



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Mosaic Preparatory Academy

Elementary School M375

**141 East 111th Street
New York
NY 10029**

Principal: Lisette Caesar

**Date of review: March 24, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Kim Lisa Hampton**

The School Context

Mosaic Preparatory Academy is an elementary school with 345 students from grades pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 36% Black, 54% Hispanic, 2% White, 1% Asian and 8% other students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 16% 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 93.0%.

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	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	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	Additional Findings	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that school-wide curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data for all subgroups.

Impact

School-wide curricula and planning result in instructional coherence and promote college and career readiness. All students, including at risk and high performing subgroups, have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Lesson plans contain evidence of tasks aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. For example, students from kindergarten to grade 4 were involved in reading complex texts such as: *Miss Rumphius and The Family Tree, What is a Community From A to Z, Earthquakes and Quake and Earthshaker's Bad Day*. In kindergarten, tasks include comparing and contrasting the adventures and experiences of characters in the story. In a self-contained third grade lesson plan, the task includes skills on understanding how photographs, illustrations and captions help the reader master concepts in informational text in order to create a main idea. In one four grade lesson plan, the task includes citing evidence from two informational texts to support and understand the author's point of view. Another fourth grade task includes an activity to identify elements of a myth and answer constructed response questions to deepen student understanding of the text. In kindergarten, the lesson plan included standards RL1.1 on asking and answering questions about the text, RL 1.7 on describing the relationship between illustrations and the story, and RL 1.9 on comparing and contrasting. In third grade, the lesson plan reflects tasks on citing evidence, point of view and reading comprehension.
- Kindergarten through fifth grade curricula maps are living documents, and reflect refinement of lessons as a result of student data and work products. For example, the Ready Gen units from kindergarten show the incorporation of sophisticated vocabulary and sequence words. As a result of a grade two data analysis to ensure that all student needs were met, the teachers alternated module B and module A, and in fourth grade, they turned all questions into constructed response questions to align with the state exam. In addition, teachers rewrote questions using the Depth of Knowledge (DoK) Web and the state exam to make them more rigorous for all subgroups including the highest achieving students. Instead of closed opened questions, tasks reflect constructed response questions with higher DoK levels.
- Tasks are planned and refined so that all students can access an engaging curriculum. For example, math tasks refinements provide the highest achieving students more opportunities to explain and demonstrate their thinking. This was visible in the fifth grade integrated co-teaching (ICT) lesson plan which contains activities for stations and included prompts toward the development and synthesis of ideas in problem solving.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies including questioning and scaffolds to provide multiple entry points into the curricula and student work products and discussions reflect high levels of thinking and participation yet evidence of extensions and high-quality supports were not always strategically implemented.

Impact

Opportunities for extended learning and demonstration of the highest levels of student ownership vary in the strategic application of entry points.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers posed questions ranging from DoK level 1 to 4 that provided opportunities for students multiple entry points to access the curriculum. For example, in a self-contained grade 3 class, the teacher posed the following questions: “Why do you think all the people in the community should be volunteers; and how do volunteers help communities? What does premature mean, and why would volunteers want to work with premature babies? How did using the caption or text help you better understand the story? What was the author’s purpose for using captions?” In a fourth grade self-contained class, the teacher instructed the students to reformulate their opinion and use textual evidence to support their thinking. Students were provided strategies and tools like graphic organizers, extended time on task, visuals and student conversation to demonstrate their thinking. In another self-contained grade 2/3 class, several students showed multiple ways of representing whole numbers using unit blocks and base tens. The students were working independently, and the teacher was walking around monitoring student learning.
- In a grade 5 integrated co-teaching class, the students had to rotate to four stations that had different word problems that they had to solve collaboratively. Students had to analyze the responses of the prior group, and connect their thinking in order to continue solving the problem. Some students struggled with the approach that their classmates used yet it led to conversations and demonstration their thinking. Students decided on an approach and worked collaboratively to continue to solve the problem and synthesize the thinking of their classmates. Although across classrooms, there was evidence of scaffolds and differentiated questions, it was not evident in the vast majority of classes. For example, in a third grade class, the teacher had three stations set up for the students: a computer fluency math program, a word problem and a fraction flashcard station. Although the students on the computer were doing math facts to build fluency, one student stated he already knew his facts and was not exposed to any mathematical reasoning.
- Across classrooms, students were engaged in discussions via turn and talk or small group interaction that teachers initiated. Students were answering high level questions and demonstrating their thinking as a result of teachers posing questions. However, student reasoning was only reflected through teacher directed questioning and tasks.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics that are aligned with the school's curricula, and assessment practices reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Actionable feedback to students and effective adjustments by teachers lead to meeting the needs of all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, student work in reading and writing had a rubric attached to it with next steps. Rubric language was aligned to the curricula and tied to the feedback provided to students. For example, the targeted feedback highlighted student strengths and gave specific strategies and examples as to how students could begin to add relevant details, capitalize, use transition words and infuse more domain specific words in their writing.
- There was a school-wide self-reflection form on every piece of student work displayed on bulletin boards and in folders. The students self assessed and wrote what they did well, and what they had to work on. In addition to the classroom visits, at a meeting, students selected one piece of work and explained what they did well, and what they needed to work on as a result of rubric and teacher feedback. For example, a kindergarten student said he needed to read more and make his lines straight in his artwork. A fourth grade student said she needed to add more details to her sentences, and a fifth grade student said she needed to add more domain specific words to her writing piece.
- In some classrooms, teachers took low inference data while circulating to groups of students to capture the learning. In a fifth grade class, the teachers used the formative data to identify some patterns and trends in the learning. In a 2nd/3rd grade self-contained class, the teacher was taking conference notes regarding students' use of vocabulary. She had a student come to the front of the room and demonstrate what it looks like and sounds like to "stomp". There was also evidence in grade 1 and 5 classrooms where teachers were viewed taking conference notes. School-wide, teacher assessment practices included interim checks for understanding. For example, in a grade 4 self-contained class, a female student explained what the red, yellow and green cards were used for. The assessment cards were on every desk, and she said, "If we understand what the teacher is asking us to do we turn to the green card. If we aren't sure, we turn to the yellow card but we can only ask a classmate for assistance. If we turn to the red card, we didn't understand and we have to speak to the teacher."

