



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Mott Hall IV Middle School

K522

**1137 Herkimer Street
Brooklyn
NY 11233**

Principal: Dr. Thomas McBryde Jr.

**Date of review: January 22, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Cheryl McClendon**

The School Context

Mott Hall IV is a middle school with 181 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 89% Black, 11% Hispanic, 0% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 11% students with disabilities. Boys account for 58% of the students enrolled and girls account for 42%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 89.3%.

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	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	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	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	Celebration	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	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training and accountability systems linked to the attainment of the expectations. Families receive ongoing feedback from teachers to further their understanding of student progress towards expectations set for them.

Impact

Professional development supports teachers in meeting school leaders' high expectations. Parents are supported in understanding student progress through various modes of communication.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal issues a weekly memo to the staff delineating instructional expectations, priorities and acclamations. At the beginning of the year every staff member receives and is provided professional development around the staff handbook comprising the school's vision, mission, core values and goals. In addition mandated instructional modalities that support the implementation of the Common Core are highlighted and explained throughout the handbook, such as the workshop model, independent work and providing multiple entry points in all subject areas. Expected standards for curriculum, unit and lesson planning are also detailed. In general, the handbook provides clear expectations for performance within all domains of the Danielson Framework for Teaching.
- School leaders, with input from the faculty have developed a comprehensive professional development plan including sessions focusing on topics such as the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), high-level questioning, incorporating multiple entry points into lesson plans, SMARTboard training, curriculum mapping, collaborative inquiry, Danielson framework, Response to Intervention, writing across the curriculum, creating and using standards-aligned rubrics. Professional development sessions are facilitated on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the year.
- The school uses the Skedula online grading system. Parents access their children's grades in Pupil Path, which is the parent portal of Skedula. In addition, the school publishes a newsletter each semester providing information to families regarding academic priorities and grade-wide learning targets.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Although across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and the Danielson Framework, reflecting the school's articulated beliefs about how students learn best and teaching strategies provide multiple entry points and promote higher-order thinking skills for students, these practices are not yet apparent in a few classrooms.

Impact

Student engagement in higher-order thinking skills varies based upon the level of questioning, differentiation and scaffolding.

Supporting Evidence

- In some classrooms teachers used high-order questioning to engage students in high-level discussions. For example in one eighth grade classroom to launch a discussion of the text, "La Vida Robot", the teacher asked, "How might robots change the way we live in the future?" Students were observed engaging in sharing ideas and generating their own questions such as, "Humans might become lazy and rely upon robots to do all of the work." And "Why do humans think it is okay to let robots do all of the work?" In another class students engaged in text-based discussions in small groups with focus on the guiding question, "Are people treated more equally under Hammurabi's code or under the United States justice system?" Students compared the ancient Babylonian codes to present-day edicts and practices. This level of questioning and cognitive demand was observed across some classrooms.
- The school wide instructional focus of providing multiple entry access to students was observed in an eighth grade science class. Students were grouped by assessed DOK competency level. Each group experimented with ramps and Matchbox cars, altering the incline to determine how the angle affects speed. Students had different roles and each group received questioning based upon their Degrees of Knowledge level.
- In a sixth grade class as students engaged in a discussion about the cultural relevance of the Great Wall of China, the teacher engaged students in analyzing the term "culturally relevant" as she elicited from them landmarks and institutions that have high relevance within our culture. Students offered, "the Statue of Liberty" and other landmarks.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the CCLS and emphasize the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work to promote coherence and accessibility for all students.

