



Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Future Leaders Elementary School

Elementary School R074

**211 Daniel Low Terrace
Staten Island
NY 10301**

Principal: Nicole Reid Christopher

**Date of review: March 11, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Anthony R. Lodico**

The School Context

Future Leaders is an elementary school with 313 students from pre-k through grade five. The school population comprises 24% Black, 63% Hispanic, 6% White, 6% Asian and 1% other students. The student body includes 27% English language learners and 14% 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 91.7%.

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	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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

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

Teachers engage in inquiry-based structured professional collaborations that promote the achievement of the school's goals and the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams work in structures that consistently analyze assessment data and student work for targeted students.

Impact

The structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations results in strengthened teacher practice and increased student achievement for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The Professional Development (PD) Team consisting of teachers, paraprofessionals, grade leader liaisons and supervisors meet to discuss the professional development needs of the staff. For example, in the fall 2014, a Google document needs assessment titled "The Teacher Professional Learning Survey", was sent to all staff. The assortment of questions allowed the PD Team to review the data and create differentiated professional learning opportunities for staff members. A review of the responses demonstrated a need for a professional cycle. As a result a five -week PD cycle focusing on engaging students in small group instruction was provided. Teachers participated in workshops around data analysis, deepening the understanding of reading level characteristics and giving student feedback.
- School leaders shared their updated memorandum on the variety of leadership roles that teachers are afforded. These distributed leadership opportunities include Response to Intervention/Leader in Focus, Book of the Month Coordinator, Building Response Team and Lighthouse Team. Each teacher team has a coordinator and committee members meet regularly depending on the purpose, need or coordination. The teams are charged with sharing their decision making with colleagues and administration. Monthly Guest Readers, College and Career Days and the annual Leadership Day Celebration are the result of the works of the various school leaders.
- Teachers participate in data days led by a teacher leader. Along with the data specialist, teachers highlight a particular piece of data and collaboratively make curriculum or instructional decisions grounded in student data. Minutes or notes are shared with all teachers so that there is communication and transparency across all grades and clusters. Teachers shared a recent visit to another school through their Network that focused on ESL students. The visit was turn-keyed to colleagues and a shift from phonics/word study was initiated. Teachers shared that the phonics focus has begun to show progress in some students' running records.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Pedagogy across classrooms reflects a common set of beliefs about how students learn best and incorporates the instructional shifts. Across most classrooms there are high levels of student thinking, engagement and participation as demonstrated in student work products.

Impact

Teaching practices focus on student engagement and accountability in learning for all students. However, in some classrooms, there are as yet not sufficiently embedded opportunities for student ownership and extensions for deeper learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers utilize strategies to integrate multiple entry points into lessons, enhanced the students' ability to access higher-level learning tasks, and to support their ability to actively participate and make their thinking visible. Teachers used graphic organizers, discussion stems and/or partnered or group conversations. In a general education third grade classroom in literacy, students interacted with the text, "Hide or Fight." Students predicted what they were going to read about in a 'turn and talk' activity. Upon the completion of the discussion activity, students were called upon to share their peer conversation with the class. Students employed accountable talk stems in their conversations. For example, one student stated, "I want to add on" in a 1:1 conversation with another student.
- Teaching strategies across classrooms included small group instruction, self-assessments, tiered activities and higher-level questioning. Teachers shared that a school-wide goal is to focus on strategies that increased student engagement. Particularly, planning engagement into their lessons. For example, in a fourth grade ELA general education classroom the learning target was "I can access a complex text by "closely reading" to analyze how the character's actions, feelings, relationships and dialogue influence the theme of the text. The students participated in a 'think, pair, and share' activity in which they were expected to respond to the questions: *Do you think Rachel's feelings have changed from the beginning of the text until the end? Why or why not? Is there text evidence to support your answer?* Yet, there were infrequent opportunities for students to develop their own questions to allow for more expanded ownership of their learning.
- Some student work products and discussions reflect appropriately high levels of thinking. Teachers posed questions designed to promote student thinking and understanding. Across classrooms, students were given opportunities to respond to questions on Levels 2 and 3 on Webb's Depth of Knowledge. Some questions posed that students were expected to write to were: At the end of the story, Rachel says that "everybody will sing Happy Birthday...only it's too late. What is "too late?" What can you infer about Rachel and about how the situation has affected her? Students had to score their written response using the rubric provided.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data so that tasks provide access for a diversity of learners.