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and staff communicate a unified set of high expectations effectively that are connected to a path to college and career readiness through successful partnerships with families and systematic structures offering clear and focused feedback to all students.

Impact

Family partnerships lead students to an effective path toward college and career readiness. Clear, focused and effective feedback is provided to all students to ensure that they own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- Students are referred to as scholars connecting them to the language of college. The students articulated a set of clear objectives that they must achieve in order to be prepared for the next level. For example, the younger students in kindergarten, first and second grade referred to reading more so they could become fluent readers. The third, fourth and fifth grade students referred to citing textual evidence, incorporating more domain specific vocabulary in their writing and being able to monitor their own learning so that they are prepared for middle school and or the next level.
- The school has established a number of community based and outside partnerships that promote college and career readiness. For example, Target built the school a new library and provided scholars with new school supplies, backpacks and ten books to build their home library. Another example is the partnership with Pencil Organization at Cushman and Wakefield. They work directly with grade 5 scholars on work related skills including excel training, public speaking and goal setting.
- Student-led conferences are conducted during Parent/Teacher Conference and Tuesday parent engagement afternoons. Students explain to their families what skills and concepts they know, understand and can implement. They explain their next learning steps, and what they need to do in order to be prepared for their next level to their families.
- The school distributes a monthly newsletter to parents and provides Common Core Standards workshops to communicate high expectations towards a path to college and career readiness. At a meeting, parents articulated how the school has prepared their children for the next grade, as well as provided them with strategies and skills to further assist their children at home. For example, based off of a kindergarten literacy workshop, parents read the same book used in class to their children to reinforce taught vocabulary. Other parents said how they question their children more in order to determine their comprehension of a text, and from parent engagement workshops, learn how to reinforce certain teaching strategies such as citing textual evidence to support their answers. Parents reported how teachers constantly communicate with them regarding student progress via email, Roboblats, notes and phone calls.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations which clearly focus on the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, and embed effective leadership practices which play an integral role in school-wide key decisions.

Impact

Professional collaborations and distributive leadership practices have strengthened teacher instructional capacity resulting in school-wide coherence, which affects student learning across the school, and leads to the increased achievement for all learners. Teachers' key decisions have impacted student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- At both team meetings, teachers articulated how the inquiry cycle has structured professional collaborations allowing opportunities for co-planning and inter-visitations to observe best practice. Collaborative planning has produced lesson plans and includes curriculum maps aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and embedding instructional shifts such as complex texts, citing textual evidence and solving complex math problems in multiple ways. Teachers stated this leads to school-wide, instructional coherence. Upon implementation of practice, student work is analyzed again. The team shared evidence of 4th grade student work products prior to the implementation of the strategy and post student work. There was evidence of student improvement.
- Both teacher meetings focused on an analysis of student writing. The grade 4 teacher team analyzed student work, and identified strengths, areas of need and next steps. The strengths of the work were paragraph structure, coherence, style and organization. The team took it a step further and broke the data down into subgroups in order to ensure that the agreed upon strategy of time on task and differentiating tasks for red, yellow and green groups would impact the achievement for all learners including English language learners and students with disabilities.
- As a result of a data analysis review, the teachers concluded that some key decisions needed to be made in reading units and math assessments that would impact student learning. They spoke to the school leadership and were able to adjust the timeframe of the execution of Unit 3 and Unit 4 in Ready Gen. Teachers stated that they felt the students were not mastering prerequisite skills in order to successfully engage in Unit 4. Lessons were refined to purposefully incorporate more skills that the students had not mastered and to allow more time on task. The application of school-wide strategies was implemented. Another example is the revision of the math assessment calendar. As a result of collaborative inquiry, the teachers knew that students needed prerequisite math skills such as facts and a deeper understanding of fractions in order to take certain assessments. School-wide revisions to math units and lesson plans were made by teachers to embed prerequisite skills for struggling students. Student improvement in math pre and post tests reflect increased student outcomes.