



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

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2014-2015**

**The Leonard P. Stavisky Early Childhood School**

**Early Childhood School Q242**

**29-66 137<sup>th</sup> Street  
Queens  
NY 11354**

**Principal: Patricia Costa**

**Date of review: January 8, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Dr. Marion Wilson**

## The School Context

The Leonard P. Stavisky Early Childhood School is an early childhood school with 409 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 3. The school population comprises 4% Black, 15% Hispanic, 4% White, and 75% Asian students. The student body includes 33% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 96.0%.

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

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

The school has made strategic decisions in order to align curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and to integrate the instructional shifts. Teachers skillfully use student work and data to make adjustments to curricula and tasks.

### Impact

The careful attention to curricular design has resulted in coherence and alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards within and across grades and content areas. Curricula and academic tasks have been planned and refined on an ongoing basis to allow students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, to have access to the curricula and tasks that are cognitively engaging.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school has clearly defined criteria for what it means to exit a grade level and to attain the enduring understandings and key skills that ensure success in college and career. The school's adaptation and adjustment of Foundations, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project workshop model and curriculum calendar for English language arts (ELA), along with Lucy West's Metamorphosis Math, set expectations for the essential questions and understanding of what students need to know in order to exit a specific grade.
- 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, so as to promote college and career readiness. This is evidenced by the school's development of a reading continuum, with connections for writing and discussion, for inferring about characters in a story, which clearly demonstrates what students will be able to do from kindergarten to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, focusing on text-based answers and response to reading. For example, in kindergarten, students are asked to write or name the character and use one word to describe the character. Subsequently, in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, students are asked to use text evidence to support description of the character, define traits, and analyze external factors related to the problem and solution in the story.
- Teachers across grades and subjects use student work and data to plan and refine curricula and academic tasks in order to cognitively engage all students, including lowest and highest achieving students which is evidenced by the work in the unit plans connected to teacher lesson plans showing the changes in tasks based on higher order thinking skills.
- Curricula and academic tasks are designed to engage students, advance them through the content, and assess their understanding as evidenced by student work products. For example, students not only have to solve mathematical word problems, but must also demonstrate their thinking and write down the steps taken to solve the problem.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

Teachers 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. In addition, students receive actionable feedback and teachers consistently check for understanding.

### Impact

As a result of these assessment practices, students are grouped according to periodic formative assessment and provided with enrichment or intervention supports as needed. Even though the school has information about student achievement and progress towards goals for students, the school is in the process of working towards systems and structures that would use these results to create a clear portrait of student achievement across all grades and subject areas.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers and administrators can articulate consistent reasons for assessment choices such as Teachers College Reading Writing Project Assessment Pro, ELA student progress portfolios, Investigations pre and post unit assessments and running records to show student growth and progress as it relates to the Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards and make the needed adjustments to improve instruction.
- Teachers monitor student understanding during lessons and actively try to determine what students know and understand during the point of instruction, often pulling a small group for further support, enrichment or intervention. Through the use of rubrics, checklists, and conferencing with students, students are able to receive feedback from both teachers and peers, however the school is still working on creating systems to share so that teachers in the vast majority of classrooms are also checking for understanding periodically within a lesson and not waiting until the conclusion of a lesson to make adjustments.
- Students in some classes consistently self- or peer-assessed against the assessment criteria by utilizing writing checklists, reading checklists, or math checklists. This practice helped students to monitor their own understanding and progress of the tasks created by the teacher and knew their next learning steps. The school is in the process of creating similar modified rubrics and checklists for student use in pre-kindergarten through 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The school has developed teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students in an early childhood school learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teaching practices are aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meet the needs of all learners.

### Impact

Teaching practices are purposefully planned and implemented to allow opportunities for students to take ownership of their learning, positively impacting the level of their work products and ultimately improving students' progress towards mastery of standards.

