



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Myra Barnes

Middle School R024

**225 Cleveland Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10308**

Principal: Leonard Santamaria

**Date of Review; April 29, 2015
Reviewer: Darryl Alhadeff**

The School Context

Myra Barnes is an intermediate school with 1,371 students from grade 6 to grade 8. The school population comprises 1% Black, 11% Hispanic, 83% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 93.6%.

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	Additional Findings	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	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	Focus	Developing

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The principal consistently communicates professionalism and high expectations to the staff. The school offers opportunities to support parents' understanding of college and career readiness and provide feedback.

Impact

There is a system of accountability in place to hold staff responsible for school-wide expectations. Ongoing feedback to families results in increased student progress towards those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal describes “a culture shift in the building through the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teacher team meetings have become an example of professionalism. Now the topics discussed can range from rigor to student grouping.” At every faculty meeting, the staff focuses on one of the components. For example, on Election Day, the staff discussed 4E, which is growing and developing professionally. The principal feels that the Danielson Framework for Teaching allowed the school to begin intervisitations and has created a system of accountability in the school.
- The principal has focused on improving engagement in the classrooms. The entire school read the book, *Seven Habits*, in teacher teams. The staff has put practices in place to support the school. Teachers are in the hallway during class changes. In addition, they have learned to foster student engagement in the classrooms. The teachers report that they now discuss “how students can learn more effectively” at team meetings. Teachers report how a group of six or seven teachers meets with the principal to discuss adult learning. The staff has used inter-visitations as a tool to support their learning in this area.
- The principal reported that in fifth grade, the staff begins meeting with parents to support college and career readiness and are ongoing in grades six-eight. One parent commented on the strength of the college and career readiness program at the school by stating, “The school is constantly talking about college and preparing us for what lies ahead.” One parent stated, “Over 27% of the graduating students receive offers to attend specialized high schools due to the intense college readiness program at the school.” A series of parent workshops on the Common Core Learning Standards are incorporated in the college and career readiness program designed by the staff. The school provides constant feedback to parents on student progress. The weekly parent engagement time is used for meetings to discuss student issues and to give detailed feedback to parents. Parents report that changes were made by the principal since his arrival at IS 24. One parent said the school has helped their children become more creative and independent. All parents agreed that the work has become more challenging. The principal writes weekly newsletters that go home to parents. The parents reported that the principal has an open door policy and welcomes all parents into his office to discuss their children. One parent talked about the letters they receive from the principal about college readiness and has created a detailed parent handbook.

Area of Focus

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

The majority of teachers are in the process of developing inquiry-based, professional collaborations in teams to meet the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams analyze assessment data but have yet to develop ongoing structures to use student work effectively for targeted students.

Impact

Collaboration and inquiry are just beginning to take place across the school. Analyses of student data does not always result in improved teacher practice and increased student outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly to discuss implementing strategies and student behavior using protocols. A review of the meetings notes suggests teachers are discussing student anecdotes rather than adjusting specific instructional strategies to support student learning. For example, during one meeting, notes reflect teachers discussing next steps for a group of students on improving their behavior and for one student, the need for a written behavior plan.
- Although the school has structures in place to support teacher teams and each team has an appointed leader, the team observed continuously diverged from the agenda. The items on the agenda were: best practice versus behavior, rigor, and the Common Core Learning Standards. The discussion began when one teacher asked a question, "What did you use to group students?" A teacher responded, "We used test data." A teacher added, "I changed the structure." The conversation continued as honor students were brought up. Yet, the team diverged from the agenda to talk about September 2015 and wanting to know every student as a reader to begin the new school year. Finally, at the end of the meeting, the group began to discuss career and vocational planning. Student work and adjustments on student progress were not an observable part of the meeting.
- The social studies team observed discussed their reflection on an article and unit on World War 2 unit but had no student work or assessments to analyze. The agenda contained a variety of items: engagement, end of the year engagement, World War 2 comic engagement, video games and movies. The teachers discussed a creative writing piece, where each student created their own hero in historical context. They reported that the assignment was a "home run" because all students received a three or four. The group continued to discuss a group project they recently finished in social studies. The teachers reported that the students taught their own group lesson after doing research using text books, computers, and internet resources. One teacher said, "The students with disabilities pulled their strength being partnered with general education students."

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that the curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. The curricula and tasks are planned using student data.

