



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Rego Park School

Elementary School Q139

**93-96 63rd Drive
Queens
NY 11374**

Principal: Monica Powers-Meade

**Date of review: December 18, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Dr. Marion Wilson**

The School Context

The Rego Park School is an elementary school with 873 students from grade Kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 3% Black, 34% Hispanic, 34% White, and 26% Asian students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 96%.

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	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Focus	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

**3.4 High
Expectations**

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness, and successfully partner with families to support student progress. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students and provide clear, focused, and effective feedback and guidance supports to ensure that students own their educational experience.

Impact

As a result of these practices, families and students are aware of the high expectations for student progress, and students have made improvements on class work and state exams and are able to work to their highest level of performance.

Supporting Evidence

- The Parent Handbook, Blackboard Communication, and the Parents' Association newsletter are comprehensive tools utilized to communicate with parents with input from all constituents, including teachers and parents.
- The principal and assistant principal facilitate monthly workshops for parents on topics such as solving math investigations or interactive read-alouds. These workshops support parents' understanding of expectations for reading, writing, and solving math problems.
- Parent workshops are conducted on a frequent basis on topics such as the Common Core Learning Standards, the Go Math curriculum, the Writerly Life, and include follow up on supports for at-home help. Parents have a menu of options to choose from as at least four topics are offered per month. These workshops support parent partnership with the school in ensuring their child's mastery of the Common Core Learning Standards.
- The guidance counselor leads lessons on college and career readiness, and on developing habits of mind that promote success for students, such as grit and self-discipline. In addition, personal habits of self-regulation are messaged to all students at the monthly Student of the Month assembly programs.
- Feedback to students is provided informally through daily check-ins. In addition, student friendly rubrics have been developed in all subjects, clearly establishing the criteria for exemplary, high-quality standards of work and performance. Students are aware of their strengths and next steps for growth, and are actively involved in reflection and self-assessment of their work.

Area of Focus

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

Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused, typically resulting in improved teacher practice and progress towards goals for groups of students. In addition, distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have built leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Impact

As a result of these collaborative practices, teachers' instructional capacity is strengthened, students progress towards learning goals, and teachers have a voice in decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams set short and long-term goals for subgroups of students using data in all subject areas, and revise instructional practices based on data analysis. The impact on practice is monitored through reflective practice during inquiry teamwork time.
- Many teachers carefully review running record results, math benchmark assessments, interpret thinking work noted on post it notes after class, and analyze reading logs and student writing. However, teachers articulated that this work is not consistent across the vast majority of classrooms.
- The principal provides an extensive list of weekly professional learning opportunities for teachers across subject areas. The professional development plan is mapped out for all dates during the school year based on teacher input, observations, and conversations with staff. However, some teachers indicated that they would like to have access to more differentiated professional learning opportunities aligned with their teaching and learning styles.
- Teachers said that they have opportunities to share ideas with administration and see those ideas coming to fruition. For example, teachers initiated a garden club, as well as a Positive Behavior Intervention System designed to address identified behavior issues. However, teachers sated that they would like to have increased autonomy and a more vital role in key school decisions.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts, resulting in coherence across grades and subject areas. In addition, rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks for all learners, and are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects.

Impact

As a result of school-wide coherence in curricula development and revision, curricula across grades and content areas promote college and career readiness for all students, and ensure that all learners must demonstrate their thinking in meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has clearly defined criteria for what it means to exit a grade, and to attain the enduring understandings and key skills that ensure success in college and career.
- School leaders and teachers can articulate how curricula across and within grade levels, are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, and how embedded scaffolds support student success and promote college and career readiness for all students in grades K-5.
- Rigorous habits and higher order skills, such as those that require students to create their own meaning, integrate skills into processes, and use what they have learned to solve real world problems, are identified and embedded coherently across grades and subjects. For example, a 4th grade project in which students studied immigration and the impact on families in New York during past and present times incorporated math, reading, writing, social studies, as well as science.
- Habits of mind are evident across classrooms and in lessons for all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities. A high level of rigor can be seen embedded in tasks such as word problems requiring students to persist, and in questioning where students have to apply past knowledge to new situations in order to solve problems and think interdependently to complete tasks.
- School leaders and teachers integrate the instructional shifts by making purposeful connections between the shifts and the topics in each subject, both within a grade and as students advance through the grades. Progression levels have been defined in each subject area for the grade above and below. These structures support collaborative planning and ensure that higher-order skills are embedded across grades and subjects for all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities.

