



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Tottenville School

Public School R001

**58 Summit Street
Staten Island
NY, 10307**

Principal: Grace Silberstein

**Date of review: November 6, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Anthony R. Lodico**

The School Context

The Tottenville School is an elementary school with 520 students from grade pre-k through grade five. The school population comprises 2% Black, 16% Hispanic, 81% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 95.3%.

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	Well Developed
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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Focus	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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across classrooms teachers consistently provide targeted support and multiple entry points that support the shared belief that all students learn best when they are fully engaged in rigorous writing, reading and speaking in all subjects and grades.

Impact

Teaching practices and pedagogical strategies employed across classrooms support learning for all students including English language learners and students with disabilities resulting in consistent opportunities for higher order thinking and rigorous student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- As part of the school's instructional focus and beliefs, teaching strategies promote productive struggle, discussion and the use of Socratic seminar to ensure consistent opportunities for higher levels of thinking and participation. Across classrooms students engage in close reading strategies fully immersed in interpreting text, citing textual evidence and drawing conclusions from texts. For example, in all classrooms students annotated text, were expected to use textual evidence to support answers and to build on each other's responses supporting accountable talk and higher order thinking.
- In a 5th grade ICT class, students were purposefully grouped and discussing a non-fiction article focusing on the author's purpose and opinion. As students engaged in group discussions they referred to textual evidence, annotated excerpts and notes. Student discussion focused on highlighting the author's choice of words and intended audience. Students worked collaboratively in groups as the teachers conferred and assisted when needed.
- During a 3rd grade mathematics lesson, students were observed reflecting on their understanding of using multiple strategies to solve word problems. Students worked collaboratively with a partner and were expected to share strategies, give positive feedback, ask questions, and suggest next steps. All students were engaged, demonstrating higher order thinking skills in process and work products.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for instruction and create opportunities for professional learning and support to faculty, students and families to support student progress towards college and career readiness.

Impact

The school's on-going effort to continually improve is resulting in professional learning and collaborative partnerships with parents and expectations that are preparing students for the next level connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- High expectations for teaching and learning are consistent and rooted in the observation process, coaching of teachers and the sharing of best practices. These expectations are aligned with the Danielson Framework and are evidenced in the highly effective practices that focus on domains 3b and 3c, effective questioning and meaningful engagement. Teachers state that inter-visitation, model classrooms and ongoing unit/task revision have been instrumental to improved instructional practice. For example, the ongoing analyzing of student work and results of benchmark tasks has resulted in the shifting of specific lessons and more purposeful grouping to meet individual student needs.
- Parents reported that through the school website, bulletins and individual conferences with teachers they are able to monitor their child's progress and are apprised of the learning targets and expectations for upcoming units. Furthermore, they said that teachers highlight specific resources that help them support their child's learning and growth.
- Parents shared that communication is a priority of the school community and are exploring ways to successfully partner with the school to further support students towards college and career readiness across grades and teachers. Parent workshops are also offered on selected Tuesdays to ensure parents have the resources to learn about CCLS aligned strategies and concepts embedded in the curriculum.
- Students stated that they are always pushed to think and that rubrics "guide" and "help" them understand what is expected for specific tasks and how it relates to their learning. Students described opportunities for self and peer assessment through teacher and peer conferring. Students described how goal setting at the beginning of units in mathematics, reading and writing are promoting student ownership and the expectation that they be able to articulate their next learning steps.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across grades and subjects, school leaders and teachers ensure that curricula are aligned to the shifts of the Common Core Learning Standards and emphasize higher order thinking for all students.

Impact

The school's thoughtful and strategic alignment of tasks to the CCLS results in embedded higher order thinking skills across grades creating instructional coherence and consistent opportunities for all students to demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers are committed to the ongoing review of unit maps, lessons and academic tasks. The instructional shifts are embedded across grades and subjects and include strategies to promote higher order thinking for all learners. For example, Socratic seminar and close reading are two consistent strategies evident in task and lesson development.
- Teachers engage in the ongoing work of reviewing and revising curriculum maps to ensure accessibility for all students, integrate the instructional shifts, revise and create rubrics and gauge the effectiveness of interim assessments. This results in the ongoing design and monitoring of multiple standardized criteria for success. In mathematics the infusion of a reteach assessment ensures that student progression on the mastery of concepts and skills is closely monitored and tracked.
- School leaders and teachers continually ensure that the Ready Gen and Math in Focus units of study are tailored to meet the needs of all students. The school continues to design their own units of study using Ready Gen materials to ensure the appropriate levels of rigor and productive struggle are evident in all units of study. For example, in grades K-2, a thematic based non-fiction unit of study is embedded in the ELA and social studies units.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Formative and summative assessments are used to determine groupings and curricula revisions, result in feedback to staff and students about students' progress towards learning goals informing strategic and timely instructional adjustments to curricula and instruction.

Impact

The use of assessment data informs adjustments to instruction and creates a culture where students know what they need to do to improve. Feedback contributes to an accurate snapshot of students' progress so that all students' demonstrate increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers utilize strategies to check for understanding including exit slips, student conferences and teacher note taking on student progress. Additionally, across classrooms the use of color coded self-assessment visual aids allows students to self-monitor progress and allows teachers and para-professionals to give support and assist students when needed. Also, students described being in the green as "being able to teach," and being in the red as "knowing how to use different resources in the classroom besides solely relying on the teacher." One student stated, "We are expected to become independent". Another student described herself as a "thinker."
- Formative common assessments are used as benchmarks to drive instructional planning, student supports and purposeful grouping. For example, in mathematics item skills analysis has driven strategic reteach strategies to target specific skills and specific students. This strategy has resulted in an increase in students reaching mastery on specific math skills as evidenced in both standardized and formative test data.
- Across classrooms teachers employed the use of formative assessments, rubrics and peer and self-reflection of students ensuring students are key players in the assessment and learning process. For example, students were observed tracking DOK levels of questions and discussion during a 5th grade class engaging in a Socratic seminar.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

All teachers are engaged in robust and collaborative inquiry teams and professional collaborations that have resulted in well-defined systems focusing on the examination of student work, curriculum mapping, academic tasks, and assessment data.

Impact

Strong collaboration and inquiry work at the school have resulted in teacher leadership, strengthened instructional capacity and improved teacher practice leading to elevated student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Inquiry work and teacher collaborations are strategically planned to ensure that there is a direct impact on improvement of teacher practice and ongoing assessment of curriculum maps, unit plans and academic tasks. Data analysis and student work review have been strengthened by the implementation of protocols and action planning.
- All grade levels consistently use protocol for looking at student work. ELA units of study, for example, are refined and adjusted to improve content writing and skills. Teachers state they collaboratively plan and refine curricula in order to emphasize the instructional shifts and strengthen the alignment with the Common Core.
- The work of the vertical and grade level inquiry teams result in action planning that determine next steps for teaching practice. For example as a result of vertical team teacher inquiry work, teachers described how the results of benchmark tests not only guide more strategic groupings for student success, but also guide the curricula revisions in at all grade levels. They described how the data analysis of a 4th grade ELA benchmark assessment led to curricula revisions in how 3rd grade teaches and assesses student proficiency in determining word meaning.