



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Clearview Gardens School**

**25Q209**

**16-10 Utopia Parkway  
Whitestone, N.Y. 11357**

**Principal: Dr. Mary Mc Donnell**

**Date of review: November 19, 2014  
Lead Reviewer: Beverly Ffolkes-Bryant, Ed.D.**

Clearview Gardens is an elementary school with 627 students from grade Pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 0% Black, 19% Hispanic, 40% White, 1% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 3% Multi-Racial and 37% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 96.1%.

## 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>Well Developed</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>Proficient</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>Well Developed</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>Additional Findings</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

Professional collaborations are a high priority and faculty profit from varied opportunities to share and develop strengths as individuals and members of the teaching community.

### Impact

This enables teachers to strengthen instruction and raise learning outcomes.

### Supporting Evidence:

- The school has established six-week long inquiry cycles that focus on the most recent student data. At the beginning of the school year, teacher teams concentrated on strengthening students' writing skills based on writing samples that were done in the spring. After analyzing the test results and finding out that the school dropped in math, the next inquiry cycle will be focused on math using the Item Analysis. When teams analyzed the math data, they also saw that Students with Disabilities made less progress than the rest of the student population. For the third Inquiry Cycle, the teams will be focusing to see if these students' needs are being addressed based on what is written on their Individual Educational Plan (IEP).
- Based on the recommendations from the previous Quality Review, the school's major focus was of the curriculum and to get information across the grades. As a result, all of the teachers at the school are involved in two teams, the grade team and the vertical grade team, which is made up of teachers in each grade as well as cluster teachers. Teams match grade level Common Core Learning Standards with existing curriculum. To ensure that students at each grade level have mastered both the prior grade's skills and those needed for the next grade; the teams supplement materials as needed. Having these two teams ensures coherence and consistency cross all grades throughout the school as well as builds a reflective collaborative community that focuses on improved student learning.
- In addition to Grade Leaders, all of the teachers are involved on committees. At the beginning of the year, teachers are given a choice to participate in a committee such as the Safety, Positive Behavior Intervention, Special Events, Testing, Grant Writing, Instructional/Curriculum, PD/Parent Workshops and Response to Intervention/School Implementation. Committees meet to talk about what is working/not working at the school. Administration either sits in at meetings or knows what is going through the minutes. The principal commented that these committees generate teacher ownership, volunteers for after-school activities and more parent participation.

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

### Findings

While the school provides consistent instructional supports including questioning and discussion techniques, the use of strategic entry points and extensions that foster deep reasoning in student work products varies across the school.

### Impact

The school needs to provide greater consistency in instruction based on data so that lesson planning reflects purposeful groupings; students are challenged; tasks accommodate different learning styles, and questioning extends thinking to maximize student learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- Individual teachers and teacher teams plan differentiated lessons using student data to guide their targeted adjustments. Although in virtually all classes observed there were students clustered for small group instruction, lessons did not consistently reflect differentiation of modalities or learning opportunities, especially for higher functioning students. This hampers students' ability to fully participate in instruction; reduces engagement, and limits the opportunity for all students to produce meaningful work products that demonstrate higher levels of thinking.
- It is the principal's expectation for all staff members to incorporate higher level thinking and questioning into their lessons. Teachers are required to scaffold questions to include the lower-level students and then progress to the higher-level questions using Webb's *Depth of Knowledge Guide*. However, in some classes observed, those types of questions were not evident. Therefore, there is limited evidence that teachers are deepening the level of instruction to provide appropriate challenges.
- The school has identified rigor with the use of the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) categories. Teacher teams use the DOK rubric to assess the level of tasks and instructional activities in a given unit. They have also introduced Hess' matrix, which integrates Bloom's Cognitive Process dimensions and DOK levels. However, in classes observed, the level of instruction was not rigorous enough to provide appropriate challenge that facilitates higher-order thinking and extends learning experiences for all students.

## Additional Findings

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

Students benefit from a standards based broad curriculum with multiple resources and a wide range of rigorous experiences.

### Impact

This curriculum facilitates student's ownership of learning.

### Supporting Evidence:

- During the Grade 4 Inquiry Team meeting, teachers made sure that tasks were all aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. They created pre and post assessments with the pre assessment a grade below based on the standard being taught and the post assessment on grade level. Based on student results, the team used the "middle" student to plan lessons for the entire grade and also created tasks for intervention and enrichment.
- Last year, teachers integrated the Instructional Shifts in ELA by using more non-fiction texts. They attribute the gains on the state examinations to this focus. The Grade 4 Inquiry Team explained that this year, one of the Instructional Shifts they are focusing on is vocabulary, and during the meeting observed, they analyzed sequence words and focused on questions to find the meanings of those key words. They reworded questions to help students understand their meaning, and incorporated text-based evidence in response to the constructive responses of student work analyzed.
- Most of the tasks planned have students apply what they learned in their everyday life to build college and career readiness. The Grade 4 Inquiry team also talked about how CLOSE Reading and looking for text evidence is something students will have to do in college, and this strategy is built as students' progress through the grades. It also makes them critical thinkers. The school also integrates college and career skills via research and presentations in the upper grades utilizing technology.
- Teacher teams supplement the gaps found in the ELA and Math programs they use from various resources; for example, the "Teachers Pay Teachers" website, the Engage NY website, and the Leveled Libraries from their previous reading program for small group instruction. The principal talked about teacher teams' analysis of instructional materials have resulted in the identification of appropriate supplemental materials that are utilized to provide targeted support for students.

