



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S.175

**The Lynn Gross Discovery School
64-35 102nd. Street
Queens, NY 11374**

Principal: Patricia Cooper

**Date of review: January 14, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Mabel Muñiz - Sarduy**

The School Context

P.S.175 is an elementary school with 757 students from grade Pre- K through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 11% Hispanic, 65% White, and 21% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 3% 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	Celebration	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	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	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:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

All curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Higher-order skills are consistently emphasized for all learners across grades and content areas.

Impact

The school's curricular decisions build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all learners. Academic curriculum maps and lesson plans promote rigorous habits across grades for English language learners (ELLs), students with disabilities and extensions for high achievers.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses ReadyGen, Go Math, Social Studies City Frameworks and Science Inquiry lessons. They support these CCLS aligned programs with additional resources such as thinking maps with specific graphic organizers to help support student writing, MyOn, an online reading program to support students at their independent level, Safari Montage, a discovery technology program to support students with non-fiction videos and animation, and DreamBox, a math program to enrich and support students at school and at home.
- Lesson plans reviewed emphasized higher order thinking and strategies for advanced, intermediate and struggling students. Strategies were evident for ELLs as well as students with disabilities. A template aligned to CCLS is optional for teachers to use.
- Unit plans reviewed in literacy and math illustrated multiple designs of academic tasks, with numerous scaffolds, and entry points for all students including ELLs and students with disabilities. Some modifications included thinking maps, models of visuals, chunking text, smaller or larger dividends, partnerships, manipulatives and the use of anchor charts.
- Reading/writing curriculum maps reviewed illustrated designs of academic tasks, with numerous scaffolds and entry points for all students. For example, in a writing map for second graders the learning objective of understanding that authors use details and facts to support an opinion which had clear multiple entry points for ELLs and students with disabilities from linking words to help support the content, sentence frames and T-chart to support the writing of facts and opinions. This map also included extensions such as writing an opinion from an independent book choice and supporting their opinion with three reasons based on text evidence.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Pedagogy provides consistent instructional supports, including manipulatives, the use of multi entry points that foster reasoning in student work products in various classrooms throughout the school.

Impact

Across some classrooms, curricula scaffolds supported students to produce meaningful work products, yet there are missed opportunities for strategic supports that extend learning and foster student ownership of learning.

Supporting Evidence

- During a 5th grade literacy lesson, students were analyzing the theme of a historical event to understand how to support their opinion using text evidence. During the visit students were working in small groups on research projects with various themes including freedom, obstacles, and courage. Students were able to articulate the purpose of their research projects by citing text evidence using graphic organizers, non-fiction text and individual notes. However, entry points and extensions for all learners including our high achievers, ELLs and students with disabilities are not yet consistently present across a vast majority of classrooms.
- While conversations with students indicated that student groups were flexible and fluid, extensions to the lessons did not always facilitate student to student interactions that lead to student ownership. For example in a 4th grade class, students were grappling with understanding the relationship between factors and multiples, some students used the number line to figure out the answers, others worked with teacher using counters, and advanced students had to show how they came up with multiples by showing their work. However, there were no structures in place to encourage peer to peer discussion or to allow students to take responsibility for their learning.
- In a 1st grade special education math class students were working on I-Ready a computer adaptive program that supports students at the level of where they are performing and allows them to work at their instructional level. Others were supported by the paraprofessional using counters and teacher modeling. Students were able to go to the SMARTboard by their desk to use the number line. Teacher provided wait time for students to think. Although there are consistent instructional supports across classrooms, they do not yet consistently lead to student work products and discussions that reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school uses teacher-created and common assessments, tracks student progress, and analyzes information to make effective adjustments to instruction and provide actionable feedback to students across most subjects.

