



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

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2014-2015**

**Tribeca Learning Center**

**Elementary School M150**

**334 Greenwich Street  
New York  
NY 10013**

**Principal: Jennifer Bonnet**

**Date of review: March 12, 2015**

**Lead Reviewer: Lucia Perez-Medina**

## The School Context

Tribeca Learning Center is an elementary school with 186 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 8% Black, 15% Hispanic, 54% White, 13% Asian, and 10% Multi-Racial students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 5% 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 95.0%.

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

The principal consistently communicates the high expectations of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and provides ongoing trainings for the entire staff. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations toward college and career readiness, building partnerships with families.

### Impact

The communication of high expectations has resulted in a culture of mutual accountability among staff. Feedback to families supports progress towards those expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school has a website where teachers have created web pages to provide ongoing information to parents of what students are working on and on the various skills to be covered across subject areas. Class websites, blogs, and newsletters provide pertinent information for students and families, including examples of work, Common Core information, and homework assignments. “Bi-Weeklies” are sent out via email to all parents, informing them of all events occurring at the school and reminding them of important dates, and face-to-face meetings that take place on Tuesdays to discuss expectations.
- Family workshops, grade newsletters, “Java with Jenny,” a bi-monthly forum for parents, where parents may ask the principal questions on any topic they wish, and other resources provided by the school indicating student goals, all provide multiple means for giving feedback and create an awareness of practices towards preparing students for college and career. During the parent interview, parents were able to explain the ways in which the school’s communication structures keep them informed of their children’s progress and how the school prepares them to support their children at home. One parent stated, “We have workshops on topics from test preparation to Common Core and social-emotional development, and these workshops are informative.”
- Parents stated that the teachers are more than willing to work with them to help their children. For example, one parent stated, “My child was having difficulty in class and the teacher went out of her way to consult with other teachers to obtain strategies to assist my child and shared those strategies with me to implement at home.” The parent stated that she is noticing a big difference now with her child’s engagement in school. One parent said that she attended a math workshop where a lesson was demonstrated using the same book her daughter used in class. She stated, “When my daughter had trouble with decimals, I was able to review with her using the book they gave us.”
- Professional development opportunities are provided to teachers in both English Language Arts (ELA) and math in the school from Teachers College and math consultants. Teachers stated “There are other opportunities outside of the school to attend training from Metamorphosis and Teacher’s College so that we can support high expectations in the classroom.” Teachers at the team meeting stated, “Our principal is clear of the expectations for learning in the classroom and follows up with us on how we are implementing strategies learned during our feedback conferences.”

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

Although teachers frequently check for understanding, use and analyze common assessments and performance-based rubrics aligned to key standards, there are a few missed opportunities for students to receive effective feedback to accelerate their next learning steps.

### Impact

Feedback in the form of next steps for improvement regularly guides adjustments in lessons, however students' ability to articulate their learning steps varies across subject areas.

### Supporting Evidence

- The following assessments are used as part of the Teachers College curriculum and provide data which assists in adjusting curricula and instruction: Teachers College running records, stop and jots, on-demand writing assessments at the beginning, middle, and end of units of study, learning progression rubrics to evaluate writing, conference notes in order to create small groups for targeted instruction, and mid-workshop check-ins which include three minute pauses, hand signals, or think-pair-share. Teachers use the Teachers' College benchmark assessments to monitor students' independent and instructional reading levels in order to plan small group work to address deficits in the grade-level reading progressions. Teachers stated that they have seen growth in student reading levels. Across classrooms, small group instruction and mid-workshop check-in was observed in three out of four classrooms visited during the literacy block.
- Most work in students' folders showed rubric-based performance level scores with teacher comments on post-its. Some student work in math showed only checkmarks. In addition, in a few students' folders, there were collections of work that showed evidence of peer feedback and some evidence of actionable feedback by a teacher to inform next steps.
- During the student meeting, students articulated that they get feedback from their peers and that teachers give them feedback in their reading notebooks. One student stated, "I use my rubric in writing as a checklist so I can see what I need to do better." However, a few students couldn't articulate their strengths and next steps for learning.
- The school uses common assessments aligned to the Math in Focus curriculum. These include pre- and post-tests after units, benchmark tests, individual data sheets to keep track of students' scores on each test, and teacher created exit slips. Teachers stated that the data gathered is used to make adjustments to the curriculum and their lesson plans. For example, teachers stated that they had to include various organization and developing ideas strategies because students didn't do well in their published pieces and thus they revised their pacing guide to extend argumentative writing for another week.

## Additional Findings

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

The schools' curriculum is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and most tasks offer a range of learning experiences that engage all students and supports their learning.