**Findings**

Through regular use of relevant data, leaders and faculty have an understanding of the performance and progress of individuals by group and by subject.

**Impact**

This informs teachers' instruction and organizational adjustments.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Based on the recommendations of the 2013-2014 Peer School Quality Review which said to *“create a comprehensive system to facilitate the collection and analysis of formative assessment across grades to assist administrators and staff in tracking progress of students, surfacing gaps and acting on data trends in order to inform ongoing school-wide instructional decisions..”*, teacher teams regularly analyze *Ready Gen* and *Go Math* unit tests, reading benchmarks, Item Analysis of the state tests for students. They also use *Ed Performance*, which tells teachers which student have/have not mastered a particular skill. Teachers share results to improve teacher practice and adjust curriculum. The outcome of these conversations is shared with staff and parents. Administration checks teachers' marking books where the unit tests are housed as well as on Schoolnet, an online instructional management suite that contains an assessment administration system, visual reports and standards' focused instructional planning and curriculum tools to help improve student outcomes.. For example, Vertical teams looked at the state test results and found out based on the data that they had to focus on mathematics for the next Inquiry Cycle, particularly reading and understanding word problems. As a result teachers can make effective instructional decisions based on data to improve student performance.
- This year, the school revamped the school's grading policy. This was a school-wide effort that included administration, staff and parents. The new grading policy, based on performance levels is used for multiple choice assessments. For example, if a student gets 19 out of 25 questions, it will be correlated to a Level 2. Student constructed response assessments and performance tasks will be measured on a rubric that is provided with the assignment. Parents were informed of this new grading policy via a parent letter in September. The system is not only comprehensive for staff; it also enables members in the learning community to interpret data to make informed decisions about resource allocations, teaching strategies and student grouping. This new grading policy outlines assessment practices that offer transparency with regard to mastery of the CCLS standards, opportunities for teacher teams to analyze trends and provide actionable feedback to students, all of which results in meaningful information on instructional practice.
- It is the school's expectation for every teacher to use checks for understanding which include Exit Slips in every grade, teachers walking around and conferring, and questioning. Teachers are to use these checks to plan when to reteach or how to group students. Students also practice peer checking as part of the checks for understanding. Student Reflection can also be seen in checklists, and students are constantly looking at their goals to see if they have mastered them. It is the principal's expectation for students to use the *“Self-Buddy-Teacher”* system where they first have to rely on themselves, and then ask a buddy before going to the teacher if they have a problem. This makes teachers more highly effective in making instructional decisions resulting in improving student performance.

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

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff and students and should expand communication and collaboration with parents

### **Impact**

This will increase their capacity to assist in their child's learning and to enable them to track progress towards attaining set goals.

### **Supporting Evidence:**

- The Network created a School Needs Analysis as a reflective instrument for Administration. Through their interview responses they found that communication with parents was a concern, particularly parents of English Language Learners (ELL). This was also substantiated in the Learning Environment Survey. Principal mentioned that even though the school has only 40 ELL students, there are many parents who do not speak English at home and many of the communications that go out to parents are not translated.
- The school analyzed the eight Danielson indicators in the beginning of the school year. They developed a Dropbox on the Google website where teachers are able to download their unit and lesson plans, and agendas and minutes from teacher team meetings. Last year, through a School-Based Option (SBO) vote, teachers gave back one hour of their lunch to observe classrooms and to take low-inference notes, which is also included in the Dropbox. However, the Dropbox is only a depository device and does not enable teachers to communicate to each other.
- The school has created a progress report for parents in each Core Curriculum subject areas that are scheduled to be given after each Inquiry Cycle, which is 6-8 weeks. However, because the school has been having difficulty with the new report cards, these reports are slated to be given to parents in the spring. This hinders parents from being actively involved in their child's education.
- It is the principal's expectations for teacher feedback to be timely and appropriate. Statements like "good" and "lovely" are no longer acceptable. Feedback should include statement a recommendation on how the student can move to the next level based on the rubric of a specific. However in looking at teacher feedback, there were some teachers who were not using the language of the rubric. . It is therefore unclear if the current strategies are setting a path towards mastery of skill and content for all groups of students.