



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Ellen Lurie School**

**Elementary School M005**

**3703 Tenth Avenue  
Manhattan  
NY 10034**

**Principal: Wanda Soto**

**Date of review: January 23, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince**

## The School Context

The Ellen Lurie School is an Elementary school with 643 students from grade Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 40% Black, 48% Hispanic, 2% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 36% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 96.0%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for professionalism and instruction to the entire staff aligned with elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The school partners with families to support student progress. Teacher Teams and staff provide clear feedback and guidance supports to ensure that students own their educational experience.

### Impact

By consistently communicating high expectations to staff student and families, and creating a system of mutual accountability for those expectations, school leaders, teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that sets high expectation level for all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- High expectations for learning and positive character traits are communicated to the entire school community. Students have an understanding of what the expected learning outcomes are and use the “I CAN” statement to assess their own learning and quality of their work. Instructional plans are aligned to the CCLS and Danielson Framework and are evident in curriculum units and lesson plans.
- A Staff Handbook is distributed for teachers to have clear professional responsibilities. Each teacher has set their own goals, and professional development is provided based on school goals and citywide expectations. School leaders meet regularly with teachers to discuss their progress.
- Rigor has been defined as challenging children to think at a high level and to expose students to grade level text, both fiction and non-fiction, aligned to the CCLS in conjunction with the Danielson Framework and Webb’s Depth of Knowledge wheel. School leaders regularly visit classrooms and provide teachers with feedback that aligns with school goals and teacher development using the Framework as a guide.
- Guidance personnel work with all students to develop understanding around a character education program, “Connect with Kids.” Character traits are discussed along with clear feedback about student’s goals and owning their educational experience. Positive feedback and conflict resolution are used to communicate high expectations around academics and socio-emotional requirements using the RULER approach – “Recognize, Understand, Label, Express and Regulate” their emotions. Guidance support is also extended to families when necessary.
- School leaders and staff offer ongoing feedback to help families understand student progress toward their goals. Parent workshops are provided to families to effectively the share the school’s goals. The school communicates constantly and consistently to parents/families. Families are involved in a community-based program through the school that emphasizes TIGER Reading, “Together in Getting Everyone Reading.” There are reading events in and around the school.

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

### Findings

Pedagogy is aligned to the curricula and reflects a coherent set of beliefs about student learning informed by Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points into the curricula for all students.

### Impact

The alignment of pedagogy to curricula and the use of scaffolding, effective questioning techniques and multiple entry points enable all learners to be engaged in appropriately challenging tasks. Students are engaged in activities that require high-order thinking skills and discussions, and reflects participation of all learners including ELLS and SWDs.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school's instructional focus is "Active Thinking Spaces," where rich learning experiences are created. Students are encouraged to engage in discussions in all subjects. Teachers have set personal goals in relation to the Framework and based on targeted components covered in ADVANCE. Improved teaching practices in designing coherent instruction, questioning and discussion techniques, more engagement in students learning, using assessments in instruction, have been a focus for most teachers as stated in the teacher team meeting.
- Teachers are formally and informally observed with feedback both verbally and written. Teachers have been grouped into Tiers based on either their overall rating from last school year or status as new teacher, so that appropriate supports can be provided. Mentoring, inter-visitations and sharing of best practices is part of the collaborative efforts of this administration.
- Across classroom teachers are providing multiple entry points and supports to all students. In classes viewed, there was a gradual release of responsibility allowing students to work independently or in groups, demonstrating their understanding of the learning target. Teachers are working on designing DOK questioning techniques to assist in more challenging assignments. In the second grade English Language Arts class, the students were asked to describe the overall structure of a story *A Chair for my Mother*, The students did the read aloud and then preceded to turn and talk about "I know this because..." Children were reciting answers, and a seamless process was in place with a gradual release of responsibility from teacher to students. The students created charts and vocabulary lists with assistance from the teacher. Some groups were encouraged to reread, use sentence starters or make a list of character traits.
- Training has been provided to the staff on multiple entry points for all students including SWDs and ELLs was evident across classrooms. There was use of scaffolding to meet the learning deficits of subgroups and struggling learners. Students were using graphic organizers, exit slips, thumbs up/thumbs down, think/pair/share and other techniques to support and extend their learning.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

All curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards. Higher order skills are consistently emphasized for all learners across the grades and content areas.

### Impact

The school's curricular decisions build coherence and rigorous habits for all learners. Across grades and content areas, academic tasks push student thinking.

