



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

I.S. 528 Bea Fuller Rodgers

Middle School M528

180 Wadsworth Avenue

**Manhattan
NY 10033**

Principal: Kristy De La Cruz

**Date of review: March 30, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Manuel Ramirez**

The School Context

I.S. 528 Bea Fuller Rodgers is a middle school with 226 students from grade six through grade eight. The school population comprises 2% Black, and 97% Hispanic students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.0%.

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	Developing
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	Celebration	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	Developing

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

**3.4 High
Expectations**

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The school has systems and structures to communicate high expectations for student learning and provide feedback to families regarding student's progress in meeting these expectations. Strategies for ensuring accurate and detailed feedback and guidance for achievement at the next level are evident across the school.

Impact

The school has established a culture for learning that communicates high expectations for stakeholders to promote shared accountability and provide students with a clear path to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school utilizes an online system, Datacation, which provides "Pupil Path" to support staff, students and parent communication. The system provides information on grades, student attendance and behavior in classrooms. Additionally, School Messenger is utilized by the school on a daily basis to communicate with families the progress of students. A monthly parent calendar is used by the school to keep students and their families informed of current events such as parent workshops, Saturday academy for students, parent learning walks and upcoming school-wide events.
- Students are provided with a course description syllabus in all content areas detailing the Common Core State Standards, units of study with time frames for the school year, grading policy requirements, rubrics and expectations for attendance and class participation. For example, a review of a course description for English language arts showed the expectations for students on organizational skills, reading log, oral participation and portfolio work. The syllabus included the rubrics for short and extended responses with writing tasks and websites for students to see exemplars of reading responses. Reading response entries are expected from students on a daily basis and these responses are done on line using Razkids program account provided to every student in the school.
- Parents are provided with many opportunities to understand their child's progress in meeting school wide expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness. Structured learning walks held on Tuesday mornings are established with parents so they can visit classes on a weekly basis. Parents give feedback on the classroom environment and observe and write down what the adults and students are doing during the lesson observation. Parents use a classroom environment checklist and components of the Danielson rubric to observe teaching and learning.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices and pedagogical strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula for all students. Student work products reveal uneven levels of critical thinking opportunities and participation; leading to uneven student engagement in challenging tasks and discussions.

Impact

Uneven student engagement with challenging tasks and intellectual discussions prevent all students including English language learners and students with disabilities from demonstrating higher order thinking skills in their work products and discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of teaching documents and lesson plans give evidence to content knowledge and understanding of different teaching strategies to support all learners. However, in some classrooms students were not cognitively challenged with the tasks. For example, in a seventh grade social studies class students were asked to analyze the message conveyed in the images of the Manifest Destiny illustrations including the portrayal of the Native Americans and the white man. There were limited opportunities for students to think and reflect to deepen their understanding about the content. A few students dominated the discussion limiting the opportunity for other students to intellectually engage in the discussions.
- Although students were working collaboratively across all classrooms visited, ample student to student discussion, use of academic language and evidence based accountable talk inconsistently supported students in demonstrating higher order thinking skills in their work. In an eighth grade English class, work in different stations within a set time frame and then rotate. At each station, students read and discussed the task, then collaboratively complete the assignment. Due to the structure and pacing of the stations, students did not have enough time to reflect on what they had done, engage in intellectual discussions or to explain their thinking before they moved on to the next station.
- The instructional focus for the year is to increase the students' use of academic language, offer students opportunities to talk via experiential learning and higher level thinking. In six out of eight classrooms observed lessons were teacher dominated with no student- to -student discussions and tasks given to students did not require them to construct meaning for themselves or to think critically about the task. For example, in a grade six ICT math lesson, students worked on calculating the volume of a rectangular prism. In this teacher led lesson some students struggled with the task of finding the volume due to lack of prior knowledge. There was limited opportunity for students to explain their thinking and to talk with one another without ongoing mediation from the teacher.

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

All curricula are aligned to the Common Core State Standards and integrate the instructional shifts to build coherence and promote college and career readiness. Teachers use data and student work to plan and refine academic tasks and curricula.

