



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Beekman Hill International**

**Elementary School M059  
233 East 56<sup>th</sup> Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10065**

**Principal: Adele Schroeter**

**Date of review: May 1 ,2015  
Lead Reviewer: Darryl Alhadeff**

## The School Context

Beekman Hill international is an elementary school with 598 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 3% Black, 16% Hispanic, 63% White, and 10% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 17% 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>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</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>Focus</b>	<b>Well Developed</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>Additional Findings</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>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

The principal and her staff have aligned the curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and have strategically integrated the instructional shifts, resulting in rigorous habits and high order thinking skills that improve student learning.

### Impact

The schools curricula decisions build coherence across grades so all learners must demonstrate their thinking. This promises college and career readiness for all learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school's unit and lesson plans, and student work viewed, demonstrate academic tasks that reflect high-level thinking and instructional shifts. This year the school has worked closely with their literacy partners at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) in annually revising units of study reflecting the Common Core Learning Standards and shifts. Consultants work across grade level teams to customize units. Follow-up is provided by literacy coach, teacher leaders, and school leaders. This year the school launched the year with a study of their school wide summer text, *Falling in Love with Close Reading*, as a way to build teacher expertise in a Common Core Learning Standards practice and independent student initiation of a key Common Core Learning Standards, devising text-based answers. In a classroom visited, the level of the task and the instructional shift was clear. For example, in a fifth grade classroom the class was studying, mode, median, and outlier. This is a sixth grade standard. The goal was to have the students draw conclusions based on data and compare sets of data using the shape and spread of data.
- In math the school has focused on Common Core Learning Standards content and practice standards in math. The principal reported that the staff has refined their math curriculum with the support of math consultants and grade level teams. The approach was to develop deep conceptual understanding for both students and teachers. Grade level teams have re-designed units to fit content standards. One of the tasks viewed in a fifth grade classroom was to make a line plot to display a data set of measurement in fractions of a unit ( $1/2$ ,  $1/4$ ,  $1/8$ ) and use operations on fractions to solve the problem involving information presented in line plots. The school focused on modeling, attending to precision, constructing viable arguments, and critiquing the reasoning of others. This work was a result of the revising that the school did in math. In addition, the level of math is an example of college and career readiness.
- Lessons provide access to support for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. For example during a math, lesson adjustments were made. Some examples were vocabulary rings, checklists with descriptions of each aspect, some groups looked at only one set of data; some groups had the data already set up. The questions were open-ended and allowed multiple entry points. In a reading workshop visited the students were talking about their questions, and deepening the level of questioning for future book club meetings. The students that needed more support had question starters.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create curriculum-aligned assessments, rubrics, and grading policies, that are aligned to the school's curriculum. The school uses the assessments to get a clear picture of student progress.

### Impact

Teachers provide actionable feedback to students and adjust the curricula for all learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal stated that the school uses assessments to drive instruction planning and decision-making. Embedded in the school culture is the understanding that next steps in teaching are rooted in student work, in a variety of forms. The school just completed a cycle of study on feedback and assessment. The school has a culture of conducting ongoing informal assessment via thoughtful kid watching, conferences, anecdotal record keeping, on-demand student work products, teacher designed assessments, early Childhood Assessment in Mathematics, running records, turn-and-talks, exit slips, flash shares on whiteboards, and collecting post-its. The school shares results with students so they can set ambitious new goals that once mastered become habits. In all classrooms visited teachers were taking notes, whether they were conferring with a student 1:1, conducting a small group, or walking the room while students were engaged in an independent task. In addition, the reviewer observed a flash share in a math class, post-it notes in reading club, turn-and-talk in almost every classroom, and exit slips at the end of a poetry lesson.
- The principal reported that grounding purposes for assessment in the school has been a wide instructional focus and has influenced school-wide instruction. It has enabled the school to use common language and conversation across the school during professional development and teacher team time. For example, we used Assessment Pro data, looking at June reading levels to determine which students would be serviced by the intervention SWAT team, and which would work with teaching assistants and paraprofessionals in Reading Rescue. When the school reconvened mid-year, students who achieved grade level benchmarks were cycled out while cycling another group in. The principal reported that the impact has been real and measurable. Additionally, the school has a color-coded list of the students as they progress.
- The principal stated that several years ago the school introduced the Scholastic Independent Reading Assessment to get a better picture of the skills older students need when reading chapter books. The school studied with Jen Seravallo the author of the assessment. Experienced teachers at the school collaborated with Jen to design the assessment. The assessment uses a chapter book and asks inference questions. Usually the teacher puts the questions into the book on post-its, differentiating for every student. At PS59 the assessment is given one-to-one. However, the assessment is lengthy and can be time consuming. Some teachers had questions about how to be sure it was helping to move students forward rather than holding them back due to its high expectations and time constraints.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
---------------------------	---------------------	----------------	-----------------------

### Findings

Across classrooms teaching practices are aligned to the curricula. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points into the curricula for all learners.

