teachers also plan with students as part of their participation in the Peer Enabled Restructured Classroom (PERC) program where high achieving students who are Teaching Assistant Scholars (TAS) support them with the daily lesson. TAS students support their peers with science and math courses. Specifically, in a PERC math lesson plan on "solving equations involving exponents and square roots," students in the PERC class with their teacher planned how they would support the layer C students with understanding various solution approaches involving exponents and square roots.
- Curriculum maps are developed across grades for all subject areas. Each map contains fully developed units of study. For example, the teacher-developed US History and Government maps include an essential question, enduring understandings, assessments, skills and strategies and are aligned to the New York City social studies scope and sequence and the Common Core Learning Standards and New York City instructional shifts. For example, in a ninth grade unit on "Jamestown," students were asked to annotate and summarize the text, based on evidence that supported their claims and assess whether or not their reasoning was sound and evidence was relevant. An eleventh grade Unit 3 map included the following topics in American history: reconstruction, industrialization and immigration, progressivism, expansionism, economic change, power/morality and global conflict along with challenges of the modern world. To support their understanding and learning students will make real world connections and use text based evidence to clarify their thoughts.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use a variety of data that is aligned to the curricula, allowing a comprehensive plan for feedback to teachers and students about student mastery of learning targets, across grades and subjects. Ongoing analysis and tracking of student progress data are embedded assessment practices across the school.

Impact

The analysis and use of common assessments along with the sharing of data with students and staff results in accurate feedback that helps improve student performance and guides teachers with making adjustments that result in improved achievement by all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has developed an assessment cycle in which teachers are expected to use the resulting data from collaboratively developed assessments to identify students' learning needs and inform instructional next steps. Through this process, teacher teams are able to analyze student outcomes and implement revisions in instructional strategies, including re-teaching of tasks. Minutes from teacher team meetings show analysis of assessment data and follow up interventions such as re-grouping, after school tutoring, and tutoring from a Teaching Assistant Scholar (TAS) student.
- Teacher teams utilize the grading policy when developing and revising assessments that are aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards and the school's instructional goal on academic and personal behaviors in alignment with student engagement. For example, all departments have agreed that the final marking period and semester academic mastery grades must reflect how well the student has met the learning standards after instruction, practice, and re-teaching. Students are provided a minimum of two learning opportunities followed by reassessments to demonstrate mastery of the content standards.
- Rubrics displayed on bulletin boards throughout the school provide actionable feedback to students. There are task specific rubrics, including text annotation rubric posted on the wall in an ELA class where students were engaged in annotating text. Similarly, in a writing class, the teacher provided students with a rubric on "creating a multi genre photograph with a cutline." Teachers were also observed making notes on clipboards as they provided students with feedback on work being done.
- Teachers are engaged in ongoing collaborations with students and families to support student progress. Teachers assume shared accountability for meeting established expectations and next steps along with the guidance counselors. Specifically, the school has created a one page tracker, "requirement worksheet for graduation" to support students with understanding progress towards high school graduation. This tracker is analyzed and reviewed with students and parents quarterly.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The principal has established a mutual understanding of high expectations and has created pervasive opportunities for professional development for staff on the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The school has systems of ongoing feedback to families regarding student progress towards college and career readiness goals.

Impact

The school's effective structures for sharing professional expectations result in staff members displaying a strong sense of mutual accountability in refining teaching and learning. On-going communication with families fosters a culture of high expectations for all members of the school community in understanding student progress as connected to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal communicates high expectations to staff through ongoing memos, and provides verbal and written feedback regarding professional and instructional practices based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching. There is a mutual accountability among teachers and leaders. Teachers willingly participate in study groups and implement learning and understanding at grade meetings and instructional planning. For example, the layered curriculum study group teacher lesson plans and grade meetings agendas and minutes include refinements to lessons inserting samples of the layered curriculum level tasks. The study group on Academic Mindsets has supported on grade and content teachers with engaging in collaborative work to meet learning goals. As stated by a teacher, "in order to want to learn and learn successfully, students need to think of themselves as productive contributors to their school."
- The school has also established a partnership with the Atlantic Theater Company's Staging Success (ATC). ATC collaborates with the U.S. History department before the semester begins to plan out history tie-ins and goals for a final performance. Students are expected to write scenes based on what they have learned in class such as issues of immigration and assimilation, and gentrification, then put on a performance at the theater for the school community and their parents. Students shared that they performed a musical inspired by "In the Heights" called "WEPA!" They took pride in showing me the pamphlet that was created for the show as well as previous pamphlets for previous shows.
- Parents feel welcome in the school and enjoy learning together. With support from school leader parents have created a newsletter, "The Pulse" to inform parents about what is happening in the school. They shared they are in frequent contact with teachers regarding their child's growth and that the school provides opportunities for them to participate in workshops regarding instructional practices, Common Core Learning Standards, supporting with searching for the right college, the application process, as well as financial aid application procedures. Parents also affirmed that they have access to Engrade, an online grading system.