



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Charles W. Leng

Elementary R054

**1060 Willowbrook Road
Staten Island
NY 10314**

Principal: Karen Catanzaro-LaRosa

**Date of review: January 7, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Roxan Marks**

The School Context

The Charles W. Leng is an elementary school with 790 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 4% Black, 26% Hispanic, 36% White, and 32% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.4%.

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	Additional Findings	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.	Celebration	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

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

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in structured teamwork on grade and cross grade teams to increase teacher capacity to promote the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards, revise curricula and pedagogy, analyze student work, and create common assessments. Teachers participate in inter-visitations and instructional rounds to improve their practice and share effective strategies.

Impact

Participation in teacher teams has resulted in increased instructional coherence, shared improvements in pedagogy, student achievement and mastery of goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teams of teachers continually collaborate to ensure support and advancement of school and student goals. The instructional focus is raising the level of rigor through highly effective teaching and an emphasis of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Teachers analyzed student solutions to solve word problems making a variety of arrays and changing the way they group numbers to find the product. The team also discussed utilizing UDL to make the standard more accessible for students. A review of agendas indicates that teams spent months working to ensure UDL strategies are integrated in units, lessons, assessment analysis, and curriculum adaptation. Teachers used a school-created template to document the strengths and next steps and providing instructional strategies to peers, to help students better understand and master concepts.
- The work of teacher teams has led to coherence of instruction across grades as teams work closely to make explicit Common Core and preparing students for college and beyond. Grade teams work to ensure tasks are differentiated, using media, visualization, graphic organizers and other access points. Teachers collaborate to make real-life connections using “how to be successful” to outline clear expectations. In a lesson plan the aim to ask and answer key details in a text while recognizing multiple meaning words, students provided the statement “you will be successful if you are able to recognize multiple meaning words”. During interviews, students spoke about consistent use of “you will be successful” prompts and how it supports them in the expectation for learning.
- Teams collaborate making adjustments in curricula based on student data, work products and teacher reflections regarding success and challenges uncovered during lessons. They work to strategically embed aspects of Teacher’s College writing component in the existing language arts program integrating writing. Teachers refined the ReadyGen narrative writing rubric and shared this information through the vertical team to get collegial feedback.
- Teachers participate in instructional rounds to strengthen their capacity, share effective techniques and focus looking for UDL strategies. Teachers use the Danielson Framework focusing on planning and preparation, designing coherent curriculum and engaging students in learning as a lens when visiting other’s classrooms. Teachers stated that these structured visits have helped them to fine tune their own practice and use strategies learned for colleagues in their own classrooms.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Classroom instruction and teaching practices are aligned to school beliefs and the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The school instructional focus on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) was evident in instruction ensuring all learners had access to higher order tasks.

Impact

Teachers participate in instructional rounds to increase their pedagogy aligned to Danielson Framework for Teaching, school beliefs and instructional shifts so that all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- During observation of a 5th grade classroom, students were involved in a ReadyGen lesson making inferences using nonfiction materials to cite specific evidence in text. The teacher reminded students to use the strategy Re-phrase, Answer, Details and Voice (RADV) when crafting their responses. Students indicated that they were sitting with students that represented their reading group. The teacher ensured that higher-level readers had an extended response designed to challenge their thinking. In this classroom choice was offered to students to work independently or with a partner. Yet choice was not consistently seen across all classrooms visited.
- In a 3rd grade math lesson students used multiplication and division to solve a word problem linked to a real-world situation. Students referred to the math group chart posted in room and each group decided what kind of manipulatives to use, some selected unifix cubes and others opted for counting tiles. The teacher provided direct support to two groups by reading the problem aloud and reminding them of the steps for problem solving.
- During classroom visits, teachers were very cognizant about using various UDL strategies during instruction and evidence was also found in planning document. Teachers customized information presented, provided visual adjustments of printed materials including various types of graphic organizers, teacher clarified vocabulary, and illustrated concepts using multimedia.
- In an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom the students were finding the gist of a nonfiction text entitled "The History of Gum". Students were reminded to use the charts in the room for support and the teacher provided concrete examples of vocabulary words from the text as well as photographs to help develop prior knowledge. The teacher read aloud the passage and used strategic pauses during sections to ask questions to ensure comprehension while asking targeted questions to assist students in using context clues and root words to decipher the meaning on unknown words.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school leaders and faculty ensure curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards incorporating the shifts. School leaders and staff have made purposeful adjustments to academic assignments to ensure Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies provide access for all learners.

