



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

**Shorac Kappock
Elementary School M098**

**512 West 212th Street
Manhattan
NY 10034**

Principal: Maritza A. Rodriguez

**Date of review: February 3, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Cheryl McClendon**

The School Context

Shorac Kappock is an elementary school with 632 students from grade K through grade 5. The school population comprises 2% Black, 94% Hispanic, 3% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 38% English language learners and 7% 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 91.0%.

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	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

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training and accountability systems linked to the attainment of those expectations. School leaders and staff communicate the school's high expectations and provide feedback to inform families of student progress towards meeting the expectations.

Impact

Accountability and professional development structures support teachers in meeting the expectations of school leaders. Parents feel well supported through ongoing communication from the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's professional development team comprises teachers from across the grades. Through the focused, collaborative work of this teacher team, professional development priorities have been established for the 2014 – 2015 academic year. Among the topics for which teachers are provided professional development training are: English language arts procedures and routines, data analysis, Ready Gen curriculum and planning, cooperative-skill building strategies (Bucket-filling paradigm), parent engagement strategies, special education reform, school emergency procedures, Measures of Student Learning, Common Core Learning Standards, mentoring strategies, bilingual education strategies, child abuse policy, differentiated instruction, and questioning and discussion techniques.
- Individualized professional development plans and/or Teacher Improvement Plans are developed and administered for teachers who have been evaluated as ineffective or developing in pedagogical practice. Assistant principals and the literacy coach develop an action plan for each teacher that comprises collaborative planning, classroom visitations and debriefing sessions, informal observation and feedback sessions, collaborative goal-setting and on-going progress-monitoring.
- The parent-student handbook is distributed to families at the onset of the school year. This manual details expectations regarding school wide curricula and initiatives as well as school policy information and valuable websites. The manual is written in English and Spanish.
- Teachers communicate with families through the publication of monthly newsletters and the school distributes a monthly calendar to families to apprise them of events, meetings and submission dates. A schedule of workshops and events for families is coordinated by the parent association, parent coordinator and family workers.
- During the parent interview, parents expressed satisfaction with the level of communication and support that they receive from teachers and the administrative team. They stated that they get information regarding student grades from the online communication portal, "Classroom Dojo". Parents also expressed that the principal and her team are very accessible, communicative and helpful.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and to the beliefs about how students learn best as informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. However teaching strategies do not consistently provide entry points for all learners, thereby limiting opportunities for student engagement and the development and demonstration of critical thinking skills.

Impact

Teaching that does not consistently provide multiple entry points limits the development of students' critical thinking skills and student engagement.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, students were observed engaging in small group discussions and “turn and talk” with partners. For example, in one fourth grade class, the teacher asked students to describe a picture that was projected on the SMARTboard. Students were observed using descriptive words and making inferences to describe the picture of the Navajo girl. The teacher ‘listened in’ to hear students’ responses and called upon individual students to share what their group had discussed. The teacher, then, related the picture to the Native American legends that the class had recently read, as she asked students to discuss how Native American children got their names. Students shared ideas which they supported with textual evidence. The purpose of this activity was to further develop students’ schema within this genre as a support to them in writing authentic legends, as a culminating project of the unit.
- In one classroom, in response to the class reading of the Ready Gen anchor text, “Heart and Soul” students were observed engaging in high-level small-group discussions about the possible themes that prevailed throughout the text. Students cited textual details that they had included in a graphic organizer in preparation for the discussion. The teacher served as facilitator as she circulated to observe and push student thinking. However opportunities for student engagement were not observed in some of the classrooms visited. For example, in one class the teacher did the entire math problem solving on the SMARTboard, on her own without eliciting any participation from students. Her back was turned to the class the entire time as she worked on the problem at this board. Although she talked as she wrote, there was no attempt to engage students and her back obscured her work. For the next problem, although the teacher asked a student to identify the quotient, the teacher provided the answer, without allowing ample wait time or support to enable the student to figure it out.
- Although in some classrooms, students were observed working in small groups or independently as the teacher worked with a small group of students, assessment-driven, strategy-focused teaching to scaffold the skills of the struggling students was not observed in the guided groups.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that Common Core-aligned curricula, with the integration of the instructional shifts, are coherent and effectively promote college and career readiness for all students.

