



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**The Audubon School**

**Elementary School M128**

**560 West 169<sup>th</sup> Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10032**

**Principal: Rosa Argelia Arredondo**

**Date of review: February 10, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince**

## The School Context

The Audubon School is an Elementary school with 603 students from grade Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 3% Black, 96% Hispanic, 1% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 37% 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 92.0%.

## 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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Additional Findings</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>Celebration</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

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

School Leaders consistently communicate high expectations for professionalism and instruction to the entire staff aligned with elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and partner with families to support student progress. Teacher teams and staff provide clear feedback and guidance supports to ensure that students own their educational experience.

### Impact

By consistently communicating high expectations to staff, students and families, and create a system of mutual accountability for those expectations. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that sets a unified high expectation level for all students

### Supporting Evidence

- There is a culture of mutual trust and respect throughout the school that is visible in the hallways, classrooms and offices. The goals set forth by the principal are for deliberate and consistent expectations that strengthen and enhance the vision of the school. The school website communicates CCLS, Scope and Sequence, curriculum highlights, grade-level content areas, assessment information and home-school connection resources.
- Instructional plans aligned to the CCLS and Danielson Framework is evident in all curriculum units. Teachers conference with students on their work to provide individual support in content areas. Teacher teams have created checklists and rubrics that are utilized to provide clear feedback with 'glows and grows' highlighted.
- Guidance support is provided for physical, social and emotional support as well as academics through community based organizations that participate in the school on a regular basis. These include a full time clinician from Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, Police Athletic League, Fresh Youth Initiatives, Alianza Dominicana, Washington Heights Coalition, Columbia University and the Association of Progressive Dominicans working with individual students in all grades to promote physical emotional, social and economic wellbeing through education.
- School leaders and staff offer ongoing feedback to help families understand student progress toward expectations. The school communicates constantly and consistently to parents/families. The parents stated at the meeting that they know what their child is learning and where they need to go to progress. Teacher teams along with the administration has developed an 'Adopt A Student' plan that provides high expectations, nurtures children mentally and provides encouragement to all students to build successful outcomes for school and for life.
- Students are recognized for their academic achievement as well as their citizenship through the Principal Hall of Fame and Students of the Month. An additional fourth report card was added to provide parents further information regarding their child's progress in alignment to the expectations of the CCLS. There are weekly parent/family workshops that include instructional tips and *Make and Take* sessions allow parents to create games/activities to support literacy and math at home.

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

### Findings

Pedagogy is aligned to the curricula and reflects a coherent set of beliefs about student learning that is informed by the Danielson framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

### Impact

The alignment of pedagogy to curricula and the use of scaffolding and effective questioning strategies, along with multiple entry points enables all learners to be engaged in appropriately challenging tasks. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

### Supporting Evidence

- Pedagogy is aligned to the curricula and informed by the Danielson Framework and the instructional shifts. Academic vocabulary has been embedded into the lesson planning for all students, not just for ELLs or struggling learners. In a 4<sup>th</sup> grade class that includes general education students and students with disabilities, the teacher had students listening to the folk tale titled *John Henry*. Students were asked to turn and talk and were engaged in a conversation around 'motivation', "why does the character do or say this". There were T-Charts on every desk to help with organizing thoughts. Students were reminded that "reading involves thinking" by the teacher. Students were aware that they will be sharing out at the end of the lesson. Each group had rubrics, the elements of Folk Tales were displayed on the wall, and writing checklists were on desks. Language prompts were supplied if needed and children were asked to respond in full sentences; sentence starters were available.
- Teaching strategies, such as ones referred to above, provide scaffolding and multiple entry points into the curricula. Across classroom, students justified responses by citing textual evidence, had peer interactions and focused on 'backing' up their statements. Teachers made connections to the real world by explicitly connecting concepts to everyday experiences and encouraging inquiry.
- Students were encouraged to collaborate with one another, often in small groups or pair/share discussions. Large group settings were limited. Extensions for higher performing students were not always in place. Often, stronger students took over in the discussion process therefore limiting the opportunity for all students to participate. While many teachers encourage students to frame their own questions and respond to other students, there were instances of teachers serving as the 'leader' and answering student questions instead of reframing and redirecting the questions to other students for discussion.
- Teachers were often conferring with groups. Students at the student meeting expressed that they are comfortable talking with each other and discussing their thoughts on a subject, as well as participating in writing peer assessments.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

All curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards. Higher order skills are consistently emphasized for all learners across the grades and content areas.

### Impact

The school's curricular decisions build coherence and rigorous habits for all learners. Across grades and content areas, academic tasks push student thinking.

