



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report 2014-2015

Madiba Prep Middle School

**Middle School 681
1010 Lafayette Ave.
Brooklyn
NY 11221**

Principal: Sharon Stephens

Date of review: November 17, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Santiago

The School Context

Madiba Prep is a middle school with 165 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 82% Black, 15% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian, and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 25% 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 92%.

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	Developing
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	Developing
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	Developing
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

The school consistently communicates high expectations to staff and aligns professional development activities to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Numerous school-wide communications and frequent student performance updates keep families informed of their child's development towards college and career readiness.

Impact

The school's structures for communication and systems of support result in staff and families working towards a clear path of higher student achievement and college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal uses the Danielson Framework for Teaching (DfT) to inform classroom instructional practices and communicates expectations to teachers and staff at professional development workshops and during individual teacher meetings. In addition, the school has two coaches who specialize in English language arts (ELA) and math respectively, and who, along with network support staff, collaborate with teachers and provide ongoing training on the implementation of the Danielson Framework. One of the training sessions included an overview of the expectations of the Domains with emphasis on Domain 3.
- The principal holds staff accountable via formal and informal observations and provides feedback during one to one conferences. Feedback to one teacher included a discussion on the development and inclusion of a learning objective to communicate to students the expected lesson outcome when planning a lesson.
- The school has established a Parent Academy that offers a variety of parent workshops such as "Technology and Your Child", "Close Reading", "High School Articulation" and "Transition 101". The school also hosted a "Curriculum Night" event in the fall where teachers and staff shared information with families on the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) with a focus on writing across all subject areas.
- Parents expressed that the school staff is caring and nurturing and maintain ongoing communication with families that includes weekly trackers, phone calls, grade conferences and monthly progress reports to keep them well informed of their child's progress in school.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Although the school has begun to align pedagogy with the Danielson Framework for Teaching and some instructional supports are provided, the emphasis on higher order thinking skills and the use of multiple entry points that would promote in-depth analysis, deep student engagement, and rich class discussion are inconsistent.

Impact

Some teachers are beginning to align the curricula and implement academic supports to yield meaningful student work products, yet there are missed opportunities for all learners, (including English language learners and special education students) to engage in high level discussions and create meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's beliefs of how students learn best, informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, include hands on activities, application of knowledge to real world situations and opportunities for questioning and discussion. However, these practices were not implemented consistently across classrooms. For example, in one social studies classroom observed, the lesson consisted mainly of student responses to teacher directed questions that yielded limited discourse. In another classroom, activities included a "Do Now" followed by students completing worksheet exercises independently that did not include peer collaboration and learning.
- The English as a second language (ESL) teacher shares strategies for second language learners with teachers and in a few classrooms students were observed working in groups with support from teachers and paraprofessionals. However, in several classrooms lessons did not consistently include demonstrations of expected outcomes and learning that provided appropriate scaffolds and challenge for subgroups. For example, during a science lesson observed, the lesson presentation was conducted whole group and focused entirely on how to use a triple beam balance with few opportunities for students to interact, discuss, and share their learning with their peers.
- While bulletin board displays in the halls contained samples of student writing and learning in content areas and students' folders included some work in English language arts and math, in most classrooms student work products consisted mainly of worksheets comprised of mundane tasks that did not reflect high levels of thinking. For example, some math work samples reflected a completed series of math exercises in isolation of application or problem solving contexts.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

While the school has aligned curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards, there is inconsistency in the use of data analysis and teachers planning rigorous tasks for all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and special education students.

Impact

Although the school's curricular planning is beginning to promote coherence to ensure that all students are college and career ready, tasks across grade and content areas do not consistently emphasize higher order thinking for all students, hindering a high level of cognitive engagement for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- During summer recess, the school developed curriculum maps that integrate the Common Core and instructional shifts in English language arts and math. In addition, teachers are in the process of expanding the maps to include standards from the New York City Scope and Sequence in science and social studies to support the school's goal of college and career readiness.
- To help enrich the school's instructional focus area in writing, the school purchased a supplemental school-wide program that supports writing in all subject areas. However, tasks that promote rigor were not evident in several classrooms visited. In one classroom, the teacher limited the lesson activities to students discussing an author's meaning of selected phrases from a poem, thus, missing opportunities to further deepen students' understanding and learning.
- Although lesson plans reflected Common Core based curricula topics, teacher planning for the use of scaffolds that might support the learning for ELLs and Students with Disabilities (SWDs) was inconsistent across the school. Some plans included only the task such as, "Read the article about the colony established by Penn and answer one question referring back to the reading."
- Teachers meet weekly in teams to plan lessons and units of study in ELA and math using summative and formative assessment outcomes to inform curricula decisions. However, there is inconsistent use of language development data for ELLs and information contained in students' Individualized Instructional Plans (IEPs) to ensure access to the curricula and lesson tasks for all students.

Findings

The school is beginning to use common assessments and classroom checks for understanding to track student progress towards goals, gauge student understanding, and inform curricula and instructional adjustment.

Impact

While the school has implemented structures to measure learning progress through data analysis and during instruction, these practices do not consistently inform adjustments that meet students' academic needs, therefore hindering student mastery of learning objectives.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses a range of common assessments that includes results from State tests, Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) and unit tests in ELA and math. The analysis of assessment results have led to the development of instructional goals for teaching and the targeting of skills in ELA and math. However, the school has not yet gathered information from these assessments to monitor individual student progress in all content areas for all learners.
- Although teachers gather data that includes formative assessments, and student work to determine levels of student learning in ELA and math, the use of data to inform and adjust instruction in all content areas is not consistent across classrooms.
- Ongoing classroom checks for understanding such as questions and answers and student self-assessments, do not always lead to instructional adjustments that support all learners including student subgroups.

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

Teachers meet in professional collaborations and analyze assessment outcomes during team meetings. The school leader provides opportunities that promote teacher leadership and input on key instructional decisions.

Impact

Inquiry-based teacher team work is building teacher capacity leading to increased student progress. Distributive leadership structures support staff collaboration and enhance pedagogical skills to improve student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly by subject and grade level with a focus on the implementation of the CCLS and looking at student work to plan lessons and improve classroom practices. For example, after analysis of student work in math, a teacher team planned to support students achieve goals through use of instructional strategies such as “think, pair, and share” and one to one conversations with feedback for targeted students. Teachers agreed to share the impact of the suggested strategies on student learning at their next meeting.
- The literacy and math coaches support teachers at team meetings via sharing strategies and best practices. In addition, teacher leaders and coaches organize inter-visitations and conduct demonstration lessons to highlight exemplars of effective instructional practices.
- Instructional coaches and teacher leaders regularly meet with the school leader to develop and plan professional development opportunities and to discuss growth towards improved pedagogical practices aligned with the expectations of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, based on the need to promote higher level thinking among students, questioning and vocabulary development became areas of focus and professional growth.