Impact

The well aligned coherent curricula results in academic tasks that are designed to be engaging, and accessible; and promote college and career readiness for all students; including English language learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- Conversations with the leadership and with teachers revealed that the school has created curriculum maps aligned with the Common Core State Standards in collaboration with Teachers College. Additionally, the school adopted the Connected Math curriculum which requires literacy and an investigative approach to learning math. Unit plans include rational, Common Core Standards and content standards, content and language objectives, differentiation and grouping strategies, skills, assessments and domain specific vocabulary.
- The school's decision to use the engage NY units of study as resources to modify curricula and performance tasks for students supports the efforts of the school to build coherence across grades and content areas. For example, teachers developed an academic rigor observation tool to evaluate content, procedures in the delivery of lessons and student engagement during instruction. This tool evaluates and aids teachers in providing multiple entry points into the lesson, skills, and different sentence starters to promote engagement for all students.
- Student work displayed on hall and classroom bulletin boards across all content areas evidenced alignment to the Common Core State Standards and Content Standards. In addition, tasks were rigorous and required the use of higher order skills and instructional strategies to ensure access to the curricula. The work showed evidence of feedback given to students aligned to the rubric to advance learning. For example, in an informative writing essay, students had to research the life of an important person, connect their learning to present day life and write a non-fiction informative essay. The tasks were assessed using an informational writing essay rubric, and students received actionable feedback on citing trusted sources, craft and features, conventions, grammar and presentation. Students had different modes to present the content and to engage with the learning.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school uses common assessments aligned to the curricula to provide feedback on student performance. Teachers consistently use checks for understanding at the classroom level to make instructional adjustments.

Impact

The school's assessment systems and structures result in effective monitoring of student progress and address the learning needs of all students. Teachers' use of ongoing checks for understanding supports student achievement across grade and content areas.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses Fountas and Pinnell system to determine the students' baseline at the beginning of the school year and then administer this assessment three times per year to monitor students' attainment of individual reading goals. Students write reading goals after each administration of the Fountas and Pinnell assessment. Literacy skills and discourse are assessed on a daily basis through conferring with students and this information is used to form groups and small group instruction. Weekly assessments in the other content areas are given to students and the information gathered through these assessments are used for planning additional support for students during and after school. iReady and IXL are programs used by the school to support in differentiated learning and basic skills with English language learners.
- A review of lesson plans and classroom observations reveal the use of checks for understanding and student self-assessment to advance learning. For example, a lesson plan for a seventh grade literacy class indicates that the teacher checked for understanding by using the traffic light system used by all teachers across the school. During classroom observation students held the traffic light cards to demonstrate understanding of the content or to signal to the teacher that they had questions or did not understand the task.
- The school uses rubrics aligned to the Common Core State Standards to evaluate student work and performance. A review of student portfolios revealed teachers provided actionable feedback to students to advance and accelerate their learning. Bulletin boards outside of the classrooms evidenced Common Core aligned tasks, rubrics and feedback given to students. The written feedback on the student work was aligned to the rubric. For example, A 6 grade unit 4, writing task was assessed with an attached check list while a another grade 6 argumentative essay had a rubric to support students with understanding the criteria for information and explanatory writing providing feedback with clear next steps for improvement.

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

All teachers engage in weekly collaboration however, it is not as yet effectively connected to the Common Core Standards and/or instructional shifts. Teacher teams are beginning to embark in inquiry work to analyze student work for students they share or for whom they are focused.

Impact

Even though the majority of the teachers are engaged in structured professional collaboration, the work of teacher teams does not typically result in improved teacher practice or progress towards goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are provided with opportunities to engage in weekly structured professional collaboration and inquiry work to analyze student work. Teachers have agendas and a protocol for analyzing student work including a deadline to revisit the practice. Teacher teams are just starting to analyze student data and classwork to strengthen the capacity of teachers and align teaching practice to the school’s goals and the demands of the Common Core State Standards.
- Teacher team inquiry work is in the emergent stages of implementation. Interviews with teachers reveal that there is structured time for each teacher to share best teaching practices. The school is working on refining this activity to ensure that this practice results in improved teachers’ pedagogical practice and student academic achievement.
- During teacher team meetings teachers are given opportunities to engage in inter-visitations with colleagues and to receive feedback from their peers. New teachers are encouraged to meet during fifth period every day to conduct classroom observations. These practices support increased collaboration among the staff and build capacity in data driven inquiry work.