### Impact

The school's beliefs are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. All learners are engaged in challenging tasks that demonstrate higher-level thinking.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school believes in the engagement of students and their progress and achievement. The principal reports that PS59 is a vibrant and exciting place to learn where students work hard, are eager to be challenged, empowered with a sense of urgency and ownership, and learn by doing. The school believes that student choice and decision-making in topics of study, texts, strategies, and social action projects are essential to student engagement. The school's English as a second language (ESL) teacher recently worked on a clean water project with her students. The ESL students researched an issue, planned a course of action to address it, publicized their Clean Water for All initiative, and collaborated on raising close to \$5000. Students were thrilled with the impact of not only learning content, but also developed habits of lifelong learners. A chart labeled - How people use fresh water! was created by the ESL class that synthesized and represented the students learning. A questioning chart categorizing different types of questions was also used. For example 1, Definition question: What is a glacier? 2. Consequence question: Why are glaciers melting? 3. Action question: What can people do to prevent the glaciers from melting?
- Across classrooms teachers provide multiple entry points for all learners. Tasks are high level and challenging and supports are in place for ELLs and SWDs. In a second grade class students were doing reading workshop. The teaching point was how to deepen the level of conversation for future book club meetings. The teacher modeled with a student using a questioning rubric. The teacher began by evaluating her own jot. What is the setting in the scene? "It is not too strong, if I look at my questioning rubric it is a "what's going on question". Her final question was - What does the garden in the scene symbolize? She asked the class to rank her questions using the rubric and sent them off to work. The students chose their strongest post-it and began to talk about their partner. Each student placed a question on a talk mat so his/her partner was ready to add on, revise, or disagree with the question. Then together the partnership built a stronger idea. The ELLs and SWD students had question starters to support the work. The teacher pulled a small group that needed to use precise language, so that ideas were clear and accurate.
- The instructional focus at PS 59 has been on student discussion, which mirrors a key component of the Danielson's Framework. The principal reported that the school chose the focus because of its flexibility and adaptability in helping a broad range of students. Teachers worked together to develop questioning protocols to apply strategically in kindergarten to fifth grade so students lead discussions. In a fifth grade class visited, the student had a Carl Jung quote to discuss. They were in small groups. There were modifications for ELLs and SWDs, question starters and verbal supports for them. The groups were heterogeneously constructed so students could support each other. Classrooms also had red and green card to assign conversation roles and responsibilities to target specific student learning needs and goals.

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

### Findings

The school leader has established a culture for learning and continually communicates high expectations to the staff. Teachers have established a strong set of expectations and they communicate them to students and families.

### Impact

The structures put into place have resulted in a culture of mutual accountability of all staff and increased student progress toward goals.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school communicates on a high level to teachers and parents. The school does weekly feedback, detailed feedback on student progress reports and teacher observations, provides leadership opportunities, shares anecdotes ,photos, quotes, does shared professional reading, and teachers are involved in book projects,, publications, and research. The teachers are proud of their professionalism. Teachers communicate with parents via email, blogs, web pages, newsletters, student-led parent conferences on grades 3 to 5, content area parent workshops, a parent book group in kindergarten, detailed progress reports with extensive narratives, and frequent opportunities to learn alongside students during Family Fridays. For example an observation of a teacher by the principal rated highly effective gave this feedback:” You are challenging yourself to put into practice our new learning around questioning and supporting students in how to use questions to deepen their understanding and lead to more engaged reading in general.”
- During the parent interview, the parents expressed that they felt like they were partners with the school and partners in their children’s education. A parent reported on the variety of workshops given in the school, from academic to social and emotional. Parents spoke about the inner workings of the School Leadership Team and how they feel supported by the principal and the entire school staff. One parent mentioned the schools relationship with Bloomingdales, when executives visit the third grade as an example of career and college readiness.
- The principal compares to the school’s learning environment to a teaching hospital model. Every member of the community expects to grow, which is why they choose to work at PS59. The kind of teaching they do requires an intellectual mindset, leaders are also looking to challenge themselves. The school provides the staff with time to study resources and expertise that keeps the staff growing. The school welcomes coaching institutes, leadership institutes, argument institutes to work in our classrooms, and the staff studies alongside them. Last year the school hosted a (QR) Quality Review institute, network principal’s visit, Teachers College coaching institute, and international visitors.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
---------------------------	---	----------------	-----------------------

### Findings

Teacher teams are engaged in structured professional collaboration and meet to analyze student work using an inquiry approach. Distributive leadership has many roles across the school and affords the staff opportunities to research instructional techniques, which results in student achievement.

### Impact

Teacher teams build distributive leadership across the school and strengthen the instructional capacity of the teachers, which results in school-wide coherence and increased student achievement.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school believes that adults, like all learners, learn best when they have a degree of ownership and urgency regarding their learning and community. The school supports collegial efforts by arranging release time, making strategic use of two day substitutes to make our scheduling more flexible, and arranging prep schedules so grade teams have three periods in common every week. Using professional study time on Monday afternoons and Wednesday morning's teachers have an opportunity to share promising practices: and work in grade level and cross grade study groups. Skilled senior teachers support colleagues in overcoming challenges by co-teaching and co-planning for a week or more followed by intermittent check-ins.
- Leadership roles are shared as teachers have the opportunity to serve in structures like, hiring committee, professional development committee generating ideas and addressing big questions around how professional development will unfold, grade leaders, and as mentors to new colleagues sharing both culture and content. Several members of the staff have left to take on new leadership roles. The school now has two LEAP (Leadership Program) interns looking to further their career. Some of the schools most effective staff have returned to school-based roles after working as staff developers and consultants. Regular teacher team meetings, grade level and cross-grade study groups work with consultants to set goals.
- The school devotes extra funds to secure an extra period for teacher teams to meet every third week during one of two set periods. This allows the teams to meet weekly after school on Mondays and provides the teachers with a longer time to closely examine student work. Teachers approach student work samples from a variety of perspectives, choosing the topic based on what is most relevant to their planning at the time. For example, the second grade (ICT) Integrated Collaborative Teaching team was meeting with service providers looking at student non-fiction post-its and thinking of ideas as they studied the student work to raise the level of the post-its in non-fiction. Teachers also review the results of a pre-assessment for a math unit, or evaluate on demand writing, or analyze post-its on questioning techniques. The work of teacher teams aligns with the school wide focus.