



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

New Bridges Elementary

Elementary School K532

**1025 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn
NY 11213**

Principal: Kevyn Bowles

**Date of review: February 5, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Clarence G. Ellis**

The School Context

P. S. 532 is an elementary school with 349 students from pre-kindergarten through fourth grade. The school population comprises 76% Black, 19% Hispanic, 2% White, 1% Asian, and 2% Multi-Racial students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 91.5%.

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	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 and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across the school, horizontal and vertical teams engage in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations using assessments data and student work.

Impact

Inquiry-based professional collaborations result in improved pedagogy, coherent implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and progress for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly and have developed structures designed to plan, trouble shoot, and refine teacher practice. Additional structures include using agendas, tuning protocols, minutes, and supplemental materials, such as professional articles to support progress toward goals. The focus of the meetings has been on improving student independent reading levels. During the observed teacher team meeting, the group conducted a miscue analysis, as students read from their “just right text”, to uncover gaps between the students’ independent decoding and reading ability, and the actual complexity of text. The facilitator recorded the miscues and related findings and they discussed next steps to support the students’ reading, such as scaffolds and citing evidence from the text.
- The school leader supports and builds capacity through providing the minimum of once a week professional learning facilitated by the school assigned Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) specialist, teacher leaders, administrators, and mentor staff. This has led to increased opportunities for teachers to learn instructional strategies which could be used to reteach lessons from colleagues, which resulted in an increase of student mastery toward school goals as observed when reviewing school artifacts such as second and third grade teacher grade books, baseline, and subsequent school year data.
- A review of minutes across the school year, demonstrate how horizontal and vertical teacher teams analyze common assessments to determine areas in which students either meet the standard or require further support. Additionally, teachers share strategies to improve instructional delivery during lessons. For example, during the teacher team meeting, teachers shared that they engage in inter-visitations and model best practices for one another to strengthen pedagogy throughout the school. This has resulted in improvement of instruction. A review of teacher observations indicates that the majority of teachers are trending in the effective category.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, pedagogy is aligned to the curricula and reflects a school-wide belief about how students learn best that is aligned to the Danielson Framework through high levels of student discussion and engagement.

Impact

There is implementation of multiple entry points, consistent student engagement by all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities, in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstration of higher-order thinking skills in all student work products. However, discussions do not reflect students' ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- School-wide, teachers believe students learn best when engaged in tasks which require higher order thinking skills and question and discussion. In a third grade class, the teacher asked students several questions such as "What is voice? What is an example of that? Various students responded to the questions. The teacher asked all students to go back into the text to find evidence. The students were citing from the Teacher's College text *The Story of Ruby Bridges*. One student said, "The type of feelings that Ruby shows because she is brave." Other students also responded whether or not they agreed citing from the same text.
- During a second grade math lesson, students were engaged in question and discussion with the teacher. The teacher discussed ways to identify the place value of two digit numbers. The teacher asked students to state what the number 3 means in the number 37. One student responded, "I think it represents 3 tens or 30." The teacher asked students to review responses from their peers and state whether they agree or disagree and why. The comments were varied and students demonstrated understanding of the concept.
- During a third grade English language arts lesson, students were instructed to turn and talk to their partner to discuss why stories use exaggerations. The students were observed in discussion with one another, then asking one another their opinion using sentence starters which were on each student's desk. The teacher circulated throughout the classroom while recording notes on a chart. The teacher then asked students to share their thoughts with the class while citing evidence from the text. However, in another second grade English language arts lesson, the lesson was teacher-dominated, and the student discussion did not offer high levels of cognitive engagement, nor were students given opportunity to facilitate discussions amongst each other.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and teachers effectively align curricula to Common Core Learning Standards and ensure the integration of the instructional shifts. School-wide, teachers utilize student work and data to plan and refine curricula and academic tasks.