### Supporting Evidence

- Curricula maps provide evidence that the school develops rigorous academic tasks aligned to the CCLS and Danielson Framework through the adaption of instructions from Ready-Gen in Literacy and Go-Math for mathematics. Teachers analyze the units and determine the sequence of lessons as well as identifying the skills and content to be taught. The school is working to prioritize the order of the Go Math units to address the standards tested on the state exam.
- Unit plans in all content areas illustrated multiple designs of academic tasks with numerous scaffolds and entry points and extensions for the advanced learners. In the 5<sup>th</sup> grade class doing Math, the students were working in small groups; the Smart Board had listed "What is a divisor?" and "Don't over think, look at the problem, use the model." The students were engaged in answering in their groups and going up to the board pointing to the answer. The use of an essential question from Go Math was, "How do you use a model to solve a problem?" Student thinking was pushed to look at different ways to solve the same task. Student groups had math vocabulary cards at their desks, and they were using think/pair/share/ to plan their process. While circulating the room, the teacher pointed out, "Brandon is using the strategy of relating division to solve the problem; who has another process?"
- Teachers are developing clear objectives and working to incorporate Webb's Depth of Knowledge across all subjects. There is a continuing plan, as stated by the principal, to focus on mathematical thinking skills and refining academic tasks to provide students with the ability to use critical thinking skills. This is being done with the support of coaches who are assisting in refining the curriculum maps to incorporate the use of non-fiction/fiction and math fluency.
- The school has supplemented the curriculum to meet the needs of the Bilingual population by incorporating translation of Read Gen masters and adding the use of informational text and literary genres to teach students in their native language.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

The school uses common assessments in all subject areas, tracks student progress and adjusts curricula and instructional decisions. There are ongoing checks for understanding that are aligned to the school's curricula and used strategically to drive instruction and push students to think critically.

### **Impact**

Teachers have identified foundational skills challenges in writing assessments through examination of common assessments and checks for understanding in lessons. Teachers are assessing student learning in all subjects, across all grades, to target interventions, to provide varied scaffolds and to share instructional planning to meet all students learning needs.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- There were common assessments and checks for understanding in the classrooms observed. Curricula aligned assessment practices and grading policies provided actionable feedback. Students held up fingers/cards/colors to show an understanding of the targeted lesson. Teachers assess and analyze students' progress through benchmark assessments, formative and summative assessments. Students are aware of their reading levels and discussed how important it is to read well and what the school's goals meant.
- Student work is assessed using a common, grade specific rubric. There is continued refinement of assessment and feedback systems to ensure that students and families have a clear understanding of what their child is doing well and what they need to work on. Grade and vertical teams look at assessments to align them with Common Core Learning Standards and curriculum aligned rubrics to discuss next steps, as evidenced by team discussions and past agendas.
- The school has a school-wide grading policy to determine student progress toward meeting subject specific benchmarks. Baseline and diagnostic assessments are used at regular intervals. Gathering data and presenting this information to monitor each student's progress over time is embedded into the teacher team practices. Teachers use curricula aligned assessments in all subject areas as a source for actionable feedback regarding students' strengths and challenges.
- Student work is posted on bulletin boards and in folders and has rubrics with actionable feedback from their teacher. GOLD, a tool for assessing the English Language Learners who are first learning English, enables the teacher to increase the effectiveness of their assessments. Teacher checklists and conferencing notes help identify who needs immediate attention with learning tasks during the lesson.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

Teachers engage in structured, inquiry based professional collaborations focused on aligning practice with the CCLS and analyzing assessment data and student work.

**Impact**

Teacher practices are strengthened, and student progress in learning is achieved.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams meet weekly organized by grade with a focus on planning lessons. Structured professional collaborations are embedded into the schedule with common planning time. Teams are implementing the alignment of the CCLS, Danielson Framework, and Webb’s DOK integration into curriculum/lesson planning. Both teams interviewed stated that they use common data tools to identify strengths and needs of the school, classes, subgroups and individual students.
- Teams use a protocol to analyze student work as seen during the 5<sup>th</sup> grade meeting. Strategic instructional adjustments are made as needed to plans/units. Teams working together plan differentiation for students within their lessons and share methods of entry points of instruction. Looking at student work employed a uniform method to help make instructional decisions among the grades.
- Additional time is given for the literacy and math coaches to be at team meeting to provide guidance in delivery of instruction and a deeper understanding of the CCLS. Teachers periodically meet in vertical teams to consider school-wide trends.
- Teachers participate in inter-class visitations with a focus on a specific skill and on sharing of best practices. Teachers revisit their own lessons after receiving feedback from their peers. Teachers spoke how this helps to further their own personal learning goals.