Impact

The use of Common Core-aligned curricula and units of study developed from content-area standards ensures implementation of the instructional shifts. On-going analysis of student work promotes coherence and accessibility.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grades teachers implement Codex for English Language Arts instruction with modifications to allow close reading. The principal stated that the close reading strategy is integrated to scaffold student comprehension of the high-level texts. In addition, to further support Common Core alignment, teachers have integrated independent reading strategies with the Codex curriculum. In math, the school uses CMP3 and integrates resources from Engage NY. The principal stated that the social studies curriculum was developed using the New York City Scope and Sequence. The school's instructional foci are "multiple entry access for all learners" and "writing across the curriculum". All social studies units include document-based questions and performance-based essay tasks. In addition the principal states there is a focus on writing within the standards-based science curriculum, as well.
- Across grades and subjects, teachers use a standard lesson plan template comprising the learning target, assessment, standards covered, essential question, key concept, guided practice, guided questions, independent practice, differentiation strategies, closing activities and remediation strategies.
- The school uses the Atlas Rubicon curriculum mapping tool. Through this online curriculum program, teachers align and modify curricular units based upon analysis of curriculum-linked performance-based assessments.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Curricula-aligned assessments and rubrics provide actionable feedback to students and teachers. Common assessments are used by teachers to make instructional and curricular modifications and monitor students' progress toward goals.

Impact

The use of rubrics, common assessments and goal-setting conferences support student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grades and subjects teachers use curriculum-based rubrics, Common Core rubrics and create or adapt rubrics. Rubrics are analyzed with students at the onset of a unit and students use them throughout the unit to guide their work. In addition, teachers create procedural rubrics that are used across grades and subjects. For example, the Group Work Rubric, with such skills as contribution/attitude, cooperation, focus on task/commitment, role fulfillment, communication and proficiency placed on a four point gradient, is used to provide feedback to students throughout the school.
- Teachers administer "skill of the week" assessments to track student progress in focal areas. Teachers meet with students monthly to discuss the data, identify critical need areas, set long term and short term goals and articulate action plans toward improvement. The plan is documented on a tracking form. The teacher and student sign the plan and a copy is given to the student.
- Teachers conduct goal-setting conferences with each student. During this conference the student analyzes summative data in a given subject and sets a realistic performance goal. The student reflects upon the obstacles that she or he may encounter toward goal attainment. The student and teacher discuss and document what the teacher will do to support progress, (this may include introducing scaffolds or modifying instruction) and what the student will do to support progress. Meeting times for progress monitoring are planned and the student and teacher sign off on the plan.

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

Teacher teams engage in consistent analysis of data and student work of focal students, resulting in improved pedagogy and student progress. Teacher leadership capacity and collaborative decision-making are supported by the school’s established distributed leadership structures.

Impact

The use of protocols facilitates teacher teams’ analysis of student work and data. Distributed leadership structures engage teachers in school wide decision-making.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use a variety of protocols during teacher team meetings to analyze data and student work. Some of the protocols used are the Data Analysis protocols. Within this protocol teachers analyze student work to determine which standards were explicitly taught, in which standards did student work reflect skill proficiency or skill deficit. Within this protocol, teachers conclusively identify patterns and determine next instructional steps. During the teacher team meeting, this protocol was observed as teachers analyzed and discussed the results of recently administered performance-based assessments in English language arts and math with regards to the progress of the lowest third performing students. After identifying the level of progress, teachers revised each student’s Response to Intervention plan by either targeting more intensive services or decreasing the frequency and intensity of services. The focus of the teacher team meeting was on school-wide goal number one which states “Decrease the percentage of students scoring in the bottom 3rd in ELA and math on the New York State exam by 10%.”
- Within the teacher team meeting, a teacher was designated as the facilitator. Another teacher assumed the responsibility of note taker. Teachers shared that teacher team roles and responsibilities are rotational. In addition, each department has a department facilitator who is also a member of the school’s instructional cabinet. Members of the instructional cabinet are responsible for reviewing school data in order to make instructional decisions that address school-wide gaps.
- The school participates in and has served as the host site for District 23 Professional Learning Communities. Within this initiative, teachers and administrators from schools throughout the district engage in pedagogy-focused inter-visitations, with the purpose of sharing and fortifying practice throughout the district.