



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Amistad Dual Language School

Elementary-Middle School M311

**4862 Broadway
Manhattan
NY 10034**

Principal: Zoraida Hernandez

**Date of review: November 18, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Cheryl McClendon**

The School Context

Amistad Dual Language School, 06M311 is an elementary-middle school with 432 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 2% Black, 88% Hispanic, 8% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 14% 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

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	Proficient
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	Celebration	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	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	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms and subjects teachers create, use and analyze assessments and rubrics that are aligned to the school's curricula to provide actionable feedback to students, as well as to help them progress on a clear trajectory towards mastery.

Impact

Students understand and refer to rubric criteria to develop mastery. The use of common assessments across the school facilitates analysis of trends across the grades to identify focal instructional areas. This also allows teachers to develop a common language for tracking student progress and facilitates collaborative planning of targeted instruction with the math and literacy coaches.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers create and use curriculum-aligned rubrics that clearly delineate levels of student mastery, and in turn teachers provide rubric-aligned feedback to students. Students engage in critically analyzing rubrics for essential criteria, evaluating the effectiveness of feedback comments, and providing rubric-aligned feedback to peers.
- When asked, "How do you know if your work is good enough?" students' responses included, "I look at the rubric and then I see what I didn't do and where I need to get better" and "I ask the teacher." Several students state the teachers consistently give them rubrics at the beginning of every unit, project or task so that they can "know what to do." Additionally, during the student interview a student stated that his teacher sets class goals and individual student goals, which she discusses with the students.
- Teachers administer and analyze curriculum-based performance assessments in English Language Arts (ELA), math and social studies during designated benchmark periods throughout the year. Horizontal teacher teams and the math coach conduct item-skill analyses of performance-based assessments and create color-coded data graphs that are posted in Google docs and used to plan for targeted instruction.
- Common diagnostic, formative and summative assessments such as Developmental Reading Assessments and running records are administered and analyzed for instructional implications by teacher teams and coaches, throughout the year.
- Teachers confer with individual and small groups of students daily during independent and guided reading and literature circles. Conference notes containing strengths and next steps are recorded on the conference record. Teachers use this data to appropriately revise instruction and shift flexible groups of students to tailor instructional support for English Language Learners (ELLs), students with disabilities and all other students, as reflected in unit plans and lesson plans. Guided reading and literature circle assessment records reflect that across the grades many students have shifted to the next reading level and some have shifted two reading levels since September's running record assessment. Also reflected is commensurate movement into higher level reading groups.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and provide multiple entry points for all students. Teaching practices and student work products reflect the school's belief in how students learn best in alignment with the Danielson framework and the instructional shifts. While these practices were present in many classrooms, it was not yet present in a vast majority of classrooms.

Impact

All students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, engage in challenging tasks that are at their level and demonstrate higher order thinking skills in their work products. These tasks are presented to students consistently but not yet strategically, leading to missed opportunities for high-quality supports and extensions for all sub-groups.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, Depth of Knowledge Level 3 and 4 questions and tasks were observed. In 3 out of 7 classrooms observed students were seen discussing questions with peers and working collaboratively on tasks. In 4 out of 7 classrooms observed students were seen working independently and exchanges were predominantly teacher to student and student to teacher, indicating limited opportunities for student-to-student discussion and learning.
- Teaching strategies included the use of rubrics, small groups, partnerships, conferencing, and vocabulary building in Spanish and English and Common Core-aligned math strategies such as using the area model to multiply two digit numbers.
- Students are developing deeper conceptual understandings of math through teachers' use of varied Common Core-aligned math strategies. Students' ability to engage in active listening and accountable talk is enhanced through the use of accountable talk stems, but this is not yet present in a vast majority of classrooms.
- Dual language strategies, English as a second language strategies and Tier 1 and 2 academic intervention services strategies such as focused guided group work, ability grouping and mixed ability partnerships provide multiple entry points and support higher order thinking for ELLs, students with disabilities and struggling students.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards through the selection of Common Core-aligned curricula in math and the provision of extra time for teachers to collaboratively plan Common Core-aligned curricula in ELA and social studies. Curricula and academic tasks reflect rigorous habits as embodied in the school's instructional focus of "questioning to foster instructional shifts" and students and their families are also supported with college and career readiness through the school counselor.

Impact

Students are able to show and explain their work in math. Students' writing skills are developed through the drafting and revision stages of the writing process.

Supporting Evidence

- School faculty chose Math in Focus and Connected Mathematics Project 3 (CMP3) because these curricula are Common Core-aligned and present a more process-oriented approach for students. Teachers wrote units of study in ELA aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, using Teachers College Units of study as the foundation.
- The school is retaining the 2013 - 2014 Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) goal, "100% of classroom teachers that teach social studies will align two units of social studies with the Common Core Learning Standards " as a 2014-2015 CEP goal. The principal states that this is a cumulative goal. Every year two new social studies units are aligned. Presently four social studies units have been aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards.
- Unit plans and lesson plans reflect higher- level questions that are incorporated into daily lessons.
- Three out of six students interviewed discussed the important role that teacher questioning plays within the instructional program. One student asserted that teachers "ask some really tough questions." Another student talked about "essential questions" within each lesson, while a third student explained that the essential question leads to other questions. Examples of essential questions that provided a springboard for higher order critical thinking were, "Que es una civilizacion?" and "How is language used in memoir to convey feeling?" Throughout the unit the latter engaged students in analysis, synthesis and metacognition as they engaged in the process of crafting "moving" memoirs. The former engaged students in deep analysis and evaluation of the construct "civilization".

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School Leaders and teacher teams consistently communicate high expectations, with the literacy and math coaches facilitating professional learning to enable teachers to meet those expectations. School leaders and faculty offer on-going feedback to help families understand student progress and provide supports to prepare students for the next level.

Impact

Parents feel well-informed about their children's progress. Students and parents feel well-prepared for articulation to the middle school grades.

Supporting Evidence

- Families receive feedback and communication on a daily basis through emails from teachers, and have access to school and student information on the Yahoo Community group site, through the Engrade platform and Amistad website. Home/school folders are placed in back packs every day.
- The math coach has facilitated Saturday "Homework Help" workshops for families. Parents report that this workshop helps them to better understand how to support their children with Common Core aligned homework assignments. The school counselor meets with families to share information regarding middle school articulation. The school counselor also facilitates small tours for 5th grade students to visit middle school classrooms.
- The math coach and the literacy coach lead teacher teams in analyzing trends across the grades. This is collated into color-coded graphs, which are uploaded onto Google docs for teachers and administrators to use as they collaboratively revise curricula and instruction to scaffold instruction for all students.

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based collaborations that strengthen their instructional capacity through the analysis of student work and assessment data.

Impact

Teacher collaboration enhances instructional planning, student achievement and professional practice.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet three periods weekly – one designated period, one math-focused period and one ELA-focused period.
- During the teacher team question and answer session, teachers asserted that the school-wide instructional focus of “using questioning to promote higher level thinking” is implemented across curricula and this strategy was observed across classrooms visited.
- Teacher teams planned student groupings based on their “confusions” in math as illuminated by item-skills analysis. For example, students are grouped into a math problem-solving group and a place value group based on their assessed needs.
- During a teacher team meeting, teachers analyzed student work and discussed how to present a math concept at different challenge levels. The participating teachers explained that the differentiation of instruction to support students with a range of proficiency levels is a common outcome of meetings in which they engage in the analysis of student work and data.