



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

**Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning**

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2014-2015**

**The Lorraine Hansberry School**

**Elementary School Q118**

**190-20 109 Road  
Queens  
NY 11412**

**Principal: Cheryl Jones**

**Date of review: May 19, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Dr. Marion Wilson**

## The School Context

The Lorraine Hansberry School is an elementary school with 595 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 88% Black, 9% Hispanic, 0% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92.7%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations to teachers through utilization of the Danielson Framework for Teaching to provide actionable feedback and support professional growth. Teacher teams and staff communicate what is expected of students in order for students to reach the next level.

### Impact

Teachers have made improvements to their practice and have increased their pedagogical capacity through feedback from administration. Student work has shown improvement from feedback received from teachers in order to accomplish next learning steps.

### Supporting Evidence

- Administrators communicate on a weekly or monthly basis to staff through emails, formal and informal communication methods, differentiated professional learning opportunities, coordinate inter visitations of best practices and provide support for teachers by providing meaningful feedback on ADVANCE reports. During the teacher team meetings, teachers shared that when they were struggling with increasing the quality and quantity of student writing, the principal offered concrete examples and guidance through her weekly memos. For example, the October 2014 letter to the staff explaining about the book of the month entitled, "My Dadima Wears a Sari," and giving them ideas on how to incorporate students' cultures, backgrounds, introduce new vocabulary, write responses to literature as well as engage in conversations through open-ended questions. These memos to staff help instill the expectations of students responding to literature and producing high quality work for bulletin board displays.
- Staff communicated that they are aware of pedagogical expectations through the principal conducting demo lessons, planning with teachers, and working with them to make meaning of the Danielson Framework. For example, utilizing the Danielson Framework, the principal works one on one with staff members to help them develop specific questions from each level of DOK to deepen student understanding of the work and also allow student discourse across all subject areas. Observations and emails with feedback notes contain precise and clear next steps for instructional improvements.
- Students' shared that they receive rubrics and sample work products without grades. Most students have the opportunity to develop the criteria for each level of performance, using the level 1, 2, 3, or 4 system and then use this information to apply to their own work. Students shared that they know what is expected of them through constructive feedback from peers, self-reflection and teachers so they can make progress towards their goals.
- Students are given opportunities after New York State testing to experience the next grade's work and are able to show their understanding of standards along with learning continuum. For example, during the student meeting, fifth grade students explained that they were addressing sixth grade standards in writing to help prepare them for middle school. After reading several stories written on the sixth grade level, they had to cite text-based evidence to support what the text says explicitly versus the inferences from the text.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

Instructional practices do not regularly and consistently incorporate effective questioning and discussion strategies. Student work products inconsistently reflect rigorous tasks and the use of multiple entry points to support learning across classrooms.

### Impact

Across grades, students are not given the opportunity to productively struggle with tasks and most teachers do not ask thought provoking questions. This limits the level of student engagement, resulting in uneven levels of participation across classrooms and inconsistent practices across grades for all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners, led to uneven demonstration of higher order thinking skills in student work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- Some teachers are asking open-ended questions and students in some classrooms respond to comments from their peers when working in groups. For example in one class, students shared their understanding of different ways to show \$1 in coins while playing math games in an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) setting. While teachers facilitated group discussions, there were missed opportunities to challenge students to think beyond the problem they were working. In addition, each group similarly had different tasks based on their levels and were working in groups according to their strengths, this practice was not always seen across all classes and grades visited.
- To meet students' needs, some teachers are scaffolding tools to support writing and math. For example, in one classroom, the teachers asked students to complete graphic organizers based on the story they read, each group had a different organizer to choose from to support their thinking while discussing elements of the story they were reading. In addition, teacher lesson plans for a fourth grade class visited indicated that English language learners might now know what an idiom is from the ReadyGen story about lunch money. The teacher explained that an idiom is an expression that cannot be taken literally and offered examples like "that was a piece of cake" or "it's raining cats and dogs." These practices however are not consistent across classrooms. In some classes English language learners as well as students with disabilities were not given appropriately challenging tasks and had been assigned the exact same activity, without supports or scaffolds.
- Frequently, lessons are a mixture of student centered and teacher dominated with limited quality interaction between students to discuss higher order thinking questions. For example, in a third grade science class the teacher focused on the essential question, "How do plants get what they need to survive?" The teacher asked lower level questions like, "What is holding up the plant? and "What would make the plant grow?" The lesson plan indicated questions like, "How can we contrast living and non-living things? Or "Is a plant a living or non-living thing?" During some lessons students quietly listened to the teacher and did not have opportunities to ask their own questions or challenge each other's thinking. Although students sit in groups, these groups sometimes do not rotate and students worked independently instead of cooperatively.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

The school has adopted curricula aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards and is in the process of further integrating the instructional shifts to integrate social studies and science curricula and academic tasks, which emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills. Academic tasks across content areas are not consistently rigorous.

### Impact

Teachers have Common Core aligned learning targets, however all learners do not consistently have access to coherently sequenced units of study. Similarly, all learners are not consistently challenged across all subject areas.

