



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Edward Mandel**

**Elementary School Q220**

**62-10 108<sup>th</sup> Street  
Queens  
NY 11375**

**Principal: Josette Pizarro**

**Date of review: January 29, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Dr. Joseph O'Brien**

## The School Context

Edward Mandel is an elementary school with 709 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 9% Black, 25% Hispanic, 36% White, and 29% Asian students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 19% 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 95.2%.

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

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
---------------------------	------------------------------	----------------	-----------------------

### Findings

The School systematically conveys high expectations to all constituencies through on-going communiqués and holds staff accountable through purposeful staff professional development linked to pedagogical outcomes. The school successfully partners with families communicating expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness.

### Impact

Numerous professional development opportunities that provide learning and follow-up assessment create a high degree of mutual accountability among staff members towards achievement of set expectations. Students benefit from successful school-family partnerships that provide them support in achieving career and college ready skills.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teacher teams provide professional learning opportunities on an ongoing basis and help to create a culture of mutual accountability and collegiality among teachers and school leaders. The professional development committee uses surveys to monitor and hone professional learning practice. Administrators engage in focused walkthroughs of grade-level classes once per week to note teachers' professional learning needs. A professional learning calendar based on these data and teacher recommendations is updated monthly. Topics include curricular development, reviewing student work, providing effective feedback, and the use of embedded formative assessment.
- The school communicates to parents in writing on a bi-monthly basis. Grade level teacher teams create a newsletter detailing what each grade will be working on in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies, and include important reminders and tips for families to use at home to support student progress. Additionally, the principal provides a monthly parent newsletter with important assessment dates and curricular overviews for all subjects and grade levels. Also, the School provides English as a second language (ESL) services for families once per week. The school notes that more parents are volunteering to read to students in the Learning Leaders program and that attendance at student-led conferences and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) events has risen.
- The School presents an annual career fair for grades three, four, and five. Fifth-graders research a career, gain an understanding of the steps it takes to be successful in that field, and stand and present at tables, as if they are truly sharing information at a job fair. Students research their dream career and make notes on index cards, hold mock job interviews, create resumes, and create classified advertisements.
- The principal leads professional book clubs and all teachers participate. Texts include *Choice Words* by Peter H. Johnston, and *Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Achievement* by Lucy Caulkins, et al. Impact of this work can be seen in the creation of student book club protocols, and in comments on student work on bulletin boards where feedback is not simply praise, but specific and descriptive.

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

### Findings

Guided by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and an articulated shared belief system, teachers plan lessons to support student ownership. Teachers consistently provide supports such as multiple entry points and extensions that allow all students, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs) access to appropriately challenging tasks, but teacher team work in terms of supporting students through strategic questioning is not as well established.

### Impact

Pedagogy does not always incorporate strategic questioning strategies that afford all students high quality supports and extensions to support consistent demonstration of higher-order thinking in their work.

### Supporting Evidence

- To support the school's belief system that student ownership and focus drives successful learning and achievement, teacher teams and school leaders have changed the way in which teachers and students frame the day's learning activities, by using "I can" statements across classrooms and subject areas. For example, in third grade math, the "I Can" statement for the day was "I can work collaboratively in a group to answer division questions." Fourth graders in social studies class, stated, "I can facilitate my own research of Medieval Europe."
- MyON and Mathletics online reading and math programs extend the learning beyond the classroom and provide differentiated instruction in reading and math with tiered non-fiction and fiction texts and word problems of varying levels of difficulty, updated daily, and aligned to challenge students' just right reading and math levels. Student accounts highlight student growth in reading and math.
- In five of eight classes, students worked on unique tasks using different resources. For example, in third grade math, students in tiered flexible groups worked on one of three different sets of word problems with scaffolds including question prompts and rubrics and extensions for advanced students in the form of additional complex word problems.
- Questions in some classrooms were posed quickly with little wait time provided for all students to formulate an answer. In the majority of classes, questions were a mix of Webb's Depth of Knowledge Level 1, 2, and 3. Questions including "What did the French and Indian war do?" "How are families around the world alike? Different?" and "Why are families important?" were heard.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks.

### Impact

The school makes purposeful decisions that build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students in academic tasks that emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order thinking.

