



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Jacques Cartier School

Elementary School M102

**315 East 113 Street
Manhattan
NY 10029**

Principal: Craig Pinckney-Lowe

**Date of review: January 15, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Alexandra Estrella**

The School Context

Jacques Cartier School is an elementary school with 317 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 28% Black, 62% Hispanic, 3% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 31% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. 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 | Celebration | Developing |
| 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 | Additional Findings | Developing |
| 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 | Developing |

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Developing

Findings

School leaders and faculty are beginning to align the curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards. Teachers are starting to refine academic tasks using student work and Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) assessment data to meet the needs of a diverse student population.

Impact

The beginning of aligning the curricula to the Common Core is promoting college and career readiness for all learners. The school is in the process of making curricula adjustments and modifications to ensure that all student needs are met and that tasks cognitively engage all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers were using units of study directly from ReadyGEN, which were only partially aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards. Consequently, teachers met for several consecutive Saturdays to create tasks that were aligned to the text provided by the program. For example, ReadyGEN had three texts within a unit, but the task did not merge the text into a final writing piece; therefore, teachers modified the task to build the common thread that people have made certain choices to live a certain way despite sociological changes. To add, teachers also utilized some of the writing prompts within the Teachers College Writing program to enhance the writing component within the new literacy units of study.
- The first year the school implemented ReadyGEN and GO Math!, the units of study lacked evidence of the use of student data and modifications tied to specific students or groups of students. As a result, upon the administrative and teacher team's evaluations of the units of study, they decided to further modify units that were already fully aligned with the Common Core. School leaders and teachers are in the process of ensuring that the units are responsive to student data, inclusive of strategies for at risk students, with greater focus on writing given the lack of writing prompts within the two programs. Additionally, the school is utilizing Foundations to build upon the lower grades phonemic awareness as well as infusing the programs within the upper grades for at risk students.
- The school is in the process of aligning science and art units to the literacy and math units of study. This will allow students multiple opportunities to engage with new content, writing, and apply the concepts they are learning in a more interdisciplinary manner. Also, the school is in the process of designing a more robust social studies curriculum that is in alignment to the literacy units of study.
- The English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers work collaboratively with classroom teachers to ensure that academic tasks meet the needs of English language learners (ELLs). For example, they support teachers during grade team or common planning periods to modify curricula to be accessible yet rigorous and grade appropriate for ELLs.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Instructional practices across classrooms do not consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula with challenging tasks to engage all learners. Furthermore, high-level student work products and discussions were evident across some but not all classrooms.

Impact

Although classes consist of a diverse student body across classrooms, academic tasks are not scaffolded to engage all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities; therefore, not all students' work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal stated that one of his pedagogical foci was to have teachers talk less in order to provide students with more opportunities to engage in tasks aligned to a lesson's objective. The administrative team's goal was to engage students in more group discussions, self- and peer-assessments, and engage in conversations where students utilize text-based evidence to support their ideas and thinking. In some of the classrooms visited teachers were starting to release the responsibility to the children; however, the teacher is still directing most of the work. For example, in some classrooms teachers were facilitating discussions, but they were mostly being led by the teacher, leading students to have conversations mainly with the teacher instead of their peers.
- In a 1st grade class observed, tasks were differentiated based on the needs of students; however, within other classrooms, tasks were homogeneous regardless of student need.
- In a math class, students were learning how they could use addition and subtraction strategies to help them find sums and differences. There were several students that were ready to tackle more challenging tasks, yet the work provided did not cognitively challenge them. On the other hand, there were several students that were confused about what they had to do or how to infuse the missing digit but the teacher did not notice the confusion and there were limited opportunities for students to engage in discussion.

Additional Findings

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| Quality Indicator: | 2.2 Assessment | Rating: | Developing |
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Findings

Teachers are in the process of using data from a work sampling system, tracking progress, and engaging in ongoing checks for understanding to create a clear picture of student progress towards goals and make effective curricular and instructional decisions.

Impact

The administrative team and teachers are beginning to utilize common assessment practices to monitor student understanding and are beginning to make adjustments to instruction so that students can make significant progress, including higher achieving learners and students with disabilities, can demonstrate increased mastery, and are aware of next steps.