### Supporting Evidence

- In all classrooms visited, teacher practices consistently reflect and support school-wide beliefs about how students learn best. In interviews, teachers and administrators consistently shared that they believe in the workshop model, small group instruction, multiple entry points for students, integrated use of technology, and clear expectations for student learning. In all classrooms visited, students were working in small groups focused on activities based on their strengths or area of growth, which demonstrated all articulated beliefs.
- Across the vast majority of classroom visited, it was evident that instruction, outcomes, strategies, and learning activities were derived from standards-based curricula and reflect school leadership's espoused beliefs about the best learning conditions; beliefs which are influenced by the prioritizing of Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. For example, the school focuses on accelerating language development through the use of a strategy highlighting various shades of meaning for vocabulary words for students based on performance level along with creating juicy sentences in an effort to help improve comprehension. For example, students were encouraged to use synonyms of commonly used words such as happy, ecstatic, delighted and elated.
- Student groups are organized thoughtfully and are varied as appropriate; they build on student strengths and incorporate student choice as appropriate to maximize learning. Plans for lessons or units are well-structured with appropriate pacing and time allocations. For example, students in a 1st grade math class were grouped based on teacher observations of their work and conference notes with students. Students were then able to choose the type of enrichment or extended practice activity they wanted to participate in with their learning partner after speaking to the teacher. Teachers supported students by working with small groups and circulating throughout the classroom to ensure students understood tasks and activities.

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

The school establishes a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families and provides supports to achieve those expectations. School leaders and teacher teams offer feedback and support to prepare students for the next grade level.

### **Impact**

As a result of the school's designed systems and structures for communicating a common set of high expectations, all stakeholders have developed partnerships with families to help increase student learning.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Staff members implement strategies and have developed systems for communicating high expectations connected to college and career readiness so that most students are challenged and meet or exceed expectations. As part of the school's culture, students are guided toward independence. For example, students maintain planners and are expected to organize their notes and homework in the planners.
- The school orchestrates ongoing events, workshops and activities to partner with families to create a culture of participation so that families can help support students at home with projects and homework. The school continuously puts systems in place to improve systems of communication to reach a wide range of parents, including parents whose native language is not English. Teachers invite parents to a variety of celebrations across the year including reading and writing celebrations and publishing parties, holiday events, and class trips.
- Most teachers and staff across the school have a set of clear structures for articulating high expectations for students including class, group, and individual goals for different subject areas. Students in grades two and three are able to own their learning progress through charts, rubrics, peer feedback, or checklists with the use of hand-prints (compliments) and foot-prints (next steps in learning) for assignments. They are also able to self-assess their work products and behavior: These practices continue to be improved and revised to help students in early childhood understand these systems as well.

<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

The vast majority of teachers engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning.

### Impact

The work of these teams has resulted in school-wide instructional coherence and increased student achievement where. Furthermore, as a result of these structured and well organized systems, there is shared leadership across the school, teachers play an integral role in key decisions, and curricular adjustments are purposeful and aimed at improving student achievement.

### Supporting Evidence

- The vast majority of teachers collaborate in professional teams during Monday and Tuesday sessions, as well as on their own, to develop and implement school-wide instructional practices, embedding the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts in order to continuously promote improved achievement for all learners. For example, teacher teams work in cross-grade teams to engage in inquiry, analyze data, and share best practices around the curricula to ensure it meets the needs of their student population.
- Teacher teams systematically and strategically revise learning continuums and expectations based on the work in classrooms and then adjust classroom practice to improve outcomes for students. For example, teacher teams use the information student writing samples through the lens of the Qualities of Good Writing rubric and revise criteria charts to group students for reading lessons. Similarly, they continue to use the results from running records to more effectively determine which cueing systems are needed to support reading growth and development for early childhood students.
- School leaders and teachers offer specific and clear examples of teacher leadership that illustrate how teachers and teacher leaders play a vital role in school-level decision making. For example, teachers, with the administration's support, decided not to spend additional resources on external professional learning consultants and instead opted to use the money to create lab sites for cross grade teams to be able to visit and improve practices.
- Administrators and teacher leaders are able to identify distributed leadership structures that are deeply-rooted in the school's day to day operations and articulate how they serve as a conduit for teacher input in strategic decisions that affect student achievement. In lieu of coach positions, teacher teams decided to utilize funding to support for the development of cross-grade teams of teachers to work together to provide coach support and leadership in their curricular area and to develop their classrooms to serve as lab sites. Teacher leaders are supported in their role by attending on- and off-site professional development through the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project and network support specialists. Teachers are the ultimate decision makers for curriculum choices and decisions and the delivery of instructional methodologies.