### Impact

Student learning is coherent, promotes college and career readiness and emphasizes student thinking across grades for a variety of learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- Most lessons and academic tasks include the integration of the instructional shifts across subject areas. For example, a third grade ELA task asked students to engage in a close reading assignment. The task required students to recognize and use the character's point of view by asking themselves "Who is telling the story and how do you know?" and to provide text-based details when discussing what they learned about the character's perspectives.
- The school has revised ELA curricula across grades K-5 to create a deliberate pacing sequence for all writing units with each unit dedicated to a particular text type. Teachers stated that all students develop a foundation for each text type, with teachers providing more time for students to learn fewer concepts and do more in-depth work within the six-week unit cycle. The school's Teacher's College ELA curricula provides a balance of just right books and grade-level texts that support development of students' fluency and comprehension in reading complex texts. For example, most lesson plans show use of academic vocabulary, assorted graphic organizers and visual aids and includes tiered bends to further support ELLs and students with disabilities (SWDs).
- The common core aligned math curriculum Math in Focus supports student's mathematical knowledge and problem solving skills and provides resources to support a variety of learners; however these supports, extensions and resources were not evident in the math lesson plans and student tasks.
- The school has two content studies per year which require students to complete projects that emphasize reading, writing, and hands-on learning experiences on research topics that range from a study of the names of streets in lower Manhattan and creation of signage to creating "Remedy Guides for Sickness," based on Eastern Woodland Indians' beliefs. Students are encouraged to use different modalities to create projects (art work, speeches, plays, and podcasts) in support of their different learning styles. Projects culminate in a large celebration of the students' work at the end of each semester. Teachers stated, "The students become experts in these areas and become more skilled at reading and writing in non-fiction."

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to a set of beliefs that is informed by Danielson's Framework for Teaching and discussions that foster higher-order thinking and learning.

### **Impact**

All students including ELLs and SWDs engage in challenging academic tasks and demonstrate their thinking. Hands-on and collaborative learning structures predominate across classrooms based on adherence to articulated school beliefs.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- In keeping with the school's belief of how students learn best, across most classrooms visited, students engaged in partner work, small group instruction, and independent practice. During a third grade lesson, students participated in small groupings, where they had opportunities to demonstrate their thinking by sharing their character's point of view and by providing proof using supportive text-based evidence.
- In the first grade class, as part of the social studies community unit, students explored different types of communities through center activities to reinforce the concepts learned. One group compared the difference between an urban and rural community, another group looked at images of a rural community, drew pictures, and wrote about what they saw, while other students read a poem about community helpers and drew a picture that illustrated the meaning of the poem. In the third grade class, students worked in partnerships annotating text to derive the gist of each paragraph. Through partnerships, leveled materials on the same topic, introduction of vocabulary and teacher support students are able to access the curriculum.
- During classroom observations the use of turn and talk, group talk, ability based grouping, and modeling and graphic organizers were observed in literacy and social studies. For example, in one class students worked in groups to identify character traits and provide evidence from the text to support the traits described and complete a graphic organizer. Students had access to leveled texts and had the opportunity to discuss their evidence with their peers.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

Teacher teams are engaged in teacher-led inquiry based professional collaborations and regularly analyze student work and benefit from a variety of opportunities to research effective instructional techniques.

**Impact**

Teacher teams have strengthened instructional coherence across grades. Professional collaboration around student work and instructional strategies results in improved teacher practice and student progress.

**Supporting Evidence**

- During a teacher team meeting, teachers used an ATLAS student work protocol to determine next steps for teaching practices. Team members analyzed writing in published literary essays to determine students' understanding of development and elaboration of ideas, norming their ratings of student work using a writing learning progression rubric. One teacher determined that although her students had improved in their understanding of main idea, that there were some students who were still having difficulty with the concept. As a next step, the presenting teacher decided to reteach the concepts during the writing block by using a transition outline graphic organizer, sentence starters, and a color-coded chart to support student's organization of ideas. The team decided to try these methodologies with their students and bring their results to the next team meeting for review.
- Teacher teams meet weekly and have developed structures including: use of a protocol titled Examine Student Work, team notes, and supplemental materials to support student progress. The focus of these meetings encompasses an integration of the school goals around using student data from varied assessments such as benchmark baselines, quick writes, and published pieces with writing progressions rubrics to determine student strengths and learning needs and to develop strategies to support active engagement and academic achievement. Additionally, the administration provides feedback to teacher teams to improve the quality of instructional work and give suggestions for future meetings.
- Teachers utilize team discussions and collaborations to develop and refine interventions and strategies to improve student performance. For example, after a discussion regarding a student's identified needs at a grade team meeting, a designated teacher follows up with the student directly. The teacher and student then co-create an intervention plan designed to support the student using a holistic approach that includes both academic and social-emotional elements.