



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Jose Celso Barbosa

Early Childhood School M112

**535 East 119th Street
New York
NY 10035**

Principal: Eileen Reiter

**Date of review: April 29, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio**

The School Context

Jose Celso Barbosa is an early childhood school with 362 students from grade pre-Kindergarten through grade 2. The school population comprises 23% Black, 67% Hispanic, 4% White, 4% Asian and 3% other students. The student body includes 19% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90.3%.

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	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	Well Developed
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

Structures and systems are in place for school leaders to consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations toward creating partnerships with families and students toward college and career readiness.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability leads to staff understanding and ownership of the school's expectations. Successful family partnerships lead to clear support in students' progress toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders reported that the creation of a Response to Intervention (RTI) handbook communicates the expectations for the implementation of this school-wide program as part of the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) goals. The handbook states the core beliefs of the RTI structure such as the "implementation of a multi-tiered service model being necessary" and "progress monitoring must be implemented to inform instruction", and contains strategies for Tier 1 intervention such as the use of visual support and dictation programs. Across classrooms, teachers were viewed using tools provided in the handbook such as extra wait time and color coding. Teachers stated that articulation meetings serve as a means to communicate the schools' goals on RTI. As a related service provider, one teacher shared how she used ReadWorks with an assigned student and shared this strategy with the classroom teacher. The teacher stated that these meetings serve as a means "to ensure communication of RTI expectations is consistent across the board"
- Ongoing professional trainings such as collaborative study groups formed by teachers on the RTI model for English language learners (ELL) and students with disabilities, oral language collaborative conversations and intervisitations with model teachers provide support on the instructional focus toward the improvement of oral language. School leaders reported that these trainings result in the implementation of language objectives in units and lesson plans. A review of lesson plans reflect language objectives such as in kindergarten, "Students will understand how a conversation works and how to share their thoughts and ideas with each other" for English language arts (ELA) and in grade 2, "explain why the strategy was chosen and use details and mathematical vocabulary to explain the steps took using that strategy."
- The school offers multiple family workshops on the standards and ways to support their children at home. Family workshops allow parents and students to work together on tasks. One parent reported that the "workshops are engaging, and my child was able to come home and tell me what she learned with her dad." School leaders reported that one parent stated as a result of attending a math workshop, they didn't know the importance of language in math, until now. In addition, parents reported that phone calls, the school website and parent engagement meetings offer feedback on student progress. For example, one parent was concerned about her child, met with the teacher and service providers who provided the parent with strategies to use at home and the teachers will be using in school. The parent was able to report that the strategies were used at home and in school, and notices improvement in her child.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teacher practices provide strategies to serve as entry points for challenging tasks and student discussion yet the use of strategic extensions vary.

Impact

Work products and classroom discussions, demonstrate higher-order thinking and participation, yet do not lead to student ownership and high-level extensions and supports for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Across several classes, rigorous questioning and tasks based on the Depth of Knowledge levels was evident and reflected a continuum levels. In a grade 2 ELA class, student groups were asked to use evidence from the text to support their ideas. The teacher used a small chart with questions such as “How did the author grab me as a reader?” When demonstrating difficulty, the teacher reminded students of the question and used other concrete prompts such as, “What does the book teach met? What did I learn?” to help students find the correct answer. However, in a grade 2 science class, students engaged in group conversations and were making predictions about whether a plant would grow if exposed to different conditions. The teacher prompted students to respond to the task with only one sentence and no more than one statement. A review of responses reflected that students were able to write more than one sentence to explain their predictions.
- Teaching strategies to support students with disabilities and ELL was visible through student use of manipulatives, visuals, sentence starters and frontloaded, repeated vocabulary. In a grade 2 Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) math class, students used counters for addition facts. After providing three problems, the teacher prompted students to think about the patterns they noticed about the facts presented and use the counters to help them determine the trends in the number sentences. With teacher prompting and use of counters, students were able to determine that the numbers in each sentence showed an ascending and descending pattern of one and were interested to find the rest of the patterns in their partnerships. However, in a kindergarten class, student groups formed did not provide opportunities to extend and challenge higher level students as some students were not given the opportunity to engage with larger numbers once completed with a task. All students had to use counters to determine number sentences for the sum of 5 and 6 only even though they were provided with several chips. One student was able to use all of his counters to create a number sentence for the sum of 10.
- Teacher-student-teacher directed conversations were viewed across classes. Students were prompted to turn and talk to a partner or work in a group yet most of the activities were teacher directed. In a second grade math class, students used a word problem and rubric to discuss ways to raise the given score on a word problem. Student responses include, “The boy needs to explain why he solved the problem the way he did and really tell me what his reasoning is. Otherwise, how is he going to explain his reasoning to another student?” This level of ownership and high level thinking was not evident across the vast majority of classes.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Strategic integration of instructional shifts and alignment of all curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards are reflected across grades and subject areas. Curricula and tasks are planned and refined using data for all students.