### Supporting Evidence

- In seven of eight classes, lessons were aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. For example, in fourth grade English language arts, students chose a topic from medieval Europe to research and used Webb's Depth of Knowledge question wheels to generate open-ended research questions about their topic. In fifth grade social studies, students chose one of three ancient empires (Aztec, Inca, Mayan) and conducted research using a balance of fiction and non-fiction text-based evidence to provide examples of a culture's contributions to society.
- Reading and writing skills within content area units of study emphasize the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts across content areas, including tiered-academic vocabulary, fluency, multi-step word problem solving, argumentative writing, and text-based responses.
- Curriculum maps show that the school uses tasks from Engage New York, the New York City Department of Education Common Core library, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, and Go Math!
- The instructional shifts are consistently addressed in the curriculum. Each grade level in K-5 requires a "step" of growth on the "staircase" to prepare students for the complexity of college and career ready texts. For example, first grade social studies unit plans list higher order skills including compare and contrast, cause and effect, reading maps, and sequencing of events. Additionally, math and spelling bees scheduled at key intervals during the year promote the instructional shift of fluency.
- Adapted tasks and scaffolds for ELLs and SWDs are noted in curriculum maps and lesson plans. Strategies including total physical response, teacher created graphic organizers and strategies to pre-teach vocabulary.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-----------------------

### Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers design and use assessments, rubrics, and grading policies aligned with the school's curricula. The school uses common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress towards goals across grades and subjects.

### Impact

School assessments provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement across grades and subjects. The school strategically makes adjustments that meet all students' learning needs, including ELLs and SWDs to ensure that students remain on track and achieve performance standards and demonstrate mastery.

### Supporting Evidence

- ESL teachers collaborate with teacher teams to design self-assessments for ELLs with visual cues. For example, re-reading checklists include reading comprehension strategies incorporating the studying of pictures and words for context clues, noting how a character changes across the text, and lessons that characters learn as a result of their journey. English Language Learner Progress (n = 120) is 57.5% at Levels 3 and 4.
- School leaders provide assessment calendars for teachers noting all assessments so that they may plan accordingly and create assessments, rubrics, and tasks to better prepare students for New York City assessments. For example, in first grade English language arts, teachers created rubrics and checklists to aid student development in writing including the "I can rate my writing" poster depicting illustrations highlighting the four levels of completion and examples of student writing at the underdeveloped, developing, proficient, and well-developed stages.
- Student self-assessment was seen in the vast majority of classrooms. For example, comments included "I think I did a nice job answering the question. Next time, I will use my time better to complete the assignment" and "Next time, I will capitalize more."
- The School's data wall highlights individual students' progress toward mastery. Using data from classroom assessments, Teachers College Assessment Pro, New York State and New York City assessments individual student progress is monitored and analyzed for trends. Teachers use data to inform flexible student groupings and adjust curriculum and supports. For example, in third grade, teams designed new units of study to address students with disabilities' struggle with recognizing and generating simple equivalent fractions.
- Benchmark assessment data is collected five times throughout the year to gauge the effectiveness of reading, writing, and math instruction. Data is utilized to track student progress, to make adjustments in instruction, and to identify students who require additional resources. For example, teacher teams meet to discuss benchmark data and to identify ways to modify instruction. After reviewing assessment data, teachers identified that ELLs were struggling with inferential questions. Teacher teams analyzed state exam questions to study the way in which questions were being asked and formulate similar questions in the classroom.

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

### Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based structured professional collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity and promoted the achievement of school's goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams systematically analyze assessment data and student work to adjust curricula and instruction.

### Impact

Structured professional collaborations result in shared improvements in teacher practice creating a school-wide instructional coherence that has increased student achievement for all learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers and school leaders have created a culture where all teachers collegially share resources and collaborate in the analyses of student work products to make systematic adjustments to their instruction and curriculum. For example, based on a systematic review of student work using a teacher created protocol, the math third grade team identified that students with disabilities struggled with multiplication and doubles facts. Teachers redesigned units to include additional mini lessons, modeling, and scaffolds including tiered tasks for advanced, middle, and struggling students.
- Teacher teams meet every day to map and plan based on data analysis of assessments and student work. The curriculum is adjusted and multiple entry points and flexible groups adapted based on data. For example, teacher teams noticed that beginner ELL's struggled in guided reading and guided writing. Teacher teams created an alternate assignment for beginner ELLs where students create guided writing books using pictures and foundational sight words. ELL students use these guided writing books as resources during guided reading to help them apply phonics skills to decode successfully, thereby improving their comprehension of text.
- Teachers use the improvement process outlined in the book *Data Wise* when meeting weekly in their grade-level Inquiry teams, as well as vertically at the conclusion of each cycle of inquiry. Each teacher on the grade has a specific role to play within an area of expertise (i.e. grade facilitator, data facilitator, social studies/science facilitator, and inquiry facilitator). For example, this cycle's focus is to strengthen teachers' use of collaborative discussions, use of rubrics, and student feedback. Implementation of these three identified practices were observed in the majority of classrooms.
- The principal leads professional learning for teachers using articles from peer reviewed scholarly journals denoting the research behind instructional practices. For example, an educational article from the *Harvard Education Letter* on the use of data to analyze instruction was provided for teachers along with accompanying worksheets that included data goals from the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan. Teachers used the worksheets to identify indicators and assessments by date to track progress toward goals.