Supporting Evidence

- During one of the teacher team meetings, teachers analyzed a piece of student work and identified target areas of growth for an individual student that would be addressed during a daily lesson or within the unit of study. As a result of the student work analysis, teachers decide to support student in writing complete sentences, to provide tutoring through their Union Settlement partner and to design a Response-to-Intervention (RTI) plan.
- Teachers are starting to utilize assessments to monitor student progress in literacy and math. For example, teachers use running records, conferencing notes, student work samples, quick check assessment checklists, and unit assessments to assess students' academic development. Teachers are starting to use the findings from assessments to influence how they modify curricular materials to meet the needs of their diverse student population. For example, after reviewing the Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) assessments and finding that students struggled with the writing prompts, teachers started to implement elements of the Teachers College Writing Curriculum to support students with more writing within units of study.
- Teachers are also starting to employ rubrics, checklists, Post-It notes with feedback or next steps, one-on-one conferences with notes, quick check assessment checklists, and exit tickets to monitor student progress and check for understanding during lessons. Adjustments observed included providing extended time in guided reading group instruction, and including leveled texts and a variety of graphic organizers to scaffold learning for some students. The school is in the process of guiding students to self-assess their learning through the use of rubrics.

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| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Developing |
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Findings

The school is beginning to provide professional development opportunities that are aligned to the Danielson Framework for teaching and is in the process of creating multiple opportunities to partner with and engage families in learning, and offering them feedback on their children's progress towards meeting the school's high expectations expectations.

Impact

The school's leadership and staff are developing a culture of high expectations that is beginning to foster teacher and parental participation in a culture of high expectations connected to college and career readiness. This has led to parents being consistently aware of their child's progress towards meeting grade level standards and students understanding what is needed to reach the next grade level.

Supporting Evidence

- Professional development opportunities have been develop to support teachers in the development of their teaching practices to ensure that they continue to move in a positive direction with the Danielson Framework for teaching. For example, the professional development committee utilizes observation trends to determine areas of focus.
- School leaders and staff members have established morning announcements by students where they introduce different school initiatives and highlight student achievement. For example, the school was running a can drive and during the announcements students identified classes that had the most cans collected.
- Towards the end of last year, school leaders and staff worked together in the development of a teacher and parent handbook. The handbook clearly articulates expectations for students, parents, and teachers.
- Parents expressed that the principal's open door policy allows them to communicate concerns frequently and that matters are promptly addressed. He greets parents and students every morning outside. Also, in most cases, parents said they communicate with them frequently through notes, emails, texts and phone calls, though some parents felt that teachers within the Gifted and Talented program communicate more frequently with parents than teacher in the General Education program.
- Teachers across grades are beginning to work collaboratively to design an articulation plan to set expectations for students in accordance with those standards or skills students will be expected to know or be able to do by the end of each grade level. For example, the school is looking at literacy and math strands and how they grow in complexity as students move from grade to grade. Also, they are infusing more writing prompts within their ReadyGEN curriculum to support students with the writing process across grades.

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| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development | Rating: | Developing |
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Findings

Teacher teams are beginning to articulate how they implement structured professional collaborations using protocols and other structures to strengthen teacher capacity as they create, revise, and adopt curricula to ensure effective integration of the Common Core and instructional shifts into instruction across grades and content areas.

Impact

The work of teacher teams is beginning to result in improved pedagogy and student progress on assessments. It has also resulted in Common Core integration and strengthening of instructional capacity.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet on a weekly basis to look at student work samples utilizing different protocols. During an observed teacher team meeting, participants were utilizing the Problem of Practice Protocol to look at student work. While observing the team utilizing the protocol, teachers were able to look at a student work sample and decide what areas they would be focusing on based on their findings. Teachers noted that students were having difficulties with the organizing sentences and ideas; therefore, they organized times within future lessons to provide interventions to support students' growth in writing.
- Teacher grade leaders meet on a monthly basis with the administrative team to discuss school-wide patterns and trends as well as set areas of focus for each grade based on trends found when analyzing student work samples or common assessment data. Currently, they are working to vertically align the school's writing curriculum.
- Teachers and school leaders have a book study that meets once a week. The book they are currently studying is titled *Rigor is NOT a Four Letter Word*, which they are hoping to connect to daily teaching practices. They decided to study this book because they want to enhance their practices to ensure that their daily lessons and units challenge students and align to the Common Core Learning Standards.
- Teachers stated that the administrative teams respect their feedback and ideas. They feel comfortable bring in new ideas or adjusting structures that are not moving the work. The administrative team provides teachers with opportunities to engage in school wide decision-making through the grade leader meetings and grade team meetings.