



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

**Dutch Kills
Elementary School Q112**

**25-05 37th Avenue
Queens
NY 11101**

Principal: Rafael Campos-Gatjens

**Date of review: January 7, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Dr. Philip A. Composto**

The School Context

Dutch Kills is an elementary school with 481 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 22% Black, 46% Hispanic, 7% White, and 25% Asian students. The student body includes 22% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94%.

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	Celebration	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:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school consistently communicates high expectations to the school community and has established multiple systems that support teachers, students and families to achieve expectations that develop students' college and career readiness.

Impact

The unified shared belief in the importance of learning is evident and genuine. As a result of support systems in place, teachers, students and families have a sense of ownership and mutual accountability.

Supporting Evidence

- Public school 112's instructional handbook, shared through the school's Google drive and the schools "operating values" communicated and posted throughout the school building provides clear instructional and professional expectations for all staff.
- Regular and recent cycle of classroom observations and feedback, using Danielson's Framework for Teaching, result in a culture of accountability for the high instructional expectations.
- The school has established a comprehensive professional development system to support teachers in meeting their individual professional goals. Through established Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), aligned to Danielson's Framework for Teaching, all teachers are provided with weekly opportunities to develop their instructional practice within the context of the school's curricula in small study groups.
- The school has established multiple structures for students to actively participate in improving the school community, including the student government. As a result, student voice in the school community is evident and students express ownership of the school, as well as ownership over their own educational experience.
- In order to strengthen partnerships with families to support students' progress towards college and career readiness, the school engages parents in weekly parent workshops and monthly writing celebrations. Topics of parent workshops conducted in the past include, Close Reading Strategies, Math Exemplars, Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) at home, and Health and Fitness. The school has created a series of parent workshops specifically for fathers, such as the Dad's Club, to further assist families in preparing children for college and career readiness.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The school's instructional policy provides a foundation for consistent pedagogical practices that are aligned to the curricula and Danielson's Framework for Teaching. Teacher's questioning and discussion techniques and the school-wide use of various engagement strategies challenge students' thinking, reflected in meaningful student work products.

Impact

Across classrooms, teaching practices reflect challenging learning tasks that invite students to explain their thinking. While teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points, successfully engaging English language learners (ELLs) and Students with disabilities (SWDs) in meaningful tasks, there were missed opportunities for higher performing students.

Supporting Evidence

- In all classrooms visited, students were engaged in learning tasks aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and were challenged to explain their thinking. During close reading lessons in grades 3 and 4, students read complex texts and provided written responses to higher-level questions posed during Chalk Talk, based on textual evidence. Students analyzed and evaluated peer's responses in groups and either justified or critiqued conclusions drawn.
- There was evidence of differentiated tasks in the classroom. In a third grade English language learners (ELL) classroom visited, students were engaged in developing creative endings to their realistic fiction story. Different groups of students worked in different work stations that provided scaffolds, such as the ELL teacher modeling using a visual and classroom teacher providing small groups support using Thinking Maps.
- A review of student portfolios and bulletin boards revealed consistent work in writing that emphasizes use of evidence from sources to inform and or to make an argument. Common CCLS aligned rubrics, adopted from the New York State Writing Evaluation Rubric were used to provide commendations and next steps "glows" and "grows" for individual students.
- While the school generally engaged ELLs and SWDs in meaningful tasks, planned extensions to the learning tasks did not fully challenge higher performing students in some of the classrooms. In a first grade classroom visited, a review of partner-work in the enrichment group indicated that the learning task in the math lesson observed did not provide higher performing students with adequate cognitive challenge.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across the school, curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). The school emphasizes rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills through engaging learning tasks for all students across grades and content areas.

