



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Arthur Tappan

Elementary – Middle School M046

**2987 Frederick Douglass Boulevard
Manhattan
NY 10039**

Principal: George Young

**Date of review: March 9, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Roxan Marks**

The School Context

Arthur Tappan is an elementary - middle school with 870 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 51% Black, 47% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 89.0%.

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	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	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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and support staff through professional learning opportunities aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. School leaders and staff successfully partner with families to support student progress toward clear expectations for college and career readiness.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability for high expectations is evident in professional development that is providing teachers with opportunities to lead activities. Students, including the target groups, receive academic support, leading to their college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate high expectations to all staff members through the handbook, newsletters, calendars, letters, and memos and provide clear guidelines at the beginning of the year. The principal has served for over 23 years as the leader and parents commented that he has set high standards and the strong arts programs provided to students. The school's mission focuses on educating the whole child, encompassing academic as well as social-emotional learning. A professional development plan supports learning through activities to assist curriculum, assessments, data applications, questioning, discussions, Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK), Hess' Cognitive Matrix Rigor, Universal Design for Learning and other topics. The use of Edviation, a program that offers exemplar videos that teachers use following the feedback from observations, enhances professional development. Teachers commented that Edviation coupled with inter-visitations and professional learning opportunities have helped them to incorporate best practices into their repertoire and have expectations for the elements of highly effective teaching based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching.
- The school provides monthly progress reports for families and uses time on Tuesdays to engage parents in a variety of activities. Academic intervention service providers create action plans for students that require intervention services. These plans provide a goal, and subsequent actions for teachers, parents and students and all parties are required to sign this document and commit to implement the activities stated in the plan. Intervention teachers also share ongoing reports with families regarding student progress toward established goals. The school library remains open for parental access and Family Nights expose the community to band, chorus, piano labs, cultural dances and other activities.
- To address college readiness, teachers display the schools they attended outside their classrooms and speakers from various fields share information with students. Former graduates are among the guests that are eager to return to their alma mater to talk with students. Students in the middle school engage in bi-weekly meetings to plan, talk about their vision for the future and steps needed to complete articulation processes. School leaders attend middle and high school fairs and students in grades 7 and 8 have advisory period to support transition planning. Pre-kindergarten parents are supported as their children transition into the school. Meetings are held that address behaviors of students, adjusting to school, discipline and other topics to support the students' acclimation to the school community.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to curricula and school beliefs are consistently reflected in classes. Teaching strategies provide entry into lessons for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities.

Impact

School beliefs drive the alignment of practices to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and focus teachers on instructional shifts, resulting in the engagement of all students in the curriculum. While most lessons provide entry points for students, extensions and high quality supports are inconsistent across classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- The school believes in the provision of appropriate supports to nurture students to develop academic, social and emotional learning. Through the inclusion of the arts, the goal is to cultivate the whole child so that each student will become a good citizen, contributing to the larger society. Across classrooms, there was continuity of practice. For example, classes had word walls, a focus on vocabulary, displayed student work with feedback, common instructional strategies across grades and student work folders in all classrooms.
- During classroom visits, teachers planned questions in their lessons and posed questions of varying cognitive levels. For example, in a grade 5 Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, students were determining the meaning of unfamiliar words and using the text as the teachers posed questions. Students turned and talked, responding to some questions, and students expanded their thinking by adding on to statements posed by others. However, this level of questioning and discourse was not evident in all classes. Some teachers were strategic in planning questions in their lesson plans that were at varying DOK levels.
- In a grade 4 social studies lesson, the teacher arranged students into four groups, working with texts about Native Americans. There were clear roles that students had within the groups and the teacher differentiated the task for each group. The teacher supported one group by guiding students in identifying why people settled in a particular area of the United States, while other groups worked without the teacher's direct support. Similarly, in a grade 8 math lesson, the teacher provided three different problems for students to create similar images through measurements. Students were talking and supporting each other as they completed the problem. Although tasks were tiered, high quality extensions were not yet evident in all classrooms.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure the alignment of curricula to standards, including a strong arts component. The curriculum integrates the instructional shifts in units of study and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills for all students.

