



Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Belle Harbor

Elementary – Middle School Q114

**400 Beach 135th Street
Queens
NY 11694**

Principal: Stephen Grill

**Date of review: November 5, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Mary Barton**

The School Context

P.S. /M.S. 114 Belle Harbor is an elementary - middle school with 657 students from grade kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 2% Black, 9% Hispanic, 87% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.1%.

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	Developing
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	Additional Findings	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	Focus	Developing
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	Developing
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	Developing

Area of Celebration

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

Teachers meet in teacher teams to analyze student work, adjust gaps in curricula and to share best practices. Teachers have a voice in curricula decisions and plan lessons to reflect trends shown in student work products.

Impact

Teachers have made adjustments to curricula resources to better support students at their entry points and are beginning to become more cognizant of the expectations for all students and adjust their instruction. As a result of teachers beginning to have a voice in making curricula decisions, students are exposed to a more rigorous and coherent curricula.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet in grade level teams in the elementary grades and by subject in the middle school. Grade teams meet weekly during common preparation time to focus on reviewing performance assessment results and discuss implementation of strategies to support all students.
- The school is programmed so that grade teams meet vertically to focus on the preparation of students for the next grade level. Teachers in adjacent grades look at gaps in curricula and standards that need to be addressed to prepare students for the rigor they will encounter in the next grade level. The school has a main team made up of grade leaders who share information with team members gained from the main team meeting, as well as outside professional learning opportunities attended.
- During an observed meeting, the third grade team discussed the need for students to read the text of problems closely as they read text closely in literacy. Teachers discussed ensuring that exposing students to appropriate math language should be planned for in lessons and units of study after reviewing student work products and seeing that there was a need for breaking down the wording of problems in order for students to use the correct order of operations to solve them.
- The third grade teacher team had asked the principal if they could meet with the second grade team to discuss gaps they saw in the Go Math program and to work on adjusting units of study to address the gaps. Teachers worked on bringing in additional resources from Engage New York to fill the gaps. Additionally, the second grade teachers meet with the first grade teacher team around similar curricular issues to ensure curricula coherence.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The school is currently developing practices around assessment in order to make more informed decisions around curriculum and instruction.

Impact

As a result of varying assessment practices, there is an inconsistency in the manner in which students receive feedback on their work as well as in having students self-assess their work. Additionally, teachers do not consistently check for student understanding during lessons resulting in some students not having their specific needs met.

Supporting Evidence

- Throughout the school, there is evidence that student work is posted and, in some cases, with rubrics and feedback given to students. However, feedback to students was not in evidence in many classrooms as well as in student portfolios viewed. Additionally, in some cases, rubrics were not in evidence on student work at all.
- Additionally, the rubrics that were used were to assess student performance and in some cases not tailored to the student assignment. For example, in viewing student work on corridor bulletin boards, the rubrics were generally generic rubrics downloaded from the internet and not developed to match the assignment. Therefore, the feedback given did not provide tailored feedback around the performance task that students were assessed on. The quality of feedback was found to be generic in many cases. For example, “you did a good job” or “watch your spelling and grammar.”
- In a majority of the classrooms viewed, checking for understanding was not observed. Many teachers did not have systems in place to check for understanding of student learning or provide opportunities for students to engage in self-assessments. For example, in a few classrooms, teachers had checklist systems in place to note observations of student learning. In a majority of the classrooms visited, teachers did not make notes of or check in with students around their learning. The school is currently working on developing systems and will provide professional learning to assist teachers with this work.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The school uses programs and curricula resources aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and is in the process of integrating the instructional shifts as well as ensuring that students engage in appropriately rigorous tasks.

Impact

Across the school, students are inconsistently exposed to the instructional shifts in English language arts and math and to appropriately rigorous learning that promotes college and career readiness for all learners. As a result, some students are not being challenged or met at their entry point.

