



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Public School 280

Elementary School Q280

**34-20 94th Street
Queens
11372**

Principal: Lisa Hidalgo

Date of review: March 12, 2015

Lead Reviewer: Dr. Philip A. Composto

The School Context

Public School 280 is an elementary school with 581 students from grade kindergarten through grade 3. The school population comprises 1% Black, 90% Hispanic, 1% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 44% 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 95.5%.

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	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	Celebration	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	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The principal communicates high expectations to all constituents within the school community and has a system of accountability that has led to students, families and staff to work together to improve student outcomes and accomplish school goals.

Impact

The collaborative spirit and shared belief in the importance of learning and providing a path for college and career readiness, results in ownership and mutual accountability by students, teachers and families.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal creates and distributes a parent handbook and monthly letters to parents that delineates expectations and what students will be working on for the month. In addition, there are parent workshops held that explain and engage parents in understanding and applying the Common Core Learning Standards. One parent stated, “By attending these workshops we now have some ideas of how we can help our children at home by asking them to explain why they think something and have them use evidence to justify their thinking or opinion.”
- Teachers receive weekly newsletters aligned to the instructional focus and measures of teacher practice. A weekly and daily focus reminds staff of the instructional expectations, professional learning opportunities and other important events for that day or week. For example, in the weekly newsletter the principal scheduled time for the teachers in kindergarten through grade two to meet to discuss the changes on the new NYSESLAT exam as it relates to the school’s instructional focus of strengthening students’ verbal and written expression. Teachers were then required to submit a description of their findings and an action plan that included adjustments to their daily lesson plans.
- Across the vast majority of classrooms, students are required to peer and self- assess. Using this feedback, along with feedback from the teacher, students establish short-term goals. For example, in a first grade classroom a peer’s feedback stated, “Include one more detail”. The student’s self-assessment stated, “Add detail about cat” and the teacher’s feedback stated, “Add one fun detail.” The student stated his goal, “Include at least three details in my writing.”
- School leaders provide teachers with specific feedback aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The feedback provides leverage area(s) that have the greatest impact on increasing student outcomes. For example, feedback on one teacher’s observation stated, “Assist students in developing expressive language, provide sentence starters that students can use for different types of conversation. Refer to the attached sentence starter toolkit that provides sentence stems.”

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Instructional practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the school's philosophy about how students learn best. High quality supports and extensions, including multiple entry points for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs) to access curricula vary across classrooms.

Impact

Across classrooms, teaching practices support a variety of learners and most students including ELLs and SWDs engage in appropriately challenging tasks that deepen student understanding.

Supporting Evidence

- In four of the six classrooms visited, teachers provided multiple entry points and differentiated supports into the curricula. For example, in one first grade Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) classroom there were three groups of students; one group acted out parts of the book, another group worked in pairs and another group worked independently using a checklist and support charts. Additionally, there was a pressure vest, fidget toy and rocking chair available for students with varying needs.
- Across classrooms, charts posted provided examples, non-examples, explanations and models. This is consistent with the school's belief of how students learn best. These charts serve as artifact resources that students can use as tools to guide them in their learning as they build independence. For example, teachers provided students with a mnemonic device, R.A.C.E, to assist students in remembering the important elements to include when completing short answer questions. R.A.C.E reminds students to re-state the question asked, answer the question, cite evidence from text, and to explain and elaborate on the answer and evidence.
- The school believes that students learn best through collaborative learning and the use of modeling. In five of the six classrooms visited, the use of mini-lessons and collaborative discussions were evident.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The school aligns curricula to Common Core Learning Standards and offers students rich instructional programs that emphasize rigor and higher order thinking skills across grades and subject areas for a variety of learners.

Impact

Curricula decisions build coherence across grades. Students are provided with a rich instructional program and activities/tasks that emphasize rigor and skills that promote college and career readiness for all students including ELLs and SWDs.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers, with the support from Teachers College, have developed lessons that include a range of pre-planned questions, aligned to Hess' the Depth of Knowledge. This has increased the level of rigor within lessons and increased student achievement by 10% when comparing mid-year to baseline assessment results.
- Across the school, teachers have students engage in close reading cycles. Student work products in four out of seven classes demonstrated the use of the close reading strategy.
- Curricula are aligned to the common core standards and the instructional shifts as evidenced in the interdisciplinary English language arts (ELA) and mathematics curriculum maps. For example, the music teacher integrated Native American music to align the unit the classroom teacher was doing in social studies and English. In all classes, including music students were provided with a close reading rigorous text.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school uses common assessments, rubrics and grading policies aligned with curricula and Common Core Learning Standards. Common assessments are used to determine student progress.

Impact

The use of assessments and rubrics provide actionable feedback to students and teachers. Common assessments are used to monitor student progress and allow teachers to make adjustments to curricula and/or instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers provide “grows” and “glows” to support students in their learning. Feedback is specific and provides next learning steps to accelerate learning. For example, feedback provided stated, “Be sure to use the rubric or checklist to make sure your work contains all the required elements and meets or exceeds standards.” Additionally, one student was able to speak about how he uses the feedback by including two details, instead of one, explaining that is why he received a lower grade.
- Teachers’ make instructional adjustments to small group instruction based on running records and Go Math assessment results. This was evidenced in the re-grouping of students and the re-teaching of specific concepts not mastered.
- The use of common assessments ensures alignment to the common core and coherence in expectations for students within each grade. It allows teacher teams to collaboratively norm and scores student work. Teachers use results from the patterns and trends to revise lesson planning, adjust future assessments and share best practices. For example, a teacher whose students scored higher than other classes shared strategies such as annotating text key words, visualizing and drawing to teach cause and effect. Teachers targeted students that did not master this standard and provided a re-teach using the strategies shared.

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

Teachers engage in professional collaborations and support on-going refinement and alignment of curriculum. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for groups of students.

Impact

Teacher teams' work around curricula refinements and alignments has resulted in shared accountability for student success and instructional coherence across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly and use agendas and protocols to look at student work with the focus of improving student achievement in speaking and writing through the sharing of best teaching practices.
- Teachers continuously refine curricula, evaluate assessments and design instructional adjustments. For example, teachers noticed that struggling students had difficulty in remembering all required components for short and extended responses. Teachers implemented the use of mnemonic devices to assist students in remembering the key elements.
- In order to maximize the effectiveness of teacher team collaboration, the school's master schedule embedded an inquiry period for every grade. The impact of teams has demonstrated an increase in student performance in both ELA and mathematics, based on common benchmark assessments.
- Grade leaders received training in the use of agendas and instructional protocols. Teachers use these protocols to track progress for groups of students. For example, using an analysis protocol, teachers looked at data from a mathematics assessment and noticed students performing at level one and two had difficulty with selected questions. Teachers looked at those questions together on the Smartboard and developed strategies, such as highlighting key words and using a strategy cube and then reinstructed students. As a result, teachers noticed a 65% increase in answering questions with similar wording.