Impact

The alignment of the curriculum and integration of the instructional shifts and the arts engages students, provides access for a variety of learners and promotes college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses ReadyGEN and GO Math! curricula in the elementary school and Code X for English language arts and CMP3 for math in the middle grades. Teachers create curriculum maps for all core subject areas, including the arts. A review of a grade 2 GO Math! unit map indicates the inclusion of priority and supporting standards in units. Essential questions were created and the map includes a list of supporting resources for math. Although the map includes a section that lists differentiated instructional strategies, it does not clearly describe these activities to enable teachers to provide adequate scaffolds and entry points into learning. The use of DOK was apparent in most lesson plans as teachers use them to vary the cognitive rigor of questions.
- Performing and visual arts are core subjects that the principal shared that he makes a conscience effort to maintain. Interns from Juilliard School of Music provide lessons for the band students. Students played various instruments demonstrating mastery of reading and playing music. All students are provided with arts offering intended to enrich their experience through exposure to music or art education.
- Across most classrooms, teachers implemented rigorous Common Core aligned lessons utilizing various meta-cognition checklists to foster ownership and support clearer understanding in students about their thinking and making connections with texts. Teacher teams meet weekly to plan and refine curricula and academic tasks using student work products and data.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teachers use results of state assessments, rubrics, baseline, and benchmark data to analyze and inform instruction. They use common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

Impact

Teachers and teams use data to adjust curricula and instruction by modifying units and lessons, thereby providing actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teacher teams collect and analyze data including New York State assessment data, NYC Schoolnet benchmarks, academic tasks, GO Math! unit assessments and other sources. The school administers teacher created assessments in social studies and science. During the fall, teachers assess students and make decisions for targeted students for afterschool programs and supports for the lowest third performers. English language learner (ELL) periodic assessments are administered for ELL students. The data from NYC Schoolnet provides an item analysis, which includes the standards and areas assessed along with school and district percentages. Teachers use the results of these assessments to modify instruction and create strategic groups.
- Teachers use common assessments to determine progress of students and grade level teams continually review data to inform decisions. Each teacher has seven focus students that they work closely with in order to raise their academic levels. These students are discussed and monitored by the teacher teams and administrators. Teachers also administer small group reading assessments and track the results to ensure progress and identification of students in need of academic intervention services.
- In classrooms, teachers collect data in binders and a data wall was evident in most classes. Teachers create checklists to assess learning and mastery of teaching points. Teachers also use conference notes to arrange flexible and strategy groups during lessons. During interviews with students, many shared that they work often in groups and use rubrics regularly. However, some indicated that they did not engage in self or peer assessment activities.

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry based, structured collaborations to support implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Distributive leadership structures are apparent in teacher teams throughout the school.

Impact

The collaborations and teacher team partnerships are improving teacher instructional capacity and ensure that teachers have a voice in key decisions across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet in multiple teams and partner with school leaders to support school and team goals. These teams work to support the Common Core Standards, including the instructional shifts. They also analyze various forms of data, and modify and adjust curricula units and lessons. Teacher teams use protocols, as needed, to guide their work. They maintain agendas and minutes and submit them for review by leadership. One focus this year was to ascertain the skills students need to meet the Common Core Standards and create lessons that would engage students in higher order thinking skills and rigorous learning activities.
- During the teacher team observation, teachers used a tuning protocol to focus their discussion using warm and cool feedback. A teacher presented the context of the task and team members looked at student work products, the self-assessment tool and the meta-cognitive sheet as they engaged in discussions about the work. Team members shared that they meet regularly and team leaders meet weekly to share with school leaders.
- Distributive leadership is apparent in the school, as staff has input in the development of focus areas for goals. The school leadership team created needs assessments to ensure that all stakeholders have a voice in the decisions that affect the school. The instructional team examined curriculum options and decided on the best option for their school community. The principal shared that he strongly believes in capacity building and the use of multiple teams empowers teachers to take on leadership roles. Teams provide feedback to administration regarding their work or concerns, and school leaders attend at least one meeting during the month to monitor and share in team discussions.