



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Christa McAuliffe School

Q149

**93-11 34th Avenue
Jackson Heights
NY 11372**

Principal: Esther Salorio

**Date of review: November 20, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Sandra Litrico**

The School Context

The Christa McAuliffe School is an elementary school with 1237 students from grade kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 2% Black, 86% Hispanic, 3% White, and 8% Asian and 1% multi-racial/American Indian/Alaskan students. The student body includes 45% English language learners and 15% 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 95%.

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	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	Additional Findings	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	Celebration	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

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

All teachers participate regularly on teams that have a clear instructional focus supported by professional structures and protocols. Teacher teams work collaboratively to analyze classroom practice, assessment data and curricular products for the purpose of making informed adjustments to improve teacher pedagogy and student achievement.

Impact

The Common Core Learning Standards are embedded in each unit of study across grades and subjects thereby strengthening instructional coherence across the school. Teachers have identified evidence of changes in their pedagogy including questioning techniques and use student data on running records, which have shown increases in reading levels to verify the effectiveness of teaching strategies.

Supporting Evidence

- The school is purposely organized to encourage teachers to meet weekly to engage in collaborative work focusing on the instructional goals of the school. Teams are organized by grades and departments with designated grade leaders.
- All teams use similar protocols to analyze student work, assessment data, and Response to Intervention program evidence.
- Teacher teams worked on improving mathematics instruction resulting in a 17% gain in levels three and four on the New York State Mathematics Exam 2014.
- Teacher teams are working on multiple entry points to ensure that all students have access to the curriculum. Curriculum units and lesson plans include supports and scaffolds.
- Teacher teams have developed rubrics and checklists to assess student work. They have also developed teacher toolkits for each writing genre. The opinion writing Toolkit in 4th grade has ideas and resources to use.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

While most classes are guided by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and a coherent belief around quality instruction, not all classes were marked by high-level questioning and deep student discussion.

Impact

Teaching strategies did provide multiple entry points for all students. However, there was little evidence of student ownership, student led discussion and student voice.

Supporting Evidence

- The second grade literacy lesson actively engaged students in “team talk” conversations. After reading a chair for my mother, students were asked “Why was it important for them to get the chair?” and “What kind of decisions did the characters have to make due to circumstances?” The teacher encouraged the students to go back to the story for details and evidence. However, this type of discussion and questioning was not evident across the vast majority of classrooms.
- In all classrooms observed, students were grouped by level and/or skill and students did receive scaffolds and supports. However, there were missed opportunities in some classes for higher level students to be challenged. For example, The ReadyGen reading comprehension lessons did not extend learning and focused more on the teaching of skills and strategies.
- Across classrooms, teaching strategies provided multiple entry points. These were generated through activities like scaffolding visual cues, web-based exercises, graphic organizers, rubrics and checklists. Go Math lessons utilize “reteach and enrich” to support student learning. During The 5th grade Integrated Co-Teaching mathematics classroom, the general education teacher taught the class the strategy of using a model to multiply decimals. The general education teacher elected to analyze homework to determine who needs help rather than provide small group instruction to higher level students or those needing a different way of learning how to multiply decimals.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school curricula offers student's opportunities to engage in rigorous academic tasks that produce meaningful work products aligned to Common Core Learning Standards.

Impact

The instructional shifts are embedded into the curricular resulting in coherence across grades and subjects. Students are provided with opportunities to demonstrate higher order thinking skills

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers approach curriculum design from a shared belief that their efforts should focus on students' needs and alignment to the standards for each grade. There is a strategic and purposeful planning of units and daily lessons. All plans include a learning objective, standards, higher-level questions, tasks/activities, grouping and assessment. A literacy pacing calendar was developed to ensure coherence.
- After last year's writing assessment results, teachers in grades 3-5 decided to refine the ReadyGen writing curriculum. They embedded the Teachers' College units of Writing into the lessons by connecting themes and correlating the standards. As a result, the volume and quality of writing has increased significantly.
- There is evidence in the classroom that teachers are promoting higher order thinking skills by emphasizing the close reading portion of ReadyGen and the problem solving in Go Math. Students engage in team talk supporting their claims with evidence from the text. For example, in a mathematics class observed, students assessed all problems solving responses and reasoning behind all responses. These practices have led to an increase of 17.5% of levels 3 and 4 on the Math State Exam 2014. In another class, fifth grade students shared their early civilization projects, which included research, building models and writing reports.

Findings

The school integrates common assessments across the disciplines and the data is effectively used to make meaningful curricular and instructional modifications for all students including English language learners and students with disabilities. Assessments and rubrics are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and used across classrooms.

Impact

Teachers effectively use ongoing assessment practices to check for student understanding, effectively make adjustments to meet students learning needs, and measure student outcomes. Students are aware of their next learning steps based on these assessments and teacher feedback.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses New York City Performance Based Assessments (baseline and post, ReadyGen unit tests, Go Math beginning of the year assessments, end of the chapter tests, Teachers College Running Records, quizzes, tests and essays in social studies and science, on demand writing and checklists) to accurately inform instructional decisions and assess student progress. The school uses pre, mid and post assessments to monitor student progress
- All student writing has meaningful teacher feedback that includes what students do well and what they need to improve. Rubrics and checklists are used to assess students writing and are attached to student work that is posted and in their folders. Most students were able to articulate what they need to do to improve their reading, writing and math skills.
- A K to 5 Progress Monitoring Pacing Calendar has been created to monitor student progress. Data is shared with all departments including the reading and English as a Second Language teachers. Based on the data and the identified trends, teachers are strategically assigned to provide students with focused content area instruction. As a result, English Language learners showed a 5% increase (69% to 74%) on the New York State English as a Second Language Assessment in advance/proficiency levels.
- Across classrooms, teachers used checklists and essential questions as checks for understanding. Teachers use this data to guide re-teaching and/or inform lesson adjustments.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The principal has effectively partnered with staff, parents and students to create a system of high learning expectations for all students to ensure that they are prepared for the next level toward college and career readiness.

Impact

There is a culture of mutual accountability for these expectations with appropriate supports that prepare students for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has strong systems in place to communicate expectations to families. Family Night had a turnout of approximately 700 parents and family members. All teachers prepared presentations which conveyed high expectations and the link to a path for college and career readiness. Each teacher presented the expectations of the grade. Workshops are offered to parents during the Tuesday parent engagement time. These include Think Central/Go Math, technology and English as a Second Language classes, and resources for children with special needs.
- Teachers understand their professional responsibilities and all elements of the Danielson Framework. They are self-reflective and have set goals for improvement. Teachers attend professional development to improve their pedagogy. They also communicate regularly with parents and provide feedback to students.
- Student work is highlighted and students are recognized for attendance, achievement and progress. For example, selected students are part of the school's award winning debate team. In addition the social studies teachers involves all students in rigorous debates. One teaching point that was observed read "Students will be able to discover the impact of Henry Hudson's' exploration in New York State through a structured debate.
- The school has an active and vocal student government. The students participate in many schools service activities such as "Mitten Tree" which provides gloves, hats and scarves to needy children. The PS 149 Debate Team won first place in competition last October. Students' educational experience is also enriched through music and visual arts. In a kindergarten class, students were introduced to the movement of notes, skipping and stepping while reading through notation and learning important content vocabulary.
- Parents said that their children are well prepared for assessments and are given additional help during, before and after school programs and small group instruction. Parents said that the teachers motivate their children and push them to do their best. They extend great effort and time to find out what their children need to be successful.