Impact

The school curricula promotes coherency, college and career readiness and tasks are planned to ensure all students have access and are cognitively engaged instructional shifts.

Supporting Evidence

- Oral language development and vocabulary acquisition is an instructional shift reflected in the curricula and aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards for content as well as specific listening and speaking standards to support the school's focus. In a kindergarten lesson, the task required students to use specific vocabulary words to describe what they are responsible for at home. In a first grade lesson, students were asked to use descriptive vocabulary to illustrate and express their opinions of characters in different texts. In a second grade lesson plan, the task was crafted to incorporate the speaking and listening standards on collaborative conversations and ask and answering questions for clarification and building of ideas. In addition, kindergarten curricula maps incorporate academic vocabulary by tier across a variety of lessons.
- Inquiry-based planning is reflected in math and science across grades and includes key instructional shifts such as real world application and using evidence to explain ideas and support opinions. In a grade 2 science plan, the learning target asked students know that seeds need access to light, air and water to grow. The overarching rationale for the lesson and unit was to encourage students to care for plants, especially trees, in our society. The procedure incorporated hands-on activities such as planting seeds with limited light, water and air and make predications on their growth. In a grade 2 math class, the learning objective required students to use a number chart and base tens to determine the correct mathematical strategy and tool to solve a number story as well as prove why one strategy was more efficient over another one. In a first grade lesson plan on insects, the task focused on students observing larvae using a magnifying glass and recording responses and observations on a chart containing the following terms, "structure, behaviors, and changes". The lesson rationale stated this information will be used to develop their own mealworm habitat by observing what the insects need to survive.
- Across vast majority of lesson plans reflect modified tasks for individual and groups of students in each subject area based on benchmark assessments. In a 2 grade math lesson, the Early Childhood Assessment in Mathematics (ECAM) data was used to group students by ability level for addition and subtraction. Each group was provided a different addition or subtraction activity such as "Hide the cubes" for the at risk students, "Find Ten" game for those on grade-level and for higher achievers, "What the Number is... 10 more 10 less." In a grade 2 math lesson, although the task required students to work in partnerships, individual and certain pairs of students with disabilities was provided modifications such as different prompts or plans to provide a preview prior to the commencement of the lesson to be incorporated as part of the procedure for the day. In the task, one pair of ELL students was assigned to specific partners for individual language support.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School-wide assessment practices are aligned to the curricula, offer a clear portrait of student mastery, consistently reflect the varied used of ongoing checks for understanding and self-assessment.

