

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 105 The Bay School

Elementary-Middle Q105

**420 Beach 51 Street
Queens
NY 11691**

Principal: Laurie Shapiro

Dates of review: March 31, 2015

Lead Reviewer: Jean McKeon

The School Context

P.S. 105 The Bay School is an elementary/middle school with 851 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 63% Black, 31% Hispanic, 2% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-15 was 90.2%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core

<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</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.	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

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

Structured teacher teams collaborate using an inquiry approach including analysis of assessment data and student work that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning.

Impact

Teacher practice and leadership have improved and, in turn, positively affects student progress toward goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet in grade level teams and use a "Looking at Student Work" protocol for analyzing student products, discussing implication for their practice, and make curricular and instructional adjustments based on students learning needs. Teacher inquiry teams also understand the implications of formative and summative data, are able to identify trends, and develop next steps for instruction. During the prior week's team meeting, teachers looked at student's responses from the middle of the year math assessment and identified the need for additional focus on perimeter. The teachers stated that perimeter is a supporting standard for their grade 4 and referenced unit 14 of Everyday Math for additional resources. They also shared strategies to support student understanding. One teacher shared her strategy for labeling the sides with a crayon. Another teacher shared copies of differentiated perimeter practice and explained how she used cubes to illustrate perimeter with the lowest performing group. The teachers agreed to try these strategies for problem of the day practice.
- The focus this year has been on providing professional supports aligned to the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) goals and Danielson Framework for Teaching. This year the school has partnered with the Office of Interschool Teacher Development to provide teachers with additional supports specifically focusing on the Danielson competencies. A Teacher Development Coach works closely with a select group of teachers representing various grade bands including Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle School and Special Needs populations. These teachers then meet with their grade teams to present new strategies and pedagogical practices. The Teacher Development Coach does classroom observations and works with small groups of teachers to improve their craft.
- The lead teacher team guided by school leaders, work together to improve their capacity as instructional leads and to turnkey their learning with the school community. This team shares professional articles, protocols, and best practices. Members of the lead teacher team shared how this forum has helped them reflect on their own work and to identify next steps to improve their practice. Fellow teachers appreciate the support and guidance they receive from their peers in this non-threatening format. The lead teacher team also facilitates inter-visitations. The administration gives teachers involved in inter-visitation the opportunity to plan visits, observe, and debrief. Teachers are held accountable to incorporate new learning and practice into their instruction. Lead teachers also facilitate intra-visitations with different elementary and middle schools within the district to observe literacy practices.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

While teachers are beginning to provide multiple entry points and targeted instructional support in some classrooms, discussions and work products did not reflect consistent, high levels of thinking or participation.

Impact

Across classrooms, students are not consistently engaged in challenging tasks, and therefore, there are uneven levels of work products and discussions that demonstrate higher order thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- The school believes that students should be engaged in authentic content and text-based discussions in all content areas. In some classrooms, students had structured opportunities to participate in collaborative team work with meaningful conversations. Students had the opportunity to participate in Socratic circles and group conversations in some instances; however, this practice was not evident across classrooms. In other classrooms, lessons were teacher-centered with instruction that provided limited opportunities for students to discuss their thinking in groups or partnerships. For instance, in one class two or three students answered whole group questions and then the teacher moved on. This teacher-student-teacher questioning presented uneven opportunities for higher levels of student thinking, discussion, and engagement.
- In some classrooms, teachers assigned rigorous Common Core aligned tasks, giving students the opportunity solve standards-based examples. During one math lesson, students were provided differentiated problems of the day all on the same content strand, were encouraged to work with their partner, and peer-assessed their solutions. The instruction and lesson plan displayed evidence of the instructional shifts. However, the use of higher order questioning and the shifts were not evident across all classrooms.
- Although the majority of classrooms were organized and student friendly, work products did not exemplify challenging tasks or extended thinking. Most classroom bulletin boards did not display rigorous work samples or in-depth student writing. Fill-in the blank worksheets and single paragraph responses were observed on some classroom boards. Work products in student portfolios were often worksheets and multiple choice exams that did not challenge students to explain their thinking.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

School leaders and teachers adopted Common Core aligned curricula that incorporates and embeds the instructional shifts. Teacher teams use assessment data and student work to plan and refine curricula and instructional tasks.

Impact

The programs were adapted to create coherence across the grades and a focus on college and career readiness skills for students. More thoughtful design of activities provide opportunities for students to be cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- The school is currently in the second year of implementing Ready Gen and Go Math in kindergarten through grade 5; Code X in the middle school grades. Analysis of the middle school New York State math assessment data for 2014, in conjunction with teacher feedback, identified the need to switch from CMP3 math program to Go Math in grades six through eight. The school now has a coherent and consistent math program in grades kindergarten through eighth. Go Math offers differentiated supports for student needs along with complex tasks and higher order thinking (H.O.T.) problems embedded in the program. Teachers also access EngageNY for additional instructional resources.
- The school continues to monitor and revise the literacy curriculum. Since the inception of the program, teacher teams have been updating Ready Gen curriculum maps and lessons to meet the needs of their students. The instructional team shared that Ready Gen addresses the shifts of the Common Core; however, it does not address the foundational skills necessary to learn to read. Grades kindergarten through three, implement Foundations to support phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency. Also, guided reading is a non-negotiable in the kindergarten through grade four literacy block. Teachers stated that during guided reading they give immediate feedback on word recognition, fluency and comprehension.
- Teachers plan instruction based on the development of Common Core Learning Standards through the use of Learning Targets. Learning targets are written in student-friendly and grade appropriate language, so that all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities can utilize the lessons. An example is a lesson plan detailed with multiple points of entry for group discussion facilitated by student team leaders. Eleven students participated in three groups identified by need, with adapted questions to encourage comprehension and participation.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school leaders and teachers use data from common assessments to closely monitor student progress, provide feedback to teachers and students. Teachers use common assessments aligned to curricula in all subject areas and consistently track student progress.