Supporting Evidence

- The school is currently using Ready Gen for kindergarten through grade five and Code X for grades six through eight in English language arts (ELA) and Go Math for kindergarten through grade 5 and for middle school self-contained classrooms and Connected Mathematics Project 3 (CMP3) for grades six through eight. For the most part, teachers are using these programs as they are and are beginning to plan to incorporate the consistent use and emphasis of academic language and text evidence within their lessons.
- School leadership is fostering the use of student data to address the development of tasks and curricula designed to meet the entry points of students. This practice is still developing, as teachers are dependent upon the Common Core programs purchased by the school with little differentiation or adjustments seen in units and lesson plans to meet the entry points of students.
- Grade level teams are in the process of discussing how to incorporate appropriate higher order thinking skills into units and lessons to truly engage students in their learning. Students reported that in many cases, the work they do is either too easy or too difficult. Therefore, students, in many cases, are not met at their entry point with suitably challenging tasks. For example, in reviewing lesson plans, a majority of the plans did not indicate any modifications for students with disabilities or more challenge or enrichment activities for high achievers.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Teaching strategies inconsistently reflect the use of multiple entry points that provide access to all learners and opportunities for high level discussions.

Impact

As a result of varying teaching practices, some students, including high achievers and struggling students do not have daily opportunities, in all subject areas, to demonstrate higher order thinking skills in their written work or discussion.

Supporting Evidence

- Although some lesson plans and unit plans list multiple entry points and scaffolds for students, teachers do not always incorporate the strategies into their lessons. During most classroom visits, there was little evidence of students being grouped and receiving supports or extensions. For instance, in most classrooms, students were viewed working on the same assignments with no modifications made. Additionally, students, in most classrooms, were not given opportunities to explain their thinking, which in turn, did not enable teachers to group students “in the moment” for immediate small group interventions or extensions.
- In a majority of classrooms visited, there was little evidence of charts and supports for student learning on the current unit of study in particular subject areas. When charts were in place in classrooms, they were generic in nature and not grounded in current units of study. Instead, most charts were store bought. For example, in looking for supports around academic language in the classrooms around the current ELA and Math units of study, there was little evidence of word walls or language supports for students in the units.
- Despite the school’s instructional focus around students facilitating authentic discussion with one another, teachers dominated the questioning and discussion in most classrooms visited. While teachers in some classrooms allowed students to speak by picking their name written on a Popsicle stick from a container and students answered teachers’ questions, this discussion was teacher-generated and directed. Students did not have the opportunity in most classrooms visited to speak to what their classmate stated or to provide text evidence to support or to contradict their contribution. Turn and talk discussion was seen in some classrooms, but the students were generally given little time to speak to one another and answered low-level questions. For example, in a fifth grade classroom, students participated in a whole class discussion recalling information on a ReadyGen text and were selected to speak after the teacher selected the Popsicle stick with their name on it. Conversely, in a second grade classroom, students had the opportunity to turn and talk with a partner to discuss captions around illustrations in a text. Despite the students having that opportunity, the questioning continued around parts of speech of the wording used in the captions without connections made to the content of the captions or text.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

School leaders communicate expectations to faculty through the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Additionally, school leaders and staff communicate to both students and families around the expectations for success in the next level of education.

Impact

Although, teachers and families are aware of the school's expectations, there is an inconsistency in providing information to families through various web-based platforms that are not updated regularly, preventing some families from supporting their children in an informed way. Additionally, there is an inconsistency in providing students with meaningful feedback on their work. Therefore, students are not fully aware of how to address their next steps along the path toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Faculty members are aware of their expectations through daily memos written by the principal. Additionally, faculty members are exposed to the expectations of the Danielson Framework for Teaching through professional learning opportunities along with the feedback received on observation reports. However, there is an inconsistency in the professional learning provided and the expectations of the Danielson Framework, particularly around Domain 3, in lessons as they are executed in the classrooms.
- The principal reported that parent outreach takes various forms including “parent outreach” Tuesdays when teachers contact parents to discuss student progress and how to help parents support their children on the path to college and career readiness. The principal reported that Datacation, an on-line communication resource was purchased this year with the intent to keep parents and students updated on their progress. Parents reported that Datacation is not updated regularly by all teachers, so not all parents have updated information to support their child. The principal reported that a new school website through E-Chalk, another on-line grading resource was purchased jointly from funding by the Parent Teacher Association and the school’s Alumni Association. This web site was purchased to improve communication of school expectations and resources to help students and families. It is also not updated regularly. Thus, parents are not able access the most up-to-date information to help their child at home.
- Students reported that they do not always have rubrics that convey expectations around particular tasks, making it difficult for students to know what the expectation is for a given task. Additionally, students reported that they do not always receive feedback on their work, therefore, leaving students unaware of their next learning steps are or how to improve in subsequent tasks.