Impact

The School makes purposeful decisions to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for students. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data, so that all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, have access and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leaders have created a Go Math Pacing Guide. The guide provides mathematical critical areas, number of instructional days, assessment dates and benchmark dates serving as an overview for planning, making curriculum adjustments and a tool for vertical alignment. The kindergarten guide provides project based assessment titles that are to be completed by the students. A copy of the Assessment Class Profile for a kindergarten class indicated that most students were either meeting the math standards or were approaching the math standards.
- Curriculum and academic tasks are refined and updated through the use of student work protocols. Teacher inquiry teams meet to modify curricula and design multiple entry points for English language learners and students with disabilities. For example, teachers created self-assessment rubrics for students to use to check their own work, score their own work and critically share their findings with their teachers. In a 12:1:1 class with students in fourth and fifth grade, students had a rubric posted to assist in their assessment of the fraction lesson.
- Teachers along with school leaders created a yearlong curriculum overview for grades kindergarten through fifth grade. The overview delineates reading, writing, social studies, science and math. In a quick glance across all these disciplines, the themes, genres and content focus can be seen. Teachers can plan cross-curricular tasks, pace their planning and make adjustments to the curriculum from their own lesson reflection using the overview. Each teacher can look at the map vertically and see the curriculum expectations for the grade above or below. This was seen in the Second Grade Yearlong Curriculum Map. The map indicates the time frame (February 9-March 27), modules (fiction/non-fiction), writing genre and content areas.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across grades and subjects, ongoing checks for understanding, actionable feedback and student self-assessment focuses on advancement of learning for students. Assessment data, checklists, teachers' conference notes and peer discussions determine student mastery and purposeful grouping of students.

Impact

The use of assessments and ongoing collection of formative and summative data across classrooms allows for clear understanding of student progress. The necessary instructional and curricula adjustments resulted in increased performance for the majority of learners.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders provide teachers with an assessment calendar for the school year to aid in planning and tracking student progress. Student data is analyzed and verified by the data specialist. Grade level teams meet to discuss the data points and its relevance to the instructional shifts necessary to have students meet the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). For example, teachers recently did a curriculum review of the assessments used in a math unit focusing on addition and subtraction of three digit numbers. A deeper review of the assessment revealed that students were not fluent in subtraction with two digit numbers. Assessment changes were then made by the teacher team.
- The school is using common assessments to provide a picture of how students are progressing toward goals. For instance, teachers shared that the school is using a DRA iPad app to assess students in determining their reading benchmark. The students were assessed for their comprehension, word analysis and a running record was kept. The data gathered was then tracked across the class, grade and school. Teachers shared that the assessment results assisted in the formation of groups, level of reading books as well as the instructional materials utilized in the classroom. The assessment data provided by the school leader indicates that students are showing progress on their reading levels.
- Teachers have been creating a wide variety of assessments that focus on student learning. Tools, such as conference notes, checklists, and exit tickets, are utilized to assess students. Across most classrooms it was noted that rubrics, checklists and other resources like the 'Fist to Five' protocol, and self-assessments are in place. For example, in a second grade during independent reading, a teacher was conferencing with individual students. During her conference, she was asking questions, guiding the student's responses and taking reading conference notes. In reviewing conference notes across classrooms, it was evident that teachers are meeting with students.

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, and provide training for all members of the learning community. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

High expectations result in a culture of collaboration and accountability for teachers, leaders, and families, which creates an atmosphere conducive to the developmental needs of students. School leaders successively partner with families to help them understand and support student learning, social-emotional growth, progress and ownership of learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers facilitated a minimum of five parent workshops across the school year during the Tuesday Parent Engagement Block. Teachers created the schedule, topic of focus and selected presenters to share the information. Each grade facilitated five parent workshops across the school year connected to a path for college and career readiness. Some of the workshops that were offered to parents included Common Core Learning Standards Expectations, Speech and Language Enhancements and Curriculum Policies.
- The school leader meets frequently with parents. Each month parents are given the opportunity to participate in “Coffee Chats with the Principal.” Parents are invited to the school to discuss concerns, issues, give feedback on school initiatives and celebrations with the school leaders. For example, during the parent meeting, the parents stated that they have attended the principal get-togethers and approximately 15 parents were in attendance. The parents also have an opportunity to view classroom instruction during ‘open access’ time.
- The school leader shared that a focus this year was to reduce the number of behavioral incidents. The Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) was introduced to all faculty members. This PBIS Team takes the lead on reviewing school incidents. They are charged with creating an incident reduction plan, collecting data that yields school-wide decision-making and incorporating *The Leader in Me* leadership theme into their daily experience. The team monitored their progress by reviewing the Online Occurrence Reporting System. A small decrease of student initiated incidents was noted by the school leaders.