



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

**Collaborative Academy of Science, Technology,
and Language Arts Education**

01M345

**220 Henry Street
Manhattan
NY 10002**

Principal: Judith De Los Santos

**Date of review: March 3, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Kristine Mustillo**

The School Context

MS 345 is a middle school with 142 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 29% Black, 53% Hispanic, 3% White, and 15% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 24% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 91.0%.

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 | 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 | 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

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

All teachers engage in multiple structured professional collaborations by grade, content and mixed inquiry focused on strengthening teacher capacity and led by teacher leaders.

Impact

Teachers share learning that promotes the achievement of school goals and implementation of CCLS. Teachers have a voice in decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly by grade, content and in mixed inquiry. Teacher team meetings involve looking at student work and data to refine curriculum and inform instructional practice. Teachers share differentiation strategies in order to meet the needs of a diverse population of learners. The work of teams has resulted in the use of CCLS aligned writing rubric includes the standards for grades five through nine. This establishes a common understanding of expectations and allows teacher to provide targeted standards based instruction that scaffolds and extends learning.
- Teachers have instructional leadership opportunities through Teacher Leadership and the Teacher Incentive Fund. Teachers participating in these programs lead teacher team meetings for grades and content areas and serve as the instructional cabinet. These teachers also work with the principal to plan professional development opportunities that include inter-visitations. TIF teachers run lab sites in their classroom and serve as peer instructional coaches using a range of peer coaching models based upon observational data.
- Teacher teams meet each Monday in mixed inquiry teams. Teachers, in teams of 5, across grade and content, use National School Reform Initiative protocols to look at student work and explore problems of practice. The inquiry work has resulted in common understandings of rigor and more consistent and effective use of formative assessments to inform instructional decision making. Across the school, exit slips, rubrics and conference notes are utilized to provide individualized support to students and support effective planning. Exit tickets not only check for comprehension but consistently as students to reflect on strategies and explain their thinking.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classroom teaching practices are aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and discussions and work products require high levels of student thinking.

Impact

While students receive consistent scaffolds up to engage in high level tasks, extensions are absent and student ownership limited.

Supporting Evidence

- In social studies students are engaged in research through different source documents and engage in higher order task requiring analysis, synthesis and evaluation of information. In a study of Abraham Lincoln students studied, “O Captain, My Captain” “The Great Emancipator” and “The Civil War President”. After close readings and discussions around each text, student created a final product to support the claim that Abraham Lincoln was a legend. In an 8th grade social studies class students were studying political cartoons looking at symbolism. Students compare historical time periods to current times and created their own political cartoons.
- Students engaged in Socratic Seminar around sport funding for schools. Students had notes from previous discussions which explored gender inequality in sports, the use of performance enhancing drugs and other relevant topics. Students guided the conversation utilizing conversation stems in the fishbowl while the “seashells” (observers) noted points they agreed or disagreed with and formulated questions.
- In a math class, students worked in groups of four to log jumping jacks, collect data and graph trends as they worked to utilize information from graphs and tables to solve word problems. Roles assignments (jumper, time keeper, recorder) supported student engagement in the task. Math journals are used by all students to reflect on their mathematical thinking and process.
- Teachers are working to include more elements of student choice in research topics and presentation styles. Students are exploring content through the arts and media along with fiction and non-fiction text. Increasingly they are having opportunities to deepen their understanding on a chosen topic within a unit and select how they want to present this information to their peers. In an 8th grade social studies class students were studying political cartoons looking at symbolism. Students compare historical time periods to current times and created their own political cartoons.
- In a 7th grade science class, students created sedimentary rocks using glitter to represent crystals, glue to represent cement, and colored paper to represent sediments. The lesson contained the exploration of advanced vocabulary such as “lithification.” Students questioned did not know the vocabulary terms listed. When they asked the teacher, they were told to “look it up” and “they will be on the quiz.” There was no exploration or connection to these terms to strengthen student understanding.

Additional Findings

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| Quality Indicator: | 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: | Proficient |
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Findings

School leaders and faculty participate in regular collaborative planning sessions across grades and content areas to ensure alignment to Common Core Learning Standards and coherence in units and tasks.

Impact

Curriculum is vertically coherent and emphasizes higher order skills for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- School-wide, students engage in social studies themes that integrate literacy and the arts. In the Manhattan Project, 6th grade students focused on the Harlem Renaissance; 7th grade focused on the evolution of the Lower East Side, and 8th grade worked with a broader immigration unit. Tasks and culminating project requirements build and spiral across grades. Students explore themes through the arts as well exploring the music and artists of the time period.
- The school adopted CMP math two years ago. Teachers note the high level of rigor and application opportunities for students. Teacher teams unpack each task to identify the necessary computation and fluency skills to ensure students receive scaffolds up to rigorous tasks.
- The school utilizes Engage New York bundles to plan for cross content instruction in ELA, social studies, and the arts. These cross content connections are strengthening student engagement by providing multiple opportunities for students to access content through high interest areas.
- The school utilizes the scope and sequence for science and social studies, integrating CCLS reading and writing expectations. Students note a strong emphasis on developing their note taking skills as an organization strategy to support comprehension and expression.

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| Quality Indicator: | 2.2 Assessment | Rating: | Proficient |
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Findings

Across classrooms teachers use common assessments and rubrics aligned with the school's curricula.

Impact

Assessment practices support teachers in determining students' progress towards goals and making adjustments to curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use CMP pre-assessments to plan instruction and student groups. The teachers use post assessments to analyze student progress. Teachers support computation skills as well as strategies for deconstructing word problems.
- Fountas and Pinnell reading inventories are used as the baseline reading assessment, guiding literacy instruction for whole class and guided groups. Fountas and Pinnell is also used as an end-line, and teachers use conferring and running records throughout the year as formative assessments.
- Teachers use CCLS aligned rubrics to provide students feedback on all literacy and math tasks. Students also use rubrics to guide their work towards expectations and to reflect on their work along with their peers. Teachers notice a strong need for organizational structures in writing along with vocabulary development and so these skills have been embedded across content area tasks as well as in literacy units.
- Teachers utilize the previous year's state exam results in English language arts and math to make adjustments to fall modules. This fall students engaged in close reading to strengthen higher order comprehension skills across fiction and non-fiction texts.

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| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Proficient |
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Findings

High expectations for teachers are communicated through the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with structures that support communication and collaboration. High expectations are communicated to students by teachers, counselors and partners.

Impact

Teachers have been trained and participate in ongoing professional collaborations that result in accountability for expectations around instruction and student performance. Students are aware of expected academic and personal behaviors for high school, college and career.

Supporting Evidence

- The school partners with Henry Street Settlement to support college and career readiness. This community based organization starts working with students in grade 7 to explore student goals and interests along with providing experiences to support their attainment. The guidance counselor works with teachers and Henry Street Settlement to support CCR habits throughout the curriculum. Together high school fairs, college tours and internships are identified for students.
- After-school programs provide opportunities for academic supports as well as the chance to explore areas of interests including robotics, sports and culinary arts. Students have the opportunity to establish businesses and learn about the expectations for various careers.
- The principal, along with the network and teacher leaders provide opportunities for teachers to engage in collaborative professional development around practice and planning aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Cycles of observation and feedback that inform school-wide, team and individual professional developments creates accountability for these expectations. Teachers have noticed that highly effective practices typically involve high levels of student engagement and student led discussion as opposed to teacher directed instruction. This has led to increased opportunities for book clubs and Socratic seminars that develop student questioning and critical thinking skills.