



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Fred R Moore

Elementary School 133

**2121 Fifth Avenue
New York
NY 10037**

Principal: Patricia Balbuena

**Date of review: May 1, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Gale Reeves**

The School Context

Fred R Moore is an elementary school with 229 students from grade pre K through grade 5. The school population comprises 52% Black, 41% Hispanic, 2% White, 3% Asian students and 2% other students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 30% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90.7%.

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	Focus	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	Additional Findings	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	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	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

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

Teachers participate in weekly professional collaborations across grades and departments. Leadership structures enable teachers to have input on key decisions about curricula and teaching practices.

Impact

Team meetings strengthen teachers' instructional capacity and enable them to assume collective responsibility for improving student outcomes. Distributed leadership structures enable teachers to build their pedagogic practices resulting in improved achievement of academic goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Grade level teacher teams meet weekly. The schedule also enables teachers to meet multiple times throughout the week for common planning. During the teacher team meeting a third grade member shared that her grade level colleagues noted that students were not using transition words and had difficulty writing concluding paragraphs. Team members then developed specific mini lessons to support students in these areas and modeled the strategies during shared writing lessons. Teachers are encouraging students to use these strategies to meet the desired outcome.
- Teacher teams review formative and summative results, share strategies and make instructional decisions. When they noted that students struggled to succinctly state their opinions, citing textual evidence, the inquiry team researched and introduced the OREO (opinion, reasons, examples, re-state opinion) strategy to support opinion writing. Teachers developed a monthly lesson planner to support targeted students noting improvement across all students. They then introduced the strategy to all teachers throughout the school. Other teachers noted that the use of this strategy resulted in improved students' organizational skills.
- To support their professional learning, identified teachers participate in the network's inquiry institute. These teachers are responsible for turn keying and sharing new learning with their grade level colleagues. Additionally, identified mentors support new pedagogues in the areas of curriculum planning and instruction. Teachers note that these additional responsibilities have contributed to their leadership growth
- In addition to school administrators, the school's Professional Learning Committee is comprised of teachers across grade levels. Teachers volunteer to attend external professional development opportunities and, upon return, share information with their colleagues. Faculty members designed a staff survey soliciting feedback from their peers regarding needed professional development topics/supports. Survey results were used to schedule focused inter-visitations with other schools across the district. Additionally, during the vertical team meeting, teachers across grades discussed their input in making curricular recommendations to meet the identified needs of selected students. Teachers shared that school administrators listen to their input. Consequently they note that these structures allow them to play a key role in shaping and supporting the school's goals as well as developing their leadership capacity.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Developing

Findings

The school has adopted curricula aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards and is in the process of integrating the instructional shifts to create social studies and science curricula and academic tasks which emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills. Academic tasks across content areas are not consistently rigorous.

Impact

Teachers have Common Core aligned learning targets; however all learners do not consistently have access to coherently sequenced units of study. As such, learners are not consistently challenged across all subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leader stated that teachers are expected to use New York City's scope and sequence to plan social studies and science lessons. Although the scope and sequence depict essential questions, unit plans are not fully developed across both curricula areas and some teachers do not plan lessons aligned to the essential questions to ensure that lessons are rigorous, sequenced and aligned to state standards.
- Teachers are beginning to plan engaging tasks. For example in one self-contained class, the teacher planned differentiated tasks across three grades in order to ensure that students are exposed to grade specific and accessible content. The teacher provided students with multiple investigatory opportunities. However, in a bridge class with two grades, all students participated in the same content activities. Process charts and student artifacts do not reflect immersion in the units of study. Daily tasks did not require research and were not always well-aligned to the Common Core standards.
- Curriculum planning begins with teams over the summer for all subject areas and grades. At times lesson plans do not align with unit plans. For example, in one class students identified the difference between rural and suburban communities on one day and the next day they wrote about the life of Dr. Martin Luther King. Consequently, at times, activities may reflect a lack of coherence to the curricula.
- Curricula maps are inconsistent. Most English language arts and math maps demonstrate thoughtful planning and revisions but the same level of planning is not reflected in all maps across all content. Consequently, core subject areas are not coherently sequenced across grades so that students meet with increasing levels of challenge.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Although teaching practices are becoming aligned to the written curricula and the tenets of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, teachers do not yet consistently incorporate effective questioning and discussion strategies into daily class lessons.

