



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Sunrise School

Elementary-Middle School Q138

**251-11 Weller Avenue
Queens
NY 11422**

Principal: James Mc Enaney

**Date of review: May 4, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Beverly Mitchell**

The School Context

PS/MS 138 is a K-8 school with 824 students from grade kindergarten through grade eight. The school population comprises 87% Black, 7% Hispanic, 3% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 93.0%.

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 | Celebration | 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 | Additional Findings | Proficient |

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The school uses common assessments across classrooms in all grades and subject areas. School staff members track student progress and consistently use checks for understanding.

Impact

The school's systems that monitor progress during instruction and through data analysis are used consistently to guide adjustments in units to meet students' educational needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school utilizes common assessments in all content areas that provide crucial information on student performance and progress. Some of these assessments are pre, mid and post unit assessments; school-wide formative and summative assessments every six to eight weeks; Teacher's College benchmark reading assessments; writing-on-demand and chapter tests.
- The school uses the *Data Driven Classroom* to more efficiently monitor students' progress towards their goals. English language learners and special education students additionally utilize web-based assessments like Achieve 3000 so that teachers can adjust instruction more rapidly.
- Across classrooms teachers use multiple measures as checks for understanding. These measures include mid-workshop interruptions during which teachers ask probing and clarifying questions. Other techniques are individualized such as: conferring, exit slips, peer student checklists and rubrics specific to the tasks. Students also use self-assessment checklists on a bi-weekly basis and provide peer feedback. Some adjustments that were observed included additional time in guided reading, use of technology such as laptops and a variety of graphic organizers.
- Teachers' conference notes reviewed indicated that assessments lead to immediate adjustments such as re-teaching of concepts.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

While teaching practices provide instructional supports, including questioning and discussion techniques, the multiple entry points and extensions that support all learners including English language learners and Special Education students varies across the school.

Impact

Across classrooms, curricula extensions enable students to produce meaningful work products. However there are still missed opportunities for all learners (including English language learners and Special Education students) to take ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- In all classrooms visited, teachers used a modified workshop model of teaching in which students turned and talked to their partners in response to guiding questions. At other points in the lessons, students worked collaboratively on challenging tasks that required thinking, pairing and sharing. The majority of student questions were for clarification or basic comprehension.
- The English as a Second Language teacher pulls students out at certain times during the day to provide additional support to English language learners. She aligns her instruction with the school's goals of academic vocabulary and writing proficiency. Students are encouraged to express themselves orally and in writing throughout each lesson. They used the distributive process and lined up the factors vertically to multiply. Struggling students sat in groups where students who were adept assisted and supported them. These students did not have the opportunity for productive struggle.
- During an eighth grade mathematics class, students were assigned to groups based on their aptitude with coordinate geometry. Students were also asked to identify and plot defined points on a coordinate plane. A review of group work indicated that English language learners and struggling students were challenged with the conversion of data into ordered pairs. The students were observed in productive struggle as they plotted their lines from endpoint to endpoint.
- A review of student portfolios revealed consistent work in argumentative writing, writing to explain and writing on demand. The work products reflected high levels of student thinking even though the feedback from teachers was limited. Students were able to discuss the level of their work when requested.

Additional Findings

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|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Quality Indicator: | 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: | Proficient |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------|

Findings

All curricula are aligned to the common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the content standards. Higher order thinking skills are consistently emphasized for all students across all grades.

Impact

The school's decisions about curricula build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all learners including English language learners and Special Education students. Academic tasks are carefully designed to push student thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Reading, writing and mathematics units of study are adjusted by teacher teams to integrate the instructional shifts across content areas. Examples of planned strategies include tiered academic vocabulary, reading and math fluency, multi-step problem solving, text-based writing and writing to persuade.
- Curricula maps for science and social studies provide evidence that the school develops rigorous academic tasks through the resources available from Engage NY, the Department of Education's Common Core Library and the New York City social studies and science scope and sequence.
- Lesson plans were available for all the classrooms visited. They all included guiding questions, the standard addressed, the mini lesson, the work period during which tasks are attempted, grouping, vocabulary and assessments. They each included some critical thinking essential questions and strategies for supporting struggling students.
- Unit plans in all content areas illustrate many different designs of academic tasks with numerous scaffolds for all students. Teachers coach students on college and career readiness skills such as note-taking, accountable talk, discussion techniques and research skills. Strategies for supporting English language learners and special education students include sentence starters, graphic organizers, discussion prompts and visual cues.

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|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Proficient |
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Findings

School leaders convey high expectations consistently to staff through the Danielson Framework for Teaching in trainings and through multiple modes of communication. Workshops and performance updates keep families abreast of student progress towards college and career readiness.

Impact

Structures that support the school’s high expectations build collaboration and accountability among staff, students and their families. This provides a clear path towards student achievement and college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Monthly parent newsletters, regular parent workshops on the Common Core Learning Standards and parent links to educational technology promote clear communication to families on school’s expectations and a path to college and career readiness. Parents receive communication on Pupil Path, Skedula and class dojo. They use e-mail daily for queries and updates regarding their children’s performance.
- The school leaders engage in frequent classroom observations and provide individualized feedback to teachers using the Danielson Framework. Peer inter-visitations, professional development and informal conversations on school performance hold staff accountable for meeting expectations.
- Parents express satisfaction with the emphasis the school places on post-secondary preparation and college and career readiness. Students from grades three to eight receive regular assemblies on college and college options.
- Students in grades four, five and six attend weekly advisory sessions with the guidance counselor and dean. Students across grades receive at-risk counseling proactively and each student is well known by at least one adult

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

Teachers consistently examine student work and data in inquiry-based professional collaboration on teams. The leadership structures provide a methodology for teachers to have input on key decisions about teaching and student learning.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has resulted in improved teacher practice and solid student progress on assessments. The shared leadership structures build a capacity for continuous improvement.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams review the results on the benchmark assessments to make instructional decisions on the differences between the Fall and Spring exams. For example, English language learner students on grade level in grade three increased from 46.7% in the Fall to 53.3% in the Spring. In eighth grade special education students on grade level increased from 27.5% to 42.2%. Teachers also conducted an item skills analysis, which enabled them to adjust their teaching of writing to become more explicit and demonstrative.
- Teacher teams meet informally up to five times a week on their common prep and lunch periods without any administrative directive. They are self-motivated and self-sustaining. ESL and special education teachers are integrated into the teams. Grades Pre-k through three meet on grade teams while grades four through eight meet as departments.
- Teacher leaders, who represent each grade or discipline, meet weekly with the instructional cabinet to discuss professional development and teacher priorities. This process began two months into the school year in response to teacher concerns. The professional development for the remainder of the school year has been initiated and maintained by teacher leaders. Topics include: “Effectively Using the Smart board”, “Peer Mediation and Conflicts”, and “Classroom Management Strategies that Work”.
- Teachers articulated that they felt empowered to have input on decisions affecting the selection and refinement of curricula resources, the placement and grouping of students and the selection of new teachers.