Impact

The school's systems to monitor progress through data analysis as well as during instruction are used regularly to guide adjustments in units and lessons to meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- During teacher team meetings, teachers articulated how they modify units and lessons for students based on the needs of students. This is done by providing visuals, scaffolds and enrichment activities. After review of a 4th grade curriculum map, Dividing by 1- digit Number, teachers added a pre- assessment to assess the prerequisite skills needed, included animated math models, use concrete models, math vocabulary words and embedded interim tasks to check progress.
- Teachers consistently analyze Ready Gen assessments, I-Ready assessments and Go Math assessments. Math data revealed that Operations & Algebraic Measurement & Data was an area of concern school decided to purchase I-Ready which provides practice and increases in complexity as students master the skill. Current data shows progress, however it is not yet the case that analysis of student data and common assessments is as consistent across the vast majority of subjects and grades.
- A Student Response to Intervention profile is provided for every student who shows a need for intervention. This outline provides assessments given to each student by marking period and the tracking of progress. In the Response to Intervention vertical team a teacher articulated how as they go into the different classrooms this profile provides highlights and outlines of where student needs support. This helps teachers provide support for students which is targeted and individualized.
- A review of writing across all content areas in a vast majority of classrooms and hallways showed feedback of glows and grows from teachers including next steps. However there was not consistent evidence of peer to peer reviews or self-assessment of student work.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school conveys high expectations that promote parental involvement and support learning so that staff, students and families work together toward achieving school goals.

Impact

Staff, students and families are well supported towards progress in meeting school expectations and parents understand the school's expectations for their children.

Supporting Evidence

- During the parent interview, parents stated that the school communicates expectations for their children through monthly calendars, letters, meetings and conferences. The principal knows every student as is always available to meet with parents. The teachers always communicate with parents. Another parent shared that they received "I can" statements which are aligned to CCLS. Parents feel their children are safe and if someone has a problem it is always addressed. A parent of a special education student shared how sensitive the teachers and administration are with regards to her child's needs.
- In an effort to communicate high expectations to all school constituents, staff and parents receive a handbook specifically designed for each constituent. The teacher handbook covers Comprehensive Educational Plan, homework guidelines, vertical committees and technology support. The parent handbook provides parents with information on conferences, homework guidelines, attendance and parent involvement opportunities. In addition, monthly calendars are distributed with events and special programs for students. Science and Math Connections to build understanding and excitement for children are also provided for parents in a newsletter.
- A review of the school professional learning plan revealed that teachers lead professional development on a weekly basis. Some topics include Thinking Maps, Close Reading, Analysis of Data, Reading Response Notebooks and teachers sharing best practices. These topics are based on a review of observations using the Danielson Framework for Teaching as well as teacher input.
- During the parent meeting parents articulated that they have monthly workshops on a variety of topics, including the Common Core Learning Standards, school policy, special awards assemblies, school goals and school budget. Parents feel the school is preparing their child for the next level.

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

Teachers examine data and student work consistently within inquiry-based teams. Leadership structures provide a means for teachers to have input on key decisions about curriculum and teaching practices.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has resulted in improved pedagogy and student progress on formative assessments. Shared leadership structures build capacity to improve student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher team reviewed data from I-Ready exams to make instructional decisions, and share ideas to adjust teaching practices per grade based on data and student performance tasks. For example a 4th grade team acknowledged the need to build stamina in reading as many of the students did not complete the entire assessments. As a team they decided on several steps to take including using a “stamina” thermometer to gage the next six weeks, increasing student reading independently over time to build stamina in reading, and employing passages from Read Works.
- Teacher leaders from the Response to Intervention (RTI) team who represent each grade or discipline meet weekly to review data and student work. Each teacher has a group of students who they track and create lessons to support their access to the CCLS and shifts. Some of these teachers are support teachers, such as the special education teacher, social worker, and psychologist. They have a RTI student portfolio which includes updated data sources and item analysis for each child they serve. One teacher articulated that this helps her when she pushes into the class to support specific students at their level to work towards progress and acceleration.
- Teachers are held accountable for this work as the teams follow a template which provides grade, date, time, attendance, goal, agenda, materials and next steps. This can be viewed as needed. This shared leadership structure provides and builds to improve teacher capacity and student learning. For example, in a 5th grade math class students had to complete a fraction conversion chart to make up their own word problem, another group was working with teacher using manipulatives, and another group worked on their own showing their work to their peers. The use of formative data was evident in this lesson as well as the practices teachers use in inquiry to analyze data and student work.
- Professional development is provided by teachers and other staff on a weekly basis which covers topics such as the inquiry process, lesson planning, review of student work, and alignment of the CCLS and instructional shifts.