### Supporting Evidence

- Curricula maps provide evidence that the school develops rigorous academic tasks through the adoption of instructional materials from Ready-Gen in Literacy and Go Math for mathematics. Reading and writing and content area units of study integrate the CCLS, instructional shifts across content areas. Planned strategies include tiered academic vocabulary, fluency, multi-step problem solving, argumentative writing and text based responses.
- Unit plans in all content areas illustrated multiple designs of academic tasks with numerous scaffolds and entry points for all learners and extensions for the advanced learners. Science lesson plans show the use of visual aids, assorted graphic organizers and leveled texts.
- Unit plans along with lesson planning in all content areas emphasize higher order thinking and include rigorous academic tasks that include the use of Webb's Depth of Knowledge essential questions to create more rigor in discussion and across the curriculum writing skills.
- The Math Action Plan, aligned to the CCLS, works to have students engaged in mathematical practice in all grade levels that use word problems, and emphasizes critical areas and depth of understanding through interactive lessons, research-based instructional approaches and best practices that use differentiated instructional resources to ensure success for all students.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### **Findings**

The school uses common assessment in all subject areas, tracks student progress and adjusts curricula and instructional decisions. Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers consistently use checks for understanding.

### **Impact**

The school's systems to monitor progress through data analysis, as well as during instruction, are used regularly to track student progress. Teachers make effective adjustment to meet all students learning needs and students are aware of their next learning steps.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The school uses common assessments in all content areas, such as Go-Math predicative, Math Performance Based Assessments, English Language Arts, Pre/Post benchmark assessments, NY Ready baseline, Mid-year assessments along with Early Childhood Literacy Assessment Systems E-CLAS) .
- Teachers monitor student progress during extra instructional times, such as early morning tutoring, after-school programs, Saturday Academy, online tracking systems to adjust student groupings, resources and instruction.
- Teachers meet to outline and analyze assessments for accurate information about student progress. In addition to selecting Measurement of Student Learning (MoSL) assessments, the assessment team along with the cabinet added assessments that would be used for formative purposes.
- The teachers stated that they are empowered to revise lessons, units, or order of units, decide on which rubrics and tasks to use for projects. Teachers check for understanding, as seen in classrooms visited, use exit slips, thumbs up/down, questioning for explanation, stop and jot prompts, parking lot, gallery walks to elicit information about individual student understanding. Students are learning to self-assess, use checklists, rubric, think pair share activities and turn and talk.
- Teachers take notes through observations, conferencing and student quick writes to make on the spot teaching decisions, and often decide to re-teach the prior assignment so that all students have a clear understanding of the content. There is a third grade clinic providing additional support in reading and writing.

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

Distributive leadership structures are embedded so that there is effective teacher leadership. A shared vision has led to teacher team work which is data driven, inquiry-based and targeted.

### Impact

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry based structured professional collaborations, and teachers have a key role in the decision-making process resulting in a collaborative professional learning community. The work of teacher teams has resulted in school-wide coherence, strengthened teacher instructional capacity and improved student progress.

### Supporting Evidence

- At the fourth grade teacher team meeting teachers were looking at data based on Literacy Performance Assessments and making connections to identify student strengths and challenges. Teachers were also looking for trends and patterns: “Is this grade-wide?”The team stated that they are constantly modifying how information is given to their students. Today’s meeting indicated that more ‘front-loading’ was needed, using specific words to assist the English language learner population as well as special education students. Each team in the school is attached to an instructional coach in order to facilitate and monitor teacher development. Teacher effectiveness ratings have improved school wide. There are mentors and a Buddy System for new teachers to become acclimated to the school culture.
- All teachers are engaged in an extensive, teacher-led process of instructional rounds. Teachers have created their own protocol for looking at work, their own agendas and schedule that includes teachers observing one another and providing warm and cool feedback. Best practices are shared and the teacher discussed the trust that has been developed between teachers and staff and administration. This has created an open and collaborative space for inter-visitations, sharing lessons and unit plans.
- Teachers stated at both teams visited that all meetings are data-driven and used to make revisions to the curricula or lesson planning. It was established at a recent meeting that an analysis of essays written in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade indicated that students struggled with synthesizing information to make their essays cohesive. The curriculum and lesson plans were re-visited and modified based on these teacher observations and teachers input.
- Teachers report that all decision making is shared and that distributive leadership structures have formed as a result of high expectations for students and a culture of professionalism and trust by the principal. For example: teachers decided to focus on vertical alignment to be able to determine “what do my students need to know?”