



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

William T. Davis

Elementary School R031

**55 Layton Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10301**

Principal: Linda Woolverton

**Date of review: May 20, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Anthony R. Lodico**

The School Context

William T. Davis is an elementary school with 467 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 51% Black, 40% Hispanic, 5% White, and 4% other. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 89.8%.

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	Developing
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	Developing
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	Developing
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	Additional Findings	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	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

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

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

Impact

Structured professional collaborations result in instructional coherence and increased student achievement for groups of learners. Teacher teamwork results in improvements in teacher practice and mastery of goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- During a teacher team meeting, the participants shared a recent agenda for grade 3. The agenda included the yearlong overarching concentration to focus on improving instructional practices, specifically word problems, using the newly purchased GO Math! program. Teachers used a school-wide student work protocol that reviewed an end of unit GO Math! performance task. They analyzed the task using a task sheet, the Common Core Learning Standards and the rubric provided by the program. They discussed the strengths, challenges and next steps and memorialized the discussion for future reference.
- Teachers have opportunities to self-affiliate with colleagues in professional reading groups. School leaders brainstormed with teachers on professional book titles that would meet the needs of the learning community. The books purchased were on a variety of topics that the teachers could read with their colleagues. Among their selections, they chose *Teach Like a Champion* by Doug Lemov. The teacher book club members meet to discuss the chapters and their relevance to their own classroom settings. Teachers take turns facilitating the professional development meetings. They display the different books on a bulletin board for all adult learners to see the learning prospects that are available.
- School leaders, in collaboration with the teachers, created a vertical team. This team is comprised of a representative from each grade and these teachers meet twice a month with the administration. The team is an outgrowth of a needs assessment. The assessment determined that the effectiveness of the grade level teams needed improvement and the creation of this team would serve as a model. Since the creation of the vertical team, the grade level teams are more efficient and effective. The vertical team acts as the catalyst and model for the other teams to emulate. Teachers on the vertical team take on leadership roles within the school and assist in facilitation of grade level meetings.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best as informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

Across classrooms, inconsistent instructional practices and tasks that are not metacognitively challenging result in the loss of instructional opportunities for all students, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. The inconsistent practices yield work products that are not always engaging or meaningful.

Supporting Evidence

- The rigor of teacher questioning was inconsistent across classrooms. While the questions asked of students were intended to promote student thinking, most questions observed were level 1 on Webb's Depth of Knowledge, which are recall in nature. Some recorded examples include "Some animals eat what?", "Apples and oranges are examples of what?" and "Why did he do that?"
- Scaffolds for students with disabilities and ELLs, including graphic organizers, working with manipulatives, and adapted word problems were evident in some classrooms. However, limited student-to-student discussions and a few student collaborative activities were observed in only three of the nine classrooms visited. The only discussion strategy seen was 'turn and talk.'
- Learning tasks and activities were partially aligned with the instructional outcomes. However, most learning tasks only required recall to complete. In a grade 2 Integrated Co-Teaching math class, students were engaged in a lesson on fractions. During this lesson, the teachers gave the children paper to fold into thirds to create their own fractional pieces. The lesson objective was for students to solve word problems involving wholes divided by equal shares by using the strategy of drawing a diagram. There was a clear disconnect between the teachers' learning activity with the students and the lesson's objective.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

School leaders and faculty are beginning to align curricula to Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher order skills are not yet embedded so that academic tasks inconsistently ensure refined student work and data.

Impact

Common Core aligned curricula, which integrate the instructional shifts, are inconsistently applied to support the learning needs of all students. Diverse learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, have limited access to the curricula and tasks that are cognitively challenging.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams are reviewing and revising the English language arts (ELA), math and writing curriculum maps with a specific focus on pre-assessments of students in order for the teachers to make informed pedagogical decisions. Teacher teams meet regularly with administration to analyze the student outcomes but this practice is not seen across all grade level teams.
- The school recently purchased *Being a Writer* from the Center for the Collaborative Classroom. They selected this curriculum because the teachers and administration realized the need for a coherent, cohesive and structured program with daily plans. The writing program was observed in two classrooms where the lesson plans were strictly followed as written in the teacher's edition. However, the students' work products yielded writing that did not meet the kindergarten Common Core Standards for writing. For example, 14 out of the 21 students rewrote the sentences that the teacher had placed on the mini-lesson chart paper, but they did not attempt to create their own original writing.
- The school purchased GO Math! as their new math program. School leaders stated that teachers review the alignment information provided by the publishers of the programs and add additional instructional materials and resources as needed to cover the grade level standards effectively. It was observed that further refinement to the pre-written curriculum map is necessary to support student success in meeting the demands of the Common Core Learning Standards. The learning objective in a second grade math lesson was to make equal groups and write the number of groups formed. The teacher modeled for the students the 'cross out' method. Almost all students were able to complete the independent activity. However, the lesson's objective was similar to the prior day's lesson and provided little opportunity for new learning.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teacher teams analyze student data to create assessments, rubrics and checklists that are loosely aligned with the school's curricula. Teachers use common assessments to determine and adjust curricula to ensure student progress toward goals.

Impact

The loosely aligned school-wide assessments provide limited actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. The school's adjustments to curricula and instruction at the teacher team and classroom levels help meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers in pre-kindergarten through grade 5 use rubrics based on the Common Core Learning Standards. They focus on writing skills production, writing distribution and conventions of standard English as per the school-created rubric that is based directly on the yearlong progression of the Common Core writing standards. Teachers assess student work and determine next instructional steps based on the rubric. Teacher inquiry teams analyze student writing during team meetings to address possible adjustments to curriculum and instruction.
- In most classrooms visited, few teachers conferenced with students and noted their answers. In one grade 3 ELA class, students sat facing one another in a circle around a rug and passed around a beach ball while discussing the question, "Was Tinkerbell a heroine or villain?" The teacher sat at a table on the outside of the group circle and took notes as students responded. However, this practice is not yet evident across all classrooms.
- Students stated that they inconsistently use rubrics to guide their work or receive supportive verbal and written feedback for their next steps. Some students could identify a skill or rubric trait they were trying to improve. However, when asked about their next steps, the students' responses were general in nature. For example, a child stated, "I need to improve my work." Some students were not always aware of how to get to the next level. This inconsistency was evident while reviewing the teacher feedback on student work posted on bulletin boards and in notebooks and student portfolios.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently emphasize a culture of learning that communicates high expectations, provide training and have a system of accountability for those expectations. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness and successfully partner with parents to support student progress.

Impact

High expectations result in a culture of collaboration and buy-in on the part of teachers, leaders, and families, which creates an atmosphere conducive to the developmental needs of students. The successful partnering with families supports student learning, their social-emotional growth and progress and ownership of their own learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams created progress reports to consistently communicate high expectations to parents about their child’s individual progress. Monthly reports are sent home to advise parents on how well their child is performing based on grade level expectations. School leaders shared that parents are encouraged to contact the teacher for additional information or resources to assist their child in meeting the standards.
- Parents shared that the school has an “open-door” policy this year. This policy is an initiative begun by the new principal and did not exist previously. The purpose of the policy is to be transparent to the school community and develop partnerships with parents. Parents stated that they may visit any time of day and visit their child in a variety of classrooms without an appointment or guide.
- Through a needs assessment the school found that parents wanted more information on how to assist their child at home. The school created a “Reading Connections” newsletter for parents. This monthly publication includes helpful strategies for students to develop reading skills during everyday activities. It provides practical ideas that parents can implement to support what their children are learning in school. A parent shared that the school furnishes parents with login information for reading and math programs and various computer applications that they can access from their home.