Impact

The school's strategic integration of instructional shifts in curricula develops instructional practices that push students' thinking and promotes college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's literacy, math and content area units of study reflect careful consideration and focus on key instructional shifts. Focus skills of the CCLS are delineated on the literacy and math overviews for each unit. This builds coherence across all classrooms. Instructional decisions reflected in the school's curricula demonstrate an emphasis on close reading of complex text, evidence-based conversations and writing about text, academic vocabulary, math fluency and problem solving.
- Rigorous learning tasks and the use of various engagement strategies, such as Chalk Talk and Clock Buddies, across grades K-5 reflect common emphasis on high-order thinking skills for all students, including the English language learners (ELL) and the Students with disabilities. (SWD).
- Performance tasks are aligned to the CCLS. Questions reflect the New York State ELA and Math target skills outlined in the school's literacy and math yearly overview. This provides evidence of rigor and coherence.
- College and Career Ready academic and personal behaviors, such as persistence, engagement and communication skills, are integrated within the school's curricula. Focus CCRS academic and personal behaviors are outlined on the curriculum overview for each unit and the school develops each behavior using multiple strategies. For example, classroom activities such as Chalk Talk demonstrate planning for the development of students' collaboration and communication skills outlined for the current units of study.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school uses common assessments across all grades that are aligned to curricula. Teachers across classrooms monitor student progress using on-going assessments and continue to make instructional adjustments based on consistent checks for understanding.

Impact

Students' progress toward goals are tracked and analyzed on an on-going basis across all grades, resulting in curricula and instructional adjustments. Teacher's assessment practices across classrooms reflect the use of on-going checks for understanding in the effort to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses common assessments, such as Fountas & Pinnell, literacy performance tasks aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), and *Math Exemplar* problems that measure problem solving skills, which provide a clear picture of students' progress in all content areas.
- School's literacy and math performance tasks are aligned to CCLS and the learning targets outlined in each unit of study. Teachers monitor students' performance and progress using common CCLS aligned rubrics adopted from the New York State Writing Evaluation Rubric and Exemplars and provide students with actionable next steps to progress to the next level.
- Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices reflect the use of on-going checks for understanding using a variety of methods, such as the use of checklists, conference notes, artifacts from Chalk Talk, post-its, and reading responses. Teachers across classrooms make instructional adjustments to meet individual students learning needs based on the data from checks for understanding. For example, during writer's workshop in a third grade classroom, the English as a second language (ESL) teacher organized and conducted a writing small group lesson, based on the data collected using a writing checklist, in order to meet the language needs of the English language learners (ELLs) struggling with the day's lesson.
- Teachers make curricular and instructional adjustments in teacher teams according to the school's on-going assessment data. For example, the math team reviewed student data from the baseline Exemplars problems and made the curricular decision to place school-wide emphasis on math representation across grades. The math team also engaged in deep analysis to find gaps in the *Go Math* curricula and made curricular decisions to supplement specific units, such as "Money" unit in the first grade using resources from EngageNY.

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

Teachers regularly engage in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations in teacher teams, resulting in school-wide instructional coherence. As teams, teachers systematically analyze data and student work to improve instructional practices.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has resulted in curricular and instructional adjustments that improve pedagogy and student learning in the school. The established structures for teacher teams also promote shared leadership and build capacity in the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet on a weekly basis to engage in data-driven inquiry work. Through in-depth analysis of data and student work, teachers share best practices with one another and collaborate to improve student outcomes. For example, during a teacher team meeting observed, teachers analyzed the results of students' literacy performance task, shared the result of their shared experience in conducting an agreed strategy for Close Reading Text Impressions, and work collaboratively to refine their instructional practices.
- Teacher leaders in vertical teacher teams meet on a monthly basis to track student progress analyze student work, and make curricular decisions to ensure progress towards meeting school goals. For example, teacher leaders on the vertical Math team analyzed student work on math problem solving skills and noticed gaps in students' knowledge and use of math representations. As a result, curricular decisions was made to provide teachers with school-wide professional development on building math content knowledge on the various ways to represent math thinking, including diagrams, tables, number line bar models and area models promotion in quality math discussions.
- Distributive leadership structures in place build leadership capacity in the school. During the Teacher Team Question and Answer conducted, teachers expressed that they have a voice in making key decisions that affect the school's instructional practice and student learning.
- School invests times and resources to strategically build leadership capacity in the school. For example, the school participated in the Teacher Leadership Program offered by the New York City Department of Education to train and empower a group of teacher leaders in the school.