



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

**Twenty-first Century Academy for Community
Leadership**

Elementary-Middle School M210

**501-503 West 152 Street
Manhattan
NY 10031**

Principal: Evelyn Linares

**Date of review: March 31, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Rafaela Landin**

The School Context

P.S. /I.S. 210 - Twenty-first Century Academy for Community Leadership is a K-8 school with 468 students from PK through grade 8. The school population comprises 2% Black, 97% Hispanic. The student body includes 37% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-15 was 95.0%.

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	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	Additional Findings	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	Proficient
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	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	Focus	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The instructional team ensures that the curricula is aligned to the Common Core State Standards and the content standards and strategically integrates the instructional shifts across grades and subject areas. Academic tasks offer all students including English language learners and students with disabilities access to rigorous and engaging learning experiences.

Impact

As a result, the school curricula decisions ensure coherence across grades and rigorous tasks support high levels of student thinking and promote college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses a uniform template to refine unit plans in all content areas that include the Common Core State Standards, content standards, domain specific vocabulary, Universal Design for Learning Principles; daily objectives aligned to the standards, questions developed using Depth of Knowledge Framework, learning activities, and assessments. For example, a review of a unit of study in math, grade 1 shows that teachers use the completed math curriculum planning template as a resource to complete a math weekly planning template. This weekly template and resources from Engage NY, GO Math, and Investigations curriculum refine instructional plans across grades to address the learning needs of all students.
- The school has developed curriculum maps for all content areas in all grades and has made strategic decisions in their revision and adjustment process to emphasize coherence and higher order skills across grades and subject areas. Teachers shared curriculum maps for K-2 demonstrating the adaptations and revision process for alignment and coherence for writing, reading and social studies. Teachers collaborate on a weekly basis to analyze students' data and make informed decisions on revisions of curriculum maps. Teachers revised the writing, reading and social studies curriculum maps by including the Core Knowledge Skill Strand in K-2. The curriculum maps for grades 6-8 show the revisions made during the science study group in teacher teams to ensure alignment to Common Core State Standards. To make revisions after each unit of work, teachers use a template to reflect on what went well, implications for instruction, improvement and ideas and strategies to enhance teaching and learning
- Students' work in classrooms visited and tasks displayed in bulletin boards outside the classrooms across all content areas evidenced alignment to the Common Core State Standards and Content Standards. In addition, tasks evidenced rigorous habits and higher order skills and instructional strategies made to ensure access to the curricula. The work showed evidence of feedback given to students aligned to the rubric to advance learning and to promote college and career readiness for all students.

Area of Focus

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

Teachers are engaged in professional collaborations to develop curriculum, analyze student work and plan instruction resulting in CCLS integration and strengthening instructional capacity.

Impact

Although the majority of the teachers participate in structured teacher inquiry teams to promote the achievement of school goals, evidence of teacher teams systematically analyzing key elements of teacher work and classroom practice was not noted

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams promote the implementation of Common Core State Standards and the instructional shift. Teacher teams engaged in the vertical alignment of curriculum and collaborate to unpack the Common Core Learning Standards and use this knowledge to develop units of study and performance tasks. During a teacher team meeting, teachers had an agenda indicating the school's goals as rigor, engagement, consistency, the use of universal design for learning and conferring, a facilitator for the meeting, a writing prompt and instructional shift 5: Writing from sources. In addition, sample writing responses for three students in the grade were shared. Teachers used a "Learning from Student Work Recording Form" to analyze the student work and evaluate the students' level of understanding about writing from sources. Teachers are refining a process by which they systematically analyze student work to inform teacher practice, get feedback on their inquiry work and inform next instructional steps to improve academic achievement for students.
- To build capacity and support teacher teams in data driven inquiry work, the school provides opportunities for teachers to engage in inter-visitations and receive feedback from their peers and from the administrative team. The Danielson Framework for Teaching is used by teachers and the administrators to build a common language of best teaching practices for implementing Common Core aligned instruction to ensure student progress in all content areas and to strengthen teacher pedagogy. Additionally the school affords teachers opportunities to receive professional development facilitated by English language arts and math coaches, consultants from Educational Options and from Generation Ready.
- Teachers reported that team analysis of student work results in revisions and adjustments to curriculum maps, lessons and unit plans. For example; an analysis of math tasks revealed that students were having trouble with fluency and mental math. Teachers collaborated to identify intervention strategies such as adding an extra step of composing and decomposing numbers, and adding visuals to the problem. This led to improvement in students' performance on follow-up assessments and strengthened the instructional capacity of teachers.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Teachers' pedagogy consistently provide scaffolds to ensure students experience rigorous instruction and engage in high-level thinking and discussions to produce meaningful work products.

Impact

Across classrooms, teaching practices and strategies ensure all students are engaged in challenging academic tasks that further promote high levels of student thinking and participation in learning