Impact

Purposeful decisions about the curricula are made to build coherence and provide access towards academic engagement, to promote college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has worked on aligning the curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and is now in their fourth year of alignment. In literacy, the school is using Scholastic's Code X. The school has added teacher created thematic and non-fiction units to supplement the curricula. In addition they have added informational writing units to the curricula. The principal has purchased additional non-fiction text to support the units. In math the school is using Pearson's Connected Math Project 3 (CMP3). In science and social studies the school is using textbooks. The principal reported that the science curricula are aligned around the schools work with Urban Advantage and all its resources aligned with STEM and NYC field based studies.
- The curricula require students to cite text evidence when responding to a text. For example, in a seventh grade Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) lesson plan, the task included a study on the novel, *Inkheart*. The task asked students to read closely and to cite specific textual evidence to support conclusions from the text relative to English language arts (ELA) instructional shift 5. In math, the curricula provides task for students such as recognizing that a measure of a numerical data set summarizes all of its values with a single number, while a measure of variation describes how its values vary with a single number. In a sixth grade ICT lesson plan, the task requires students to find the medium, mode and outlier.
- Across the majority of lesson plans, tasks were modified to challenge English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. The staff has refined the Pearson units based on student data. In a seventh grade social studies lesson plan, the task included visual, auditory and tactile/kinesthetic activities for multiple learning styles to meet the needs of students. In addition, specific students were given graphic organizers to remember important historical information and required students to engage in heterogeneous groups. The principal reported that after analyzing the state math scores the staff needed to refine the algebra curriculum. The teachers did two separate revisions, one for the students taking the Regents and another for the children not taking the exam. Embedded in the units were tasks to support ELLs and students with disabilities.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teachers use common assessments, ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment to determine student progress on school goals.

Impact

Effective adjustments are made to revise curricula and instruction to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms teachers use ongoing assessments that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. For example, when visiting classrooms the students were using entrance and exit slips, rubrics and checklists. In an interview, one student discussed how the rubric helped him do better on his argument essay. He discussed how he kept writing and checking the rubric as he wrote the essay to improve the quality of it. Another student discussed being part of writing a rubric for a social studies project on the Texas Revolution. Other students brought examples of the rubrics and check lists they were using in class. In science, the school has created portfolios to be used by the students to self-assess their progress. Next year, the staff reported that they hope to use portfolios in other subject areas.
- The staff reported that they revised the math curricula using pre and post assessments and stated that they look at it as a "living document." The areas of revision were in fractions and algebra units. Teachers reported that at team meetings, they study the data and adjust the curricula. In math, the pre- assessments reflect that sixth graders need additional work with fractions, seventh graders need to work on models and eight graders need support with order of operations. The teachers revised the math units to support the students' needs. The units were revised to provide for all groups of students including implementing tasks when students finished their work early.
- The school has created benchmarks in math and reading at each grade level. Throughout the year, the benchmarks are used to form intervention groups in literacy and math and changes in instructional practices. Recent pre and post assessments in literacy identified areas of concern for sixth graders in inference while students in seventh and eighth grade needed support in other reading strategies. Revisions were made to lessons to support all learners.
- During the summer, the principal and staff members analyzed the ELA and math state test results for the school. Students were grouped depending on their need. Major areas of concern were fractions in math, and inferring in ELA. Throughout the year, cycles of intervention were developed, students are assessed for determining progress and new groups formed as needed.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teaching practices across classrooms are aligned to curricula and the Danielson Framework for Teaching to reflect a set of beliefs of how students learn best. Teachers consistently provide multiple entry points to support student subgroups with the curricula.

Impact

Across classrooms, core beliefs are evident in teaching practices resulting in work products reflecting higher-order thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- The school believes that students learn best by using the workshop model in all content areas. In the classrooms visited, the students were in small groups working on tasks during independent work time. In a sixth grade English class, the students were in groups working on the novel *Inkheart*. The students were asked to find evidence from the text. Students were working together on this task and had a choice of questions. In a sixth grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, the students were close reading using sections of a text. The teacher used multi-level questions for a variety of learners. One question was, “Based on what you have read in *Inkheart* so far, how would you describe the setting?” Another question was, “What might the characters unusual behavior indicate?”
- Station teaching was a teaching strategy used for grouping students across classrooms. For example, in a sixth grade math class, the lesson was to find the median, mean and outlier. Students were in four different stations with modified tasks. The students had to find the mean, median and outlier using height, heart rate, date of birth and create their own topic and collect data. For the students that finished early, there was an extension activity, which included Depth of Knowledge (DOK) level 3 and 4 questions such as, “In your own words define the outlier, median and mode of a data set?”, “How do you find and analyze the outlier, median and mode?”, and “By analyzing the data, how can you formulate a method for finding the outlier, median and mode of a data set?”
- The school believes that students learn best from each other through partnering and small group conversations. In most classes visited, the students were in small groups working together and conversing. For example, in a sixth grade English class, the students were partnered to do peer editing on their argument essays.