Impact

The use of curricula has provided coherence across all grades and college and career readiness skills for students. The planning and refinement of units and academic tasks based on the needs of all learners, has provided students with access to learning opportunities in which they are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet weekly in horizontal and vertical teams to examine Common Core aligned units of study, student work, analyze data, and adjust lesson plans which results in differentiated tasks which provide multiple entry points for all learners. For example, a first grade lesson listed refinements for students who were having difficulty with regrouping in subtraction. Additional differentiated tasks were created to support students, specifically through the use of a number line, as well as base ten blocks.
- The reading, writing, math, science, and social studies units of study are closely aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards instructional shifts. Additionally, the school utilizes the Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project for reading and the enVision Math curricula. Examples of student tasks that align to the shifts were evident in teacher's lesson plans such as responding to questions using text-based evidence, writing opinion pieces on topics or texts, and opportunities for students to engage in accountable talk in groups, or in pairs. For example, a second grade unit of study indicates writing activities for students such as thinking of a topic, then listing poem structures to match what they are trying to say about the topic.
- Lesson plans in all content areas reinforce higher order thinking skills and represent various instructional strategies such as turn and talk, citing text-based evidence, and the use of graphic organizers. For example, within a first grade teacher's plan, students were required to turn and talk using pre-planned questions aligned to the lesson focus. The lesson plan also reflected evidence of questions that students could respond to, following the pre-planned mid-lesson interruption.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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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

The use of assessments has led to actionable next steps so students and teachers are aware of areas in need of improvement, which are used to inform curricula and instructional groupings.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grades and content areas, rubrics are aligned to the school's grading policy. During an interview, one student stated, "When we are close to publishing, our teacher makes a rubric so we can see what we have and what we are missing." As a result, students are able to plan next steps independently, with peers, or with the teacher which has led to an improvement in the learning process. This was evident during the student interview; as another student stated, I know that I am on target because I know what my level is, and the teacher lets me know what I need to work on to improve.
- Teachers use Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, enVision Math, end of unit assessments, pre and post tests, high frequency word assessments, and Fountas & Pinnell running records to demonstrate student growth. During an interview with members of the vertical teacher team, it was stated that assessments take place regularly to ascertain student strengths and areas of need. All teachers and students maintain assessment binders in which students' progress is tracked for further supports including intervention, re teaching, or enrichment. The assessments uncovered that students needed support with high frequency words, as well as support in writing with structure, elaboration, and writing mechanics. Thus, students were grouped according to aforementioned needs. As a result there students were given small group academic supports tailored to their respective areas of concern.
- It is evident that feedback is given to students, both verbally and in writing. Additionally, students engage in individual and peer assessments. While visiting classrooms and reviewing student work portfolios, actionable, rubric-based feedback with next steps was written on all student work samples. For example, a student was told that he cited evidence appropriately but needed to give more specifics, when writing it.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Schools leaders consistently communicate high expectations for teaching and professional development that is aligned to the college and career readiness path. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students. The school is in the process of expanding a system to engage more parents in the community.

Impact

Schools leaders have a system for holding staff accountable; as such staff is fully aware of school-wide instructional expectations. The school ensures that students and families are provided with feedback regarding student progress so they are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- During interviews, parents stated that information is communicated to them via Tuesday parent meetings, school calendar, phone-master, phone calls, school and class newsletters, and memorandums from the principal and teachers. For example, one parent shared; “I am consistently informed how to support my child at home.”
- Schools leaders provide ongoing feedback to teachers, which detail strengths and areas of concern. The principal provides teachers with educational articles and video resource lists, to help them address targeted areas of their instructional delivery or planning. He also encourages the teachers to engage in inter-visitations and learning walks with colleagues, utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching, as the tool which focuses the visit. The principal conducts snapshots of teacher practice which allows him to give immediate feedback upon the conclusion of the visit. The principal then coordinates teacher leaders and mentor staff to support teachers individually or in small groups. These observations highlight trends of improvement in the area of questioning and discussion techniques and engagement.
- Every school year, the school leader distributes expectation handbooks to students, parents, and staff. The school community also participates in a Curriculum Night and Meet the Teacher Night. The parents stated during interviews that there are structures in the school which prepare students for middle and high school. For example, each Friday, the schools hosts College and Career Fridays, where the students are encouraged to plan for their life after school, by being engaged in varied learning opportunities around potential careers and discussing and exploring the concept of going to college.