Supporting Evidence

- In classrooms visited, teachers provided students with multiple entry points into the lesson to ensure that all students had access to the curricula. For example, in a sixth grade math class, students were grouped to ensure effective student to student discussions, collaboration and participation. Students were provided with high level questions, prompts, charts, and manipulatives to support the individual learning needs of the students.
- In a second grade writing class, students engaged in Turn and Talk, and were given wait time to respond to questions and discussions centered on text features and how readers use them to support better understanding and comprehension of text. Accommodations for this lesson included modeling, partner work, prompts, visuals, technology and the strategic use of native language instruction.
- In all classrooms, students had opportunities to engage in rigorous tasks on their own, in pairs or in groups to build high critical thinking, participation and high level work products. In a seventh grade class, students were observed citing evidence from text, making connections, questioning and analyzing text by participating in a Socratic Circle Seminar. The class was divided into two groups, one group observed and provided feedback to their peers by using an observation form, the other group participated in the analysis of the text and discussed evidence based claims using the protocol for Socratic Seminar.
- A review of classwork, and other tasks completed by students, indicated that students' work illustrates high levels of student thinking, participation and analytical reasoning. Tasks in all content areas also evidenced the school's efforts in providing multiple entry points to accommodate the individual learning needs of all students and to use different types of representation, engagement and expressions in the development of learning tasks that promote high level student thinking. In a fourth grade Integrated Collaborative Team Teaching Class (ICT), after a close reading analysis of a poem, students worked in groups supported by strategies provided by the teacher; such as visuals, graphic organizers, and color coded vocabulary which promoted intellectual discussions and high levels of student participation in lesson activities.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school has developed common assessments and rubrics aligned to the curricula to determine student progress towards goals across grades and content areas and the results are used to make adjustments and revisions to the curricula.

Impact

Assessment practices provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding academic achievement and adjustments needed to curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- As stated by the leadership and teacher teams, across classrooms in K-8, teachers use Fountas and Pinnell running records assessments in English and Spanish, and the Writing and Reading Assessment Profile (WRAP) in grades 4-8 for Spanish to determine independent reading levels of students and to monitor their progress. These assessments are administered three times per year. Additionally, teachers have developed and adjusted performance tasks aligned to the Common Core State Standards and to the curricula utilizing resources such as Engage NY, Go Math, Ready Gen, Common Core Learning Standards, Teachers College and Accelerated Learning units. For example, the curriculum maps were adjusted in math after a revision of the Engage NY math calendar leading to a reduction of units in the curriculum maps for math.
- The school uses common assessments and rubrics aligned to the Common Core State Standards to determine progress towards curricula goals and provide feedback to students regarding their academic achievement. A review of portfolios during classroom visitation and conversation with students showed evidence of the use of rubrics and feedback given to students to advance their learning. Furthermore, students were able to articulate the purpose of the rubrics and checklists and they were able to explain the written reflections on work that they wrote based on the feedback given by teachers. For example, seventh grade students received the following feedback on an informative/explanatory writing assignment: “Good progress with syntax in sentences. They are much more clear and concise. Good details to support the thesis. Work on using full quotations to explain your ideas. Ask yourself does this quote fully explain or prove my thesis/inference/claim? Use more transition words”. A student stated: “we get feedback from teachers. They write notes and this helps me know what I am good at or what I need to improve. Sometimes I work with a partner to help me with my work. In December, on my writing task I received a level 3 using this rubric, if you look at my writing in January; I moved to level 4 on the rubric. I just worked on what the teacher wrote and my goal for writing and I got better”.
- Teachers meet in teams on a weekly basis during study group and in grade common planning time to make adjustments and revisions to the curriculum maps, units of study and lessons based on the analysis of student work, data results and expectations of the curricula. Assessments data is used to target students for small group instruction, intervention, conferring and individualized support. For example, during the teacher interview and the meeting with the leadership, teachers reported that a math unit was revised after an analysis of student work in writing which revealed that students were struggling with focus on one moment in their narrative piece. Teachers decided to readjust the unit by using graphic organizers to support students in their writing development.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and staff consistently embed high expectations in all aspects of school culture, focusing on the Danielson Framework for Teaching and college and career readiness, and successfully partner with families for mutual understanding of those expectations.

Impact

Systems and structures that support a culture of high expectations, responsibilities, and professional collaboration for staff, students and families effectively communicate mutual accountabilities amongst all stakeholders for achieving the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers shared that the leadership holds one to one meetings with the staff to reflect on the vision and goals of the school. At these meetings, the Danielson Framework for Teaching is discussed and class/school data is reviewed. Teachers use the Danielson Framework to determine if they met their individual goals and to set new goals for the upcoming year.
- Curriculum maps in all content areas, a cohesive unit plan template, rubrics and checklists for all performance tasks and on demand assessments define for all teachers the expectations of teaching and learning at the school. Evaluation of unit plans and conversations with teachers revealed that teachers across grades and content areas use the Depth of Knowledge Framework to develop questions and to support students in engaging with the content. Universal Design for Learning, Common Core resources and the lesson plan template clearly delineate expectations for instruction for all staff. For example, a review of a science unit showed the scaffold instruction, the co-teaching structures expected during the unit, participation mode such as Think-Pair-Share, Mix-Freeze-Pair, Turn and Talk, and type of grouping for the students.
- Conversations with teachers, students, parents and the leadership showed that students use rubrics to evaluate their work and create goals based on end of unit assessments in all content areas. Students reported that teachers hold individual conferences to discuss their progress and to come up with a plan to improve their work. Middle school students participate in advisory group using the Roads to Success Program. This program supports students with college and career readiness and understanding of how to set long term and short term educational goals.
- Parents reported that they receive newsletters before every unit of study and that during curriculum night in the beginning of the school year they were provided with the expectations for students for the academic year. During parent engagement time on Tuesdays, teachers provide parents with exemplars of the current units to support them in understanding the expectations for the grade. Additionally, teachers stated that students have specific learning goals and next steps to improve their work at home and in school. Teachers provide a chart on Fountas and Pinnell's reading levels tracking individual student's progress. Tuesday workshops given by teachers on Common Core State Standards provide clarity for parents on what is expected for each grade level.