



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

William T. Harris School

Elementary School M011

**320 West 21st Street
Manhattan
NY 10011**

Principal: Robert Bender

**Date of review: May 12, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Darryl Alhadeff**

The School Context

PS11 is an elementary school with 820 students from grade Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 9% Black, 28% Hispanic, 47% White, and 12% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 95.0%.

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	Additional Findings	Well Developed
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	Focus	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	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	Additional Findings	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school leaders constantly communicate high expectations to the entire staff and successfully partners with families to support career and college readiness.

Impact

The high expectations communicated result in consistent engagement by students involved in their own learning. In classrooms and at meetings student voice is heard and results in higher achievement and readiness for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- A school handbook which outlines school protocols and expectations for students is providing to all staff. The principal created a document that chronicles each teacher in the school regarding license, tenure status, grade level taught, professional development provided, observation feedback cycle, action plan/support and building capacity based on the Danielson indicators The administration meets with the staff to set goals that are aligned to the Danielson Framework based on data and teacher observations. .
- The principal revised the handbook resulting in it being online as well as in hard copy. The online version can be translated into various different languages on the school web site providing all members of the school community to have access to the expectations set forth. The handbook outlines all school expectations and protocols. Administrators have set clear expectations for their staff in regards to professional responsibilities and planning for units of study and daily lesson plans. The principal has met with members of the staff to set goals that are aligned to the Danielson Framework.
- Student portfolios are shared with parents five times a year. Families receive a wide view of their child's learning. Families are invited to participate in parallel professional development. The school invites families to learn more about specific content related information in the schools "Curriculum Connection" series and content specific evening workshops. "Show Me videos" allow families to get at home support through video tutorials. Families have become part of the school's instructional partnership. Instruction in science, arts, library science and robotics are offered to all families. The school holds ongoing meetings to prepare students for middle school admission.
- Peer feedback is internalized by students and sets them on the path to independent learning. Students know where to go when they need support. In the classrooms there are process charts, graphic organizers, and mentor text. Teachers are readily available for academic and social emotional support. Students are made aware of benchmarks and standards at the beginning of each unit of study and receive direct feedback from teachers and peers regarding their progress toward meeting grade level standards. In the parent meeting many parents commented on the many ways the school reaches out to them and how the school supports their children.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Assessments are aligned to the schools curricula and focus on student self –assessment with on-going checks for understanding. Teachers make adjustments to curricula and daily plans based on data.

Impact

Analysis of student performance provides teachers with assessment data across subject areas. . However, the feedback is not sufficiently clarified for all students including English language learners and students with disabilities to push students to their highest level of achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal reports that assessment is deeply embedded in planning and is present in daily lessons. Pre and post assessments are given to all students. Teachers assess daily, when meeting with individual students, partnerships and small groups. Students self -assess using standards based on checklists and rubrics. For example, the school uses a rubric for the students reading notebook. The levels include scholar, thinker, reader, and scanner/shopper. The notebook is scored using a four point rubric Teacher feedback however did not offer a clear portrait of student mastery.
- During the student meeting the students shared how they use rubrics and checklists in their classrooms. One student spoke of the feedback given by his peer on a writing assignment. Another student brought his writers notebook and discussed the teacher feedback that was written about an entry he wrote. Two students stated that they used the rubrics and checklist to do a better job. Yet, some students were unable to articulate the next steps needed to reach mastery.
- In most classrooms formative assessment practices were embedded in lessons in reading, writing and mathematics. The students share their thinking and ideas with partners or group members. The students used exit slips for immediate teacher feedback. In some classrooms teachers had detailed check- lists for content and skills. In all classrooms teachers were taking conference notes as they observed learning or met with students 1:1 or in small groups.
- The school carefully analyzed assessment data in mathematics for grades K-5. The analysis was based on the fluency aspect of the main computational skills taught. Data revealed the percentage of students who were lacking in basic fluency improved across grades. The fifth grade showed an increase of 29% in the number of students whose fluency improved.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school has a rigorous curriculum that is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and incorporates the instructional shifts. Academics tasks emphasizing higher –order skills are embedded across grades and subject areas.