### Supporting Evidence

- Curriculum planning begins with teams over the summer for the core subject areas and the school relies on the embedded social studies thematic concepts from ReadyGen to support their maps. Teams look at pacing, essential questions and alignment to Common Core Learning Standards and create performance-based tasks based on student performance and item skills analysis. Curricula maps are inconsistent; in that maps sometimes do not demonstrate thoughtful planning and revisions across content areas and memorialization of the changes that were made. Core subject areas are not coherently sequenced across grades so that students meet with increasing levels of challenge. Furthermore, some maps contained generic supports for English language learners and students with disabilities. For example, in a reading unit plan, it references using Universal Design for Learning strategies to support struggling learners but does not specifically address whether it would be through multiple means of expression, representation or making meaning.
- Lesson plans vary and teachers make attempts to address math and English language arts Common Core Standards and multiple differentiated learning opportunities for students. However, overall plans lack the incorporation of the school's instructional focus as well inconsistently explicitly addresses the procedures or supports for struggling learners or those performing on or above grade level. Across grades, assigned tasks in some content areas do not demonstrate rigorous expectations or alignment to curricula maps or content standards. In another third grade social studies plan, students were asked to discuss vocabulary using pictures and definitions. Some tasks included, reading and fill in a graphic organizer, look at maps and answer questions directly related to the map, complete a graphic organizer about the geographic features of Asia, and work together to figure out which peninsulas reach into the Indian Ocean and limited opportunities for challenging work.
- While the school meets and plans instruction using Common Core Learning Standards aligned materials and resources, unit plans do not reflect actual changes to incorporate higher order thinking tasks or reflect the review of student work products that led to the change. The principal provides supports for teachers to help with planning for curricular expectations. In some plans, teachers use various supplemental supports that provide core problem solving opportunities. For example, second grade math maps contained enrichment activities for students to create their own math game and figure out how many more cents are needed to show one dollar. However in one first grade math class, students had little to no opportunities to problem solve and were asked to label and produce a bar graph without further extensions or enrichment.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress towards goals across grades and most subject areas.

### **Impact**

Assessment data provide actionable feedback to students and teachers and information instruction. Teachers utilize assessment data to identify next steps for students, adjust pacing and plan re-teaching.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Rubrics and checklists are used across classrooms and subject areas. Students understand the use of these tools to inform their learning and next steps. For example, a writing rubric in a 5<sup>th</sup> grade class shows the continuum of performance and the difference between fourth and fifth grade writing expectations.
- The school has an assessment calendar that is mapped out for all teachers to monitor the use of various data and a system to monitor student performance and progress. Teachers are using formative and summative data to provide students feedback on their progress on activities and assignments. Students across classrooms are using rubrics, self and peer-reflection checklists to understand the expectations of the tasks, where they were successful and what their next steps are in learning. For example, in one math class visited, students used rubrics to monitor their use of mathematical practices and strategies. Teachers used this information to provide support, model for students or re-teach when needed.
- The school uses results from running records, unit assessments, teacher created common assessments, which are given as baselines and revised to serve as benchmark indicators for student progress. Writing assessments are given at the end of each unit. School administrators and staff review results to note trends and make adaptations. For example, in December, teachers noted that students struggled with academic vocabulary and this has informed their monitoring of student use of academic vocabulary verbally and written during class and in writing products.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

Teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations around teaching practice that promote achievement of school goals and increased student learning. Teacher teams play a key role in school wide decision making.

**Impact**

Teacher teams are engaged in conversations that are strengthening their instructional capacity and positively impacting student learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers are allowed to make instructional decisions in their own classes and orchestrate professional learning opportunities, which best suits their needs and strengths. Teachers can choose curricula supports to support class activities for students they service. For example, teachers use many online curricular supports and programs to inform math and English language arts instruction. Teachers in the team meeting shared using activities from MyOn, Think Central, and Reading A-Z to support the school’s curricula and offer alternatives to help students make progress towards mastery of standards. Teachers utilize technology supports as a way to engage and address the multiple learning styles of students in their classes and keep them engaged in learning.
- Teacher teams, led by a teacher leader, meet at least twice per week in different configurations and for various purposes. Teachers work on planning, analyzing assessment data elements, and discuss instructional strategies that can be utilized to meet the needs of learners. The work being done is attempting to build vertical coherence and develop an understanding of effective instructional practices from grade to grade. For example, in the teacher team meeting, they shared that teams across the school meet with the grade level above in the spring to look at standards and the revise the curriculum to identify areas needing improving for the upcoming school year. The school is also planning on having both the grade below and above join conversations for future sessions.
- Teacher teams noted that students struggle with math fluency and were not able to demonstrate conceptual understanding of math word problems due to this concern. As a result, teachers have modified individual plans to reflect current research to support learners in acquiring the automaticity needed to be more fluent in math facts. Teachers created new performance tasks and a checklist to help monitor student understanding of concepts in between benchmarks.