Impact

Meaningful feedback to teachers leads to effective adjustments to meet the needs of all learners and student awareness of their next learning steps regarding academic achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses multiple assessments, including citywide performance tasks, benchmarks such as Teachers College running records and ECAM assessments. In addition, to measure oral language development, the school has trained teachers to use the Conversation Assessment Tool (CAT) and aligned it to the school's curricula, to inform staff on student progress. A kindergarten teacher shared that the CAT was used to analyze student conversations, and noticed that the students were applying generic terms in work products. This informed teachers that they needed to work with students on descriptive language and provide them clear feedback through the unit in this area. School leadership and teachers report that students are now using more precise adjectives and content specific words and using more than one or two word phrases to describe their observations.
- During an interview, students stated that teachers show them how to use rubrics and provided feedback to them. For example, one student stated, "Teachers give us rubrics so we can get to a higher level." After review student work products, feedback included areas of strengths, needs for improvement and clear next steps for students. For a second grade student, feedback on a math task stated, "Good job on writing the strategy you used. This brings you to a level 2.5." To get a higher grade, the teacher stated next steps were, "naming the tools used and adding mathematical vocabulary." For another second grade student, feedback stated that the students' strength was naming the strategy and tool and why it was important which brought the student to a "3.5". As a next step, comments request use of more mathematical vocabulary which would "bring you to a level 4." Both students were able to state their next steps and that they are working on these strategies in class.
- School wide assessment practices to check for understanding include conferring and small group questioning. For example, in one ICT class, students were split into groups for parallel teaching and the focus of the lesson was how to use the class rubric for understanding what next steps would be needed to improve the quality of the example provided during the mini-lesson. One student was observed trying to explain how to use the rubric to identify what areas needed improvement but demonstrated difficulty in clearly explaining how to make the sample better. After a few minutes of trying to explain to the class, one of the students stated, "I don't understand you, could you clarify?" The teacher stopped the lesson and for the given group shared how to use the rubric again. The student was given a second opportunity to explain and was able to provide a clear, correct response. In addition, a review of student documents reflects self assessments used across curriculum areas. One kindergarten student stated, "I use this page to check my work and if I have everything, I'm a 4. If not, I'm a 3" Similar student responses were recorded after a group of students discussed how they use their rubric to improve their work.

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

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations, which increase teacher capacity and the promotion of Common Core Learning Standards. Distributed leadership structures are embedded through effective teacher leaders for decision making on teaching and learning.

Impact

School-wide coherence and teacher leadership decisions led to increased student achievement for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly and have structures including agendas, the *Looking at Student Current Thinking Surfacing Gaps* protocol and supplemental materials, to support their work. Each grade has a specific content focus after a review of baseline and ongoing data such as Teachers College Running records, pre and post math assessments, ECAM and the CAT which are aligned with Common Core Learning Standards, and instructional shifts. The focus of these meetings encompasses an integration of the school goals around using student data from varied assessments to determine student strengths and learning needs and the development of strategies to support oral language and achievement. Additionally, agendas for meetings are co-constructed with team leaders and the administration to ensure team decisions are monitored through classroom observations, to improve the quality of the instructional work and provide suggestions for future meetings.
- During a meeting, grade 2 teachers stated that they chose at risk, on-level and above level students to analyze from each of their classes so when they are developing strategies, the learners are representative of the grade. Using the protocol, teachers collaborated on areas where the students' were demonstrating difficulty in the math task and decided to focus on gaps such as helping students show their work and explain use reasoning. In addition, during the reflection, the teachers decided to focus on concepts for building student academic language. Teachers report that team decisions on instructional strategies are implemented each week and teachers are required to bring documents for each meeting that reflects their use with student work. An analysis of ECAM reflects increases in math data.
- The school has Instructional Lead, Model Teacher, and Dual Language vertical teams. School leaders state each team consists of teacher representatives across grades to make decisions on curricula and instruction and use inquiry to inform their decisions. Teacher leaders on these teams are provided key training such as NOVA training on Collaborative Conversations and Teachers College training. School leaders stated this information along with support from school leadership provide teacher leaders with the tools needed to have high quality teams. For example, the kindergarten team began the oral language inquiry group as a result of analyzing assessments and noticing their students showed difficulty in academic vocabulary, specifically descriptive language. The NOVA training on Collaborative Conversations has provided model teachers and instructional leads with information from experts modeled for grade level teachers. Lead teachers shared how they use the CAT which has resulted in students' use of higher level academic vocabulary and longer phrasing in responses.