Impact

The curriculum ensures that students are engaged in challenging tasks that allows all students to be independent thinkers. There is coherence across subjects and grades promoting college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has developed units of study across subject areas that are rigorous and aligned to the Common Core Standards. When planning and revising lessons teachers use an instructional stairway of complexity to ensure that there is coherence across grades. All curriculum and planning notes are shared with the staff via G Drive to enable access on all grades in order for teachers to differentiate and meet students' needs. Standards are constructed into "I Can" statements which students use independently to monitor their progress. Students use the "I Can " statements daily as part of self- assessment.
- The mathematics curriculum was re-written to address all standards. Teachers worked in grade level teams with the principal, assistant principal and math coach. Resources from several research based curriculum including. Investigations, Georgia Math, Math in Focus, and Context for learning were utilized. All math units and lesson plans have enrichment/intervention. For example, in the kindergarten unit on shapes an overview, the essential questions followed by the "I Can" statement, key models, key language, and benchmarks were incorporated. The unit also provides examples of station teaching. The majority of the units give supports for every day lesson planning over two weeks. In all grades the school is working on multi-step problems. Students work with peers and apply their knowledge to problem solving. In the gifted and talented classes mathematics is differentiated by the results of unit pre- assessments to provide meaningful grouping of students.
- The school employs Teachers College reading and writing units for its literacy program. The workshop model allows for student independence during the independent work time. Students are given choice about which skills and strategies to work on during this time. Students become experts in a specific area of literacy and conduct student led seminars for their peers. The school has also incorporated project-based learning into their literacy units. Teachers design project based learning so students can learn how to apply their knowledge.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Teachers develop lesson plans that provide multiple entry points for all students. All classrooms had a variety of ways in which all students were given high-quality supports to produce their work products.

Impact

Across classrooms the vast majority of students demonstrate high levels of thinking. Academic tasks are embedded in coherent ways across classrooms and subjects resulting in strong student participation and ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- The workshop model provides time for small group learning, guided reading, strategy groups, as well as Individual conferencing. Students work at independent levels and are offered choice. In Integrated Co- Teaching classrooms the parallel teaching model is used. “Lesson Menus” of learning opportunities are created for students, including strategy tool boxes, checklists and “I Can “statements. In one of the classes visited, one student had his own schedule taped to the desk to support his learning. Special education students in a general education setting receive the same supports. Students may be departmentalized to meet their academic needs.
- The school’s instructional focus is on developing stamina and is embodied in the term “grit”. Teachers and families have spent the year engaged in grade level and cross grade level teams studying the research around student grit and perseverance. The “I Can “statements were a result of this instructional focus. The school wide belief in children having ownership is seen across grades. Each child participates in the development of their personal reading plan with the support of the teacher. A student in a first grade class had his plan out during independent reading. His job was to look at sight words on a rig, start reading his just right book, and have a discussion using talk moves with his partner. The child sitting next to him had a slightly different routine. In all classrooms there were independent scaffolds for students. For example, the teaching point of the lesson is displayed on a white board, word walls and charts that supported the current units in reading, writing and math. All supports were in child friendly language from grade k-5. The charts were authentic and contained examples of student work. For example on a chart:” Lessons Learned in Lots of Books”, a student said, “I worked on this yesterday with the rest of the class.”
- Instructional shifts are incorporated to design coherent academic progression. Mathematics classrooms addressed mathematics fluency through math centers and station teaching. In literacy, increasing non-fiction reading, writing about reading, comparing big ideas in all units and developing common language across grades is a yearlong goal. For example, during a kindergarten lesson on shapes, the students engaged in fluency through rapid recall as shapes appeared on the Smart board. All students were observed to be fully engaged in the learning.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

All teachers engage in collaborative sessions and inquiry groups that drive academic improvement in classrooms. The school supports teacher participation in varying capacities and provides opportunities for teacher to have voice in school decisions.

Impact

The level of curricula coherence is due to the ongoing work of teacher teams. Distributive leadership is supported by the school leader and results in increased teacher capacity and improved student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet at least twice weekly. These meetings are rotated between professional study, grade level planning and inquiry study. The Integrated Team Teaching partnerships created their own meeting time with support from the principal. Additional voluntary cross grade action research occurs monthly. Teachers use this time to review student work and make adjustments regarding their planning. A team member using the shared leadership style facilitates meetings. All teachers are responsible for the facilitation of meetings. Minutes from meetings are shared school-wide through the use of G Drive. The administration monitors team meetings through attendance at meetings and reviewing minutes on line.
- Distributed leadership opportunities are afforded teachers both formally and informally.. Teachers may choose to design their own learning through Cycles of Learning. A detailed proposal is presented to the administration based on observational data. If accepted, the teacher together with colleagues creates a plan for the six-week cycle. Teachers also participate in the Teachers College Leadership program. Teachers serve on the professional development committee, hiring committee as well as provide coaching to new members of the staff. New teachers meet monthly with mentors. Cross grade team members return to their grade level teams monthly to turnkey practices discussed at cross grade team meetings.
- During teacher meetings the staff enthusiastically expressed the effective support they receive from the administration. One teacher said, "The principal listens to what we want." Teachers shared that they had voice in the makeup of the inquiry groups as well as many opportunities to learn and share together. The school conducted an inquiry into math and refined the math assessments. The principal and his team studied the math data from the state test and addressed the students' needs. Teachers feel instruction for all learners to achieve mastery improved as a result of their inquiry and studies.