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. In addition, across the vast majority of classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

Impact

As a result of coherent teaching practices, classrooms are student centered, with students taking ownership for their work. Teachers facilitate learning and provide opportunities for students at all levels to display their strengths and work on areas needing improvement.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teacher practices consistently reflect the school's beliefs about how students learn best. Teachers and administrators can articulate how those beliefs are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and aligned to the curricula. For example, both teachers and administrators articulated that they believe that students learn best in small groups, through conversations, as well as with visual and manipulative supports. Across classes, students used the accountable talk stems and prompts affixed to each individual desk to guide group discussions across subject areas. Students also had access to vocabulary word cards/lists, assorted graphic organizers, and math manipulatives to support their thinking and understanding.
- Instruction, outcomes, strategies, and learning activities are derived from standards-based curricula, and reflect the school's beliefs about optimal student learning situations. These beliefs are influenced by the priorities of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, the Common Core Learning Standards, and the instructional shifts. This is evidenced by the focus on engagement, questioning and discussion across classrooms. For example, in classes observed, students had access to complex texts and conceptual and procedural understandings, and were able to cite text based evidence to support their responses.
- Across the 1st through 5th grade classes visited, students produced work and engaged in discussions that reflected critical thinking, creativity, innovation, and problem solving, as well as student ownership of the learning process. All students could articulate the essential question of the lesson, what they were expected to learn, and their next learning steps. Students shared that they had progressed several reading levels since the beginning of the school year.
- There was ample student-to-student dialogue and the use of academic vocabulary, which is the school's instructional focus. In addition, lessons observed included multiple opportunities to incorporate evidence-based accountable talk. Students articulated what they were working towards, why it was important, and how they help determine the direction of lessons based on what they understand and what they do not yet understand.

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery, thus providing actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers. In addition, teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment so that teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

Impact

As a result of these assessment practices, teachers know how individual students, groups, sub-groups, grades, and classes are performing, and teachers adjust and modify the curricula on an on-going basis. Students have improved their writing and reading skills, and can articulate how they made the improvements, leading to greater student mastery and progress of all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers and administrators articulate coherent reasons for assessment choices. Across content areas, assessments are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and curricula content standards. These assessment practices deliver a range of data, daily, monthly, and quarterly, to sustain collaborative inquiry and continuously improve instruction. The school uses running records, daily conferences with students, collection of student work samples, performance assessments, end of unit assessments, teacher created assessments, as well as rubrics and checklists to determine student mastery of subjects.
- A variety of feedback to students, from both teachers and peers, is accurate, specific, and timely, advancing learning as evidenced by students' articulation of checklists and rubrics showing progression based on lesson target and where they fell on the continuum. Students articulated incorporating self-reflection, peer feedback and teacher feedback as they improved their work and made progress.
- In classes observed, teacher monitoring of student understanding during lessons was visibly active and continuous. Teachers were observed making frequent use of strategies to check for understanding and gather information about individual and group of students understanding and learning trends. Checks for understanding included questioning for explanation, thumbs up and down, colored cards (red, yellow, and green), and exit slips.
- Students are actively involved in the collection of information from assessments, and provide input. Students keep journals, notes, and portfolios, and track their work using student-friendly checklists for projects, homework assignments, and formative as well as summative exams. Students consistently self/peer-assess against the assessment criteria (rubrics and checklists), and monitor their understanding and progress either by taking initiative or as a result of tasks set by the teacher. Students are aware of their next learning steps, and can articulate clearly what they need to do and will do to make improvements.