Impact

Some teachers ask thought provoking questions but, across grades, teaching practices do not require all students to productively struggle with tasks. This limits the level of student engagement, resulting in uneven levels of participation across classrooms and lost opportunities for students to demonstrate high order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- School administrators' core beliefs require the change from teacher to student centered classrooms so that students participate more and assume ownership for their learning. The school leader believes that teaching practices must build students' stamina and foster their independence. Students must engage in high levels of thinking that requires them to analyze and synthesize information while they question the text and each other. This belief system is at the beginning stages of development across grades.
- Teachers explicitly inform students of the teaching point. Some teachers use scaffolding tools such as anchor charts to model concepts and encourage student choice of math manipulatives. In one class, the teacher referenced process and strategy charts to support student understanding, used a language frame to model citing key details and ideas in the text, required students to research using multiple sources and asked several open-ended thoughtful questions such as "Why was hurricane Sandy called a costly hurricane?" These practices are not consistent across classrooms. In other classrooms, teachers are not as adept at using exemplars and students are not frequently required to employ research strategies across multiple sources.
- During a science lesson, the teacher posed the question: "What happens to matter when it is exposed to heat?" She elicited students' prior knowledge, encouraged students to write their hypothesis and then conducted an experiment. Students recorded their observations and the teacher, as a result of skillful probing, enabled students to uncover the answer. Students were then able to apply the concept to other real life scenarios. This level of student engagement, however, is not consistent across grades. In other classes the teachers provided the answers rather than allowing students to uncover them and teachers did not regularly require students to use multiple sources, including providing real life experiences, to support their understanding. As such, all classes are not equally rigorous and do not require students to think deeply or to research and extend their thinking in order to apply their learning to real world concepts in multiple ways.
- Smart boards are available in some classrooms and are used to display problems, notes and the lesson focus. Most teachers do not yet use them as instructional tools to enhance learning and deepen student understanding of taught concepts. This results in uneven levels of understanding and student engagement

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Teachers use rubrics inconsistently to provide written feedback. They do not regularly check for student understanding of taught concepts to meet the needs of all students.

Impact

The quality of feedback and the assessment practices in all classrooms are not targeted to address students' needs and help them understand their next learning steps so that they are able to self-assess and demonstrate increased levels of mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, lesson plans reflect tiered groupings and teachers are expected to use a class tracker to group students. Teachers are asked to provide feedback as 'glow' and 'grow' statements. However, students' work products at times lack written feedback and, when provided, the quality of the feedback in some classrooms is not consistently targeted to ensure that students exceed performance standards. Comments such as "Great ending" and "Next write a conclusion" reflect examples that are not specific and do not inform students of what they need to do to increase their level of performance.
- Students are aware of their Fountas and Pinnell reading level assessment results and targeted goals. However, although students know that their reading levels have improved, some are unable to verbally articulate their next steps across content areas.
- Most teachers use English language arts and math rubrics to provide written feedback to students but the use of rubrics is not a consistent practice across all subject areas. In some classrooms students shared that, many times, they receive the rubric or checklist after the teacher grades and returns their work. Some students also do not understand the written feedback. This limits students' ability to have a clear understanding of how their work will be judged or to fully understand their strengths and next steps so that they can support their own learning.
- The school leader purchased the text Checking for Understanding for all teachers. Teachers are beginning to incorporate some of the strategies discussed. As such, some teachers are beginning to take notes when they confer with students. However, this is not the norm for all staff. The principal also shared that teachers are expected to record which students require re-teaching or additional support. This was evident in one teacher's lesson plans. Some teachers do not regularly incorporate structures to assess student understanding. In addition, although some students are given a checklist to help them self-assess, they often receive the checklists after the assignments are completed. This precludes students from supporting their own learning growth.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

High expectations are consistently messaged to staff via the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching (DfT), during trainings and other modes of communication. Ongoing feedback to families keeps them apprised of student progress toward a path for middle school and college and career readiness.

Impact

Training structures aligned to school leaders' verbal and written feedback offer support leading to shared accountability. Additionally, families have high praise for the support their children receive, resulting in consistent and ongoing feedback that families use to support student success.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders share their expectations during classroom visits as well as provide written feedback aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching after formal and informal observations. Differentiated feedback supports are aligned to the identified needs of individual staff members. Staff and administrators engage in visits to each other's classrooms and teachers are encouraged to provide feedback after instructional peer visits. The school leader stated that she expects teachers to apply their new learning after receiving professional support. Teachers share new insights with peers and school supervisors hold them accountable during follow up visits to classrooms.
- The school leader shares her expectations through practices and modeling. For example, after learning walks she may write a letter to the entire staff sharing noted strengths and areas for improvement. Additionally, she meets with the teaching cabinet on a weekly basis to review and discuss her instructional expectations.
- Grade curricula newsletters, reading and communication logs, weekly homework sheets, phone calls and face-to-face meetings all enable staff and parents to exchange ideas and discuss goals aligned to the staff's expectations for student success in readiness for middle school and beyond. Parents stated that the staff "knows the students well" and that parents, in turn, also readily provide feedback to teachers. For example, one parent shared that if her child did not sleep well, she feels that it is important to apprise the teacher in case he is not attentive during the day. As such, there are consistent levels of communication to support students' academic gains.
- Student progress reports are sent home three times annually (between report cards) to inform parents of their children's progress on summative and formative assessments, including current Fountas and Pinnell reading levels. One parent happily shared that the school has high expectations for all students including those with individual education plans. During *Java Friday* meetings with the school leader and at literacy support workshops such as Bingo Night and Family Feud, parents stated that strategies are shared with them so that they better understand how to assist their children at home. These structures help to solidify the home-school connection.