Impact

The school leaders and faculty build curricular coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students. Teachers plan and refine tasks to provide access for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses Go Math program in all grades and supplements instruction using Exemplars program. The work of school leaders and teachers in mathematics using Exemplar task is likely attributed to the increase in the number of students meeting state standards, based on New York State 2014 mathematics test whereby 65% of the students are meeting standards, representing an increase of 27% in level 3 and 4 of all tested students. There is a strong focus in math on multistep problems through the use of Exemplars resource and teacher maintain a list of strategy charts and problems are maintained in classrooms to support students. The school has embedded UDL principles into math to ensure access for all students. However UDL strategies are not fully integrated in English language arts, science and social studies.
- The school schedule includes a daily 45 minutes block of time targeted for independent and guided reading including conferencing. Teachers have refined lessons in writing to include UDL strategies. Using the book entitled Rigor Made Easy: Getting Started, teachers have increased the level of questioning to reflect complex cognitive demands and promote higher-order thinking activities and discussion across classrooms. For example, lessons have tasks for students to annotate text to better understand the content and use text to locate evidence to answer prompts.
- Unit plans include essential understandings, goals are listed for module and the Common Core Learning Standards that are addressed in the unit. ReadyGen unit plans included questions with the Depth of Knowledge level listed for lessons, anchor texts and essential vocabulary students need to know. ReadyGen unit plans also included turn and talk sections with focus questions to encourage discourse. Unit plans also contained a section for differentiated activities for English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities and three levels of activities for working with varying level of students in group activities.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use assessment data and rubrics to monitor student progress. Across classrooms exit tickets are consistently used as ongoing checks for understanding.

Impact

The school provides actionable feedback to students with clear next steps. Teachers make adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses Teachers College Assessments to collect reading data in October, December, March and June. This data is used to inform guided reading groups and monitor progress for the students in the lowest third. ThinkCentral portal is used to store student data and provides reports for teachers to inform their instructional decisions and parents also have access to this information. Performance based assessments (PBAs) are administered for English language arts and shared with school leaders who provide written feedback to every teacher including a summary chart indicating the number of students in each performance level and teacher goals for the next PBA. Teachers use this feedback to inform lessons and instructional groups in classrooms.
- In a third grade math lesson students worked on an Exemplar problem that required the application of multiplication and division within 100 involving equal groups. A student self-assessed using the problem-solving rubric and this was evident across math classrooms. Additionally, the teacher tracked student performance while circulating and examining student's work products, using a spreadsheet specifically created for the lesson to assess progress. Most teachers used similar tracking sheets to note student progress, using this data to inform instruction and curricula.
- Teachers create checklists to assess learning and mastery of teaching points. For example, in a third grade class the teacher was using a checklist to examine student work and recording data on the progress of students toward meeting the outcomes of the lesson. Teachers also use conference notes to arrange flexible and strategy groups for lessons. The independent reading conference form includes strengths, a focus that covers fluency, inferring, retelling, connections, comprehension and visualizing and future teaching point for the student. During interviews with students many stated that they frequently worked in groups, and use rubrics and checklist regularly.
- Across classrooms teachers create and modify rubrics to ensure they are child friendly and aligned to state learning standards. They use Exemplars program for multi-step problem solving in math. Exemplars Jigsaw Student Rubric assesses problem solving, reasoning/proof, communication, connections and presentation. Teachers use these rubrics, indicating specific actionable feedback to students with clearly defined next steps and marking the appropriate level from novice, apprentice, practitioner or expert.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

High expectations are continuously messaged to teachers through the Danielson Framework for Teaching. School leaders and teachers partner with families to provide ongoing feedback regarding progress towards the expectations of Common Core Learning Standards.

Impact

The schools' culture of mutual accountability and professional learning results in students being supported academically leading to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses the Leader in Me process to develop staff and student leadership skills and abilities. The Leader in Me incorporates strategies and tools to build a common language across the school integrating in the school culture. Students establish meaningful goals, maintain positive relations with peers and develop students' self-confidence, leadership abilities and preparing for college and careers. Across classrooms visited visual evidence of the Leader in Me initiative included student generated lists showing student reflection about the application of these habits into their lives and academic implications. Progress reports also include feedback to families about work habits. Throughout the year the school focuses on each habit to deepen understanding and continuously recognizes students who display these leadership behaviors. Students also work in partnership with Staten Island Technical High School students to create and program robots. Students shared positive feedback and were able to talk about aspirations for attending college and the importance of perseverance and problem solving that they learned through their experience with the robotics project.
- School leaders communicate high expectations for professionalism and instruction through the staff handbook, letters, daily news and professional learning opportunities. The instructional focus is to raise the level of rigor in all academic areas through highly effective teaching practices aligned to Danielson's 3c, engaging students in learning. Clear expectations and guidelines were communicated about the year's focus and incorporate prior feedback. These focus areas were collaboratively developed with all constituents, especially parents and contains specific and measurable goals that are intended to impact student achievement. To fortify the professional learning plan the school integrates UDL to ensure accessibility for all students.
- Teachers participate in learning walks to view and discuss effective practices in classrooms that are aligned to the schools' instructional focus. After attending a workshop or seminar, teachers use the Professional Development Tracking form to document sessions and this information is used by school leaders to ensure turn-key of professional learning activities. Teachers reflect and identify a specific goal or focus for the year and in partnership with school leaders work in collaboration with teachers to establish additional goals based on observational data. School leaders use a Post Observation Actionable Feedback Support form which incorporates commendable aspects related to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, next steps and includes professional development follow up.
- Information about student progress and curricula is communicated home via email, backpack, and phone. Parents appreciate that an online program makes homework accessible. Also, they indicated that teachers know their children and give specific, targeted feedback about next learning steps.