



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 4

**196-25 Peck Avenue
Fresh Meadows, NY 11365**

Principal: Marcy Berger

**Date of review: December 9 and 10, 2014
Reviewer: Ketler Louissaint**

The School Context

P4Q is a special education school with 403 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 60% Black, 20% Hispanic, 15% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 81% of the students enrolled and girls account for 19%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 93%.

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	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	Well Developed
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	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:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

A variety of assessments are used across the school community. These assessments provide both students and teachers with actionable and meaningful feedback that drives instructional decisions across the community.

Impact

Assessment is cyclical and ongoing and used to drive instructional decisions. Information gleaned from multiple assessment tools provides a clear picture of shared accountability for student achievement among all stakeholders.

Supporting Evidence

- The use of assessments is prevalent and visible throughout the school. Both alternate and standardized assessment students engage in goal-setting with their teachers to monitor progress and mastery of Individual Education Plan goals. Students on the autism spectrum used an "I Can Statement" rubric to self-assess and give feedback to teachers.
- Students' exit slips, student interviews and self-assessment opportunities demonstrate a personal investment in learning. District 75 rubrics and school created student-friendly rubrics alongside actionable feedback students received extend student understanding.
- Students' progress is documented and discussed by teachers and related services providers. The feedback students received on both their academic and behavioral performances contributes to their learning and overall growth. A member of the Teacher Team confirmed that teachers, paraprofessionals and related service providers continuously assessed students to create an accurate present level of performance picture.
- Student learning is consistently monitored and considered through the use of varied groupings across the week, based on daily assessment data. Teachers use a Velcro board system to interchange students amongst groups based upon prior day or even prior period assessments.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Teacher pedagogy consistently reflects the diverse student needs, addressed through multiple teaching strategies that cultivate high levels of student participation and ownership while enhancing student work products. However, while the school incorporates the instructional shifts through the delivery of instruction supported by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, this practice is not demonstrated across all school sites.

Impact

Teaching strategies, anchored in school wide beliefs about how students with disabilities learn best, delivered through small group instruction appropriately challenge students yet such practices across sites have not consistently provided targeted outcomes for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- In the majority of classrooms, teachers challenged all students through *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) questioning and classroom discussions. In a class of students that have intellectual disabilities, the teacher pushed their thinking by asking them to make a claim and provide evidence about the story read.
- Students access the curriculum through a variety of supports and extensions. Across the majority of classes, Thinking Maps, Smart Boards, effective questioning techniques, student grouping, Workshop Model, differentiation of classroom activities and peer to peer interactions afford all students the opportunity to deepen their understanding of new concepts and new knowledge.
- In the small student group, students clearly articulated that conferences with their teachers/paraprofessionals and working with their peers in small groups or in pairs (turn and talk) motivate them to produce meaningful work products. However, the volume and caliber of student work products are not consistent across sites.
- Teachers know students' strengths and weaknesses and challenge them accordingly. They identify key areas of support, plan with paraprofessionals and speech therapists and strategically adjust their instruction to provide students with multiple ways to show their thinking and learning.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Common Core aligned curricula across the school's five satellites are extended and adapted to provide multiple entry points for all students along a continuum of cognitive disabilities.

Impact

The school's common and customized curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) form the basis for coherent classroom instruction across all sites. The functionality of the curriculum exponentially pushes student participation and ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's curriculum and instruction team is instrumental in ensuring that modifications and extensions keep students cognitively engaged. The schools' five instructional satellite teacher leaders (Unit coordinators) meet weekly to make sure that the instructional program is honored and delivered rigorously and consistently across all sites.
- The school uses evidenced-based instructional practices to support students' acquisition of higher order thinking. In a class of students with intellectual disabilities, students used financial reasoning to determine affordability of items.
- Curriculum mapping and pacing calendars show that teachers are providing students with challenging academic tasks. The school has aligned its curriculum maps with the District 75 Units of Study and is using various graphic organizers across all grades and subjects to help students organize their thinking and promote writing strategy.
- The school uses information gleaned from the analysis of student work samples to constantly refine and extend the curricula to support student learning. For example, analysis of student work has prompted teachers to help students strengthen their skills in vocabulary, argument and opinion writing. Art and technology are also used to extend the curriculum, to orient and provide students with supports, vocational and social skills.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders communicate clear expectations which reflect the tenets of the Danielson Framework for Teaching in regards to professionalism, instruction and communication. These expectations support teacher practice and perpetuate student growth and mastery of goals.

Impact

The collaboration among teachers has resulted in a streamlined approach to instruction and an accelerated mastery of students' Individual Educational Plan goals. Successful partnerships with parents foster mutual respect and trust resulting in increased student outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- The *Danielson Framework for Teaching* is referred to constantly and serves as a compass to orient and frame all professional expectations. Through collaboration of pedagogical, clinical and therapeutic delivery of services, teacher teams in association with school leaders maintain shared accountability to ensure that students continue to strive.
- Parents defined the school as “all-around supportive and attentive to my child’s needs”. One parent articulated the shared sentiments of the group, stating, “They don’t only nurture our children, they nurture us as parents.”
- A variety of communication practices provide parents and families with clear expectations for student learning and achievement. E-mails, daily communication books, behavior trackers, Parent Coordinator’s communication for a variety of reasons, keep parents informed about the progress of their children and the events within the school community. Parents fully embrace the school’s commitment to enriching their children’s learning experience.
- The school’s strong partnership with families and the community at large is indicative of a purposeful plan to engage them in the promotion of the personal growth of all students. Parents shared that teachers keep them informed about their children’s progress and provide them with assistance and resources to help their children at home.

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

Teacher teams continuously analyze student work to ascertain gaps in learning. School leaders have established a culture of shared accountability and distributive leadership amongst teachers, welcoming their contribution to key decision making throughout the community.

Impact

Through a culture of professional collaboration, inquiry teams promote a results-driven environment. Shared leadership structures communicate high expectations for all that contribute to the decisions that impact student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams allocate time to analyze multiple sources of data to inform decisions which are most impactful on student learning. Teachers utilize Google Docs to share information about student progress which then generates discussion and focus for future team meetings.
- Teachers at 4Q plan together and share reflections on students' learning to identify gaps in students' acquisition of skills taught. During the teacher meeting, teachers confirm that they have total freedom over decisions about their craft. Structures are in place for team leaders to meet regularly with the Principal to share agendas, findings and next steps.
- Teacher leaders representing the school's five sites meet weekly to design coherent instructional plans, share student data, act as critical friends and promote each other's growth. One teacher stated, "We are each other's teacher."
- Teachers use a variety of academic and socialization trackers to monitor student progress which is then shared through Google Docs. During the teacher meeting, teachers and paraprofessionals agreed that through the variety of school community supports and structures, they are able to collaborate and prioritize their students' learning above all else.