Impact

Curricular modifications that are based on analysis of student work and data provide access and cognitive engagement for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Using selected curricula materials as the foundation, units of study are planned using the backward planning model. Teachers have been trained to use this planning process which entails: analyzing the culminating performance-based assessment for a unit, identifying the Common Core standards that are addressed, analyzing the performance-based assessment rubric to identify benchmarked skills, reviewing and further developing essential questions, enduring understandings and unit goals, identifying and emphasizing key vocabulary, planning coherent lessons and tasks that are aligned with the unit plan. Teacher teams have modified Ready Gen modules using this backward planning model.
- Unit plans and lesson plans reflect an emphasis on students providing text-based answers. In addition, the use of academic vocabulary is purposeful throughout classroom instruction to support vocabulary development for the large English language learner population. Also reflecting purposeful integration of the instructional shifts are the well-developed classroom libraries that contain leveled texts and books categorized by genre representing a balance of literature and informational texts. During the leadership meeting, the principal shared that each Ready Gen module has an anchor text that is complex and often above the reading level of the students. In accordance with literacy instructional shift 3 that entails engaging students with a staircase of complexity in text, teachers chunk the anchor texts and provide graphic organizers to guide students in close reading.
- The principal shared that this is the school's second year using Go Math. Teachers have found this curriculum provides a lot of scaffolds. The school uses the Full Option Science System (FOSS) and follows the New York City social studies scope and sequence.
- In order to provide scaffolded support for struggling readers, teachers have incorporated guided reading. Teachers use a standard guided reading planning sheet to plan each guided reading lesson.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across grades and subject areas teachers are developing in their use of common assessments to measure student progress towards goals. However, checks for understanding are made inconsistently by teachers, limiting teacher effectiveness in adjusting instruction to facilitate student learning.

Impact

Inconsistent “checks for understanding” limits the teacher’s ability to support student learning and progress.

Supporting Evidence

- Structures for monitoring guided reading are developing within the school. During guided reading teachers use a template to record observations of student reading. Teachers can refer to the chart at the bottom of the planning template to identify “reading behaviors to notice” and “supports” for each specific level.
- Across grades, teachers administer Ready Gen performance based-assessments and Go Math unit tests. The principal shared that baseline, mid-year and end-of-year assessments are administered to measure students’ growth in English and Spanish.
- Across grades and subject areas an inconsistency in the use of checks for understanding was observed. In some classrooms, teachers circulated to provide appropriate and actionable feedback during small-group and independent work periods, while in other classrooms, the teacher failed to check for understanding or the feedback was not appropriate to the student’s needs.

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

The majority of teachers participate in inquiry-driven teacher team collaborations with a focus on the Common Core Learning standards and school wide goals. Distributed leadership structures are in place, allowing teachers to have a voice in key decisions across the school.

Impact

Collaborative teacher teams support the implementation of the Common Core standards. Distributed leadership structures allow teachers involvement in school wide key decisions.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal stated that teacher teams meet two times a week. Teachers also stated that they meet at least two times per week and sometimes more. Each grade team meets during the regularly scheduled collaborative planning time. In addition, each team meets during the circular 6 planning professional period.
- During the visit, the fifth grade teacher team was observed during their circular 6 planning period. The focus of the meeting was to revise the 5 trait English language arts performance-based assessment writing rubric to make it more student-friendly. Teachers expressed a concern that most of their students were unable to use the rubric as a guide due to the complex terms used in the criteria. The teacher team began the work by collaboratively analyzing and revising the terms in each level of one trait.
- Teachers shared that the weekly team meeting during the circular 6 period is designated for making modifications to structures or curriculum and the meeting during the regularly scheduled collaborative planning time is for analyzing student work and data.
- In addition to horizontal teacher teams there are other teams through which leadership is distributed. They are the professional development committee, the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS) team, and the vertical instructional team.