Impact

The school's use of assessment analysis results in meaningful examination of teacher practice, refinement of curricula, and adjustments to instruction that increases student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses the Ready Gen curriculum in kindergarten through grade five. All teachers administered the baseline assessment for Ready Gen and subsequent unit assessments. Assessment data is disaggregated for each student in comprehension, vocabulary, constructed responses, and extended responses. In grades six through eight teachers administer the English language arts (ELA) performance series three times per year. The data is analyzed to identify student growth, instructional strategies, and instructional grouping.
- A school-wide calendar including grades kindergarten through eight outlines assessments in all content areas including ELA, math, science, social studies, the arts, foreign language, and physical education. The middle school assistant principal worked with a cross-content teacher team to design an updated grading policy for students in grades six through eight aligned to the curricula. The grading policy was shared with students in their homerooms, with parents at the beginning of the year parent conference, and is detailed in the middle school parent handbook. Students shared that they understand the expectations of the grading policy and know that rubrics tell them what they need to do to achieve levels three and four.
- Go Math assessments are administered in all grades. The most recent data indicates that student's average performance has increased across all grades from the beginning of the year Go Math benchmark compared to the middle of the year assessment. The largest increases are highlighted in kindergarten where students' performance increased 26% and in grade five with an increase of 15%. The administration meets with teacher teams to discuss the results of these assessments and has individual conversations with those teachers whose students did not demonstrate at least a 5% increase. As a result of this mid-year data analysis, the school has recently purchased Mathletics, an online program to further engage students and reinforce math skills.
- The Teachers College Reading Benchmark data is utilized in kindergarten through grade 2 to form guided and Response To Intervention (RTI) student groups, identify Reading Recovery participants, and to monitor student growth. Students are benchmarked three times per year, in September and January by the classroom teacher, and then by an impartial reading teacher in June. School leaders and teacher teams discuss specific skills and strategies identified as strengths or weaknesses so that the teachers can modify instruction to provide the students with instructional supports to be successful readers. The students are then immersed in direct instruction, discussions, and group activities to help them internalize appropriate processes, strengthen their comprehension, and grow as readers.

Findings

School leaders ensure that the staff is consistently informed of the school's high expectations through ongoing communications and differentiated professional learning opportunities. Expectations are conveyed to students and parents through timely ongoing communication that are connected to a path of college and career readiness.

Impact

A system of accountability for high expectations is shared by school leaders and staff. Families receive ongoing verbal and written communications to deepen their understanding of student progress toward college and career readiness for their children.

Supporting Evidence

- In collaboration with school leaders, the Teacher Center specialist, math coach along with grade leaders developed a detailed professional learning calendar. The calendar is planned through April and is updated according to teacher preference and needs. The school leaders also developed a Differentiated Professional Development Plan using the Advance School Status Report and Teacher Detail Reports. This plan identifies trends in teacher's instructional strengths, progress, and areas of development. Teachers completed two Professional Learning Surveys this school year. The results are shared with the staff and professional learning is planned and revised in response to teacher's requests.
- To culminate professional learning on Monday afternoons, teachers participate in "Share Our Success". During this time, teachers volunteer to share successful practices. School leaders stated that they have been seeing so many excellent instructional strategies in classrooms they wanted to give teachers the opportunity to share with their colleagues. The principal posts the best practices on Facebook and the Teacher Center specialist maintains a binder of the successful strategies. One grade 4 teacher shared her use of talking sticks and color-coded questions, (colored by level and strategy), videoed the class and shared it one Monday afternoon. Another teacher developed a student self-assessment on listening and participation, classroom rules, things done well and things to work on, and then shared with parents. This teacher shared with peers and several teachers are now using this student self-assessment.
- Teachers utilize a parent engagement Log to record their communications with families. The school leaders review the logs that detail the type and frequency of parent outreach. Teachers use the 40 minute parent engagement time on Tuesdays to reach out to parents to share student success as well as areas that need additional support. Academic Intervention Plans are developed and shared with parents for Level 1 and 2 students. Some teachers have developed a student reflection sheet which is shared with parents at most recent conferences. Parents know that specific time is set aside on Tuesday afternoons when they can speak directly with teachers and learn about additional strategies for working with their children. Middle school teachers work together during the Tuesday time to communicate as a team to parents. Parents know their child's goals and feel they are prepared for the next level of schooling.
- A detailed parent calendar is distributed monthly. The school's instructional focus, Common Core literacy and math focus as well as mathematical practices are included on the monthly calendar. The parent coordinator, Teacher Center specialist, administration and teachers have curriculum/content workshops for parents during the school day, on Tuesday afternoons during parent engagement time, and in the evening before Parent Association meetings. Separate elementary and middle school handbooks are distributed to all parents at the beginning of the school year. The parent handbooks include sections on the importance of attendance, grading and promotion policy, and homework policy.