



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Stapleton Lighthouse Community School

Elementary School R078

**100 Tompkins Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10304**

Principal: Louis Bruschi

**Date of review: December 12, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Jessica Jenkins**

The School Context

Public School 78 is an elementary school with 672 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 4. The school population comprises 42% Black, 49% Hispanic, 5% White, 1% Asian and 3% other students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92.4%.

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	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	Developing
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

Teachers regularly collaborate in structured team meetings focused on the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Leadership structures provide a means for teachers to have input on key decisions about curricula and teaching practices.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has resulted in strengthened instructional capacity. Shared leadership structures build capacity to improve student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- A select group of highly respected teacher leaders participate in the teacher leadership program and have gained facilitative leadership strategies to effectively lead teacher teams in protocols to look at and analyze student work, conduct peer inter-visitations, and execute the school's instructional focus. This was evidenced through the team meeting and embedded in the school's professional development plan.
- A variety of teacher teams including grade leaders, parent engagement team, data inquiry team, and a vertical planning team provide teachers with the opportunity to provide critical input on key decisions that advance student learning. For example, a vertical math team convenes and regularly uses the Atlas Learning Protocol to uncover gaps across grades, resulting in modification to unit plans and curriculum maps.
- A review of team leader agendas provides evidence of collaboratively developed teacher-created goal setting sheets for students include next steps and how the student will attain those next steps to formalize feedback to students. These goals are derived from performance based assessments as well as end of unit assessments.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula, and are beginning to reflect coherence with this set of beliefs. Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula, and student work products and discussion reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

A lack of coherence in teaching practices and aligned to the curricula hinders student growth towards learning goals. Inconsistency in teacher practice leads to uneven engagement in appropriately challenging tasks and discussions, and uneven demonstration of higher-order thinking skills in student work products, including the work of English language learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's instructional focus to increase student engagement through discussion techniques to promote critical thinking was evident in three of the nine classrooms visited. In one classroom, student engaged in a carousel protocol to compare and contrast themes across texts. As students rotated among stations, they answered such questions as, "How do the authors use text structure to communicate ideas?" and "Identify two examples of descriptive language and explain how it contributed to your understanding of the topic." However, in several classrooms visited, teacher-dominated instruction limited student ownership of learning and failed to provide multiple entry points for high-achieving students, students with disabilities, and English language learners. For example, in one integrated co-teaching class, students worked in pairs to apply place value concepts using the break-apart strategy. However, several students had already mastered this concept as evidenced by their work, while others worked directly with the teacher who asked closed-ended questions, limiting student-student dialogue and deeper conceptual understanding.
- In a third grade math classroom, students used arrays to model multiplication and find factors. During the mini lesson, it was evident through student work samples that a majority of students were ready to move into work time or had mastered the learning target. Failure to plan for multiple entry points resulted in limited student engagement for both students with disabilities and higher-achieving students in the classroom.
- In a science class, students worked collaboratively to uncover if the label on a soda can reflects of the volume of the liquid or the capacity of the can. While the teacher provided students with the opportunity to engage in real-world problem solving, there was limited evidence of planning for multiple entry points. At least half of the class hadn't filled in the graphic organize. Furthermore, the pacing of the lesson did not allow for a closing or reflection, limiting the teacher's ability to assess knowledge gained or gaps to address in the following lesson.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty collaborate to align curricula with the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are refined using student work and data.

Impact

Curricula development and revision advances curricular coherence, and curricula refinement promotes access to the curricula for all learners, including students with disabilities and English language learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The school utilizes Google Apps for Education to upload and share unit plans and curriculum maps. Refinements made during grade level meetings are summarized here and accessible by all staff, capturing the school's intense work focused on integration of the instructional shifts across subjects, a deeper understanding of the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards, and curricular coherence.
- A sample unit of study in Kindergarten includes the reading and writing standards, anchor and supporting texts, the performance-based assessment, as well as suggestions for formative assessment strategies. This three-week unit on home explores texts such as *Make Way for Ducklings* and *A House for Hermit Crab*. Students then chose one animal from either story to write and narrate a single event from the story tied to the concept of "home". Providing choice for students in how they retold this event addressed the varying entry points of all learners.
- A fourth grade unit of study on becoming researchers includes a comprehensive list of anchor and supporting texts spanning Lexile levels to support both students with disabilities and English language learners in reading informational texts. Students were provided with the opportunity to show what they know through a short investigative project on a scientist who has made a difference in society as well as through a speech.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations regarding elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching as well as the importance of the school's instructional focus, and are developing consistent professional development supports and a system of accountability for teachers. The school is implementing systems to provide feedback to families regarding student progress toward meeting grade level expectations.

Impact

Teachers are beginning to share an awareness of the school's instructional focus, and structures are developing to provide feedback to families and guidance supports to students regarding student progress toward meeting grade-level expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders consistently communicate high expectations through daily email bulletins as well as a staff handbook, which has been revised to include a classroom environment section highlighting school-wide expectations conducive to active teaching and learning. Non-negotiables include the flow of the day, a class mission statement developed by class through the Leader in Me program, a meeting area, and math and writing centers. The staff collaborated and agreed upon these school-wide non-negotiables in an effort to promote consistency across classrooms.
- School leaders are beginning to embed the school's instructional focus in professional development offerings. For example, a network math coach meets monthly with math teachers to engage in deepening student engagement and discussion in math classrooms. However, the professional development plan does not yet include differentiated opportunities for teachers to examine and grapple with in depth strategies to promote student discussion and critical thinking across grades and subjects.
- Parents articulated that staff members genuinely care about the welfare of their child and that parents can utilize the community coordinator, one-on-one conferences with teachers during parent engagement time, and the principal's weekly notes to ensure open communication. However, the school is in the developing stages of providing families with consistent feedback on their child's progress toward mastery of the Common Core Learning Standards. Parents indicated that this type of feedback and additional learning resources would enhance their child's educational experience and connect student learning with a path to college and career readiness.

Findings

The school uses summative and formative assessment strategies in all subject areas. However, they are inconsistently used to adjust instruction, and provide limited feedback to students as evidenced by the majority of the classrooms visited.

Impact

Limited feedback to students at the classroom level reflects an inconsistent use of ongoing checks for understanding, student self-assessment and teacher adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- In some classrooms visited, there was evidence of a formative assessment strategy. Students self-assessed using color-coded cards indicating their level of understanding of the concept taught. Each card allowed students to communicate whether they could complete the task with help and understood most parts, whether or not they could do the task independently without help, or if they were a master at the concept and could teach others. This is a strategy in the developmental phase; given student self-assessment was only evident in two of the classrooms visited.
- Goal setting sheets, based on performance based assessment and end of unit exam outcomes are in the beginning stages of implementation. Goal setting sheets include the standard rewritten in student-friendly "I can" statements, the date the goal was started, strategies for the student to identify in accomplishing this goal, a follow-up date and whether the student has mastered the target. Inconsistent implementation across classrooms limits feedback to students and adjustments to instruction based on assessment data. In one math lesson observed, the teacher indicated that he was working with a small group of students on skill development. However, several of the students in his group had already mastered the target. Additionally, several goal sheets named a goal connected to determining main idea, yet there was no plan for these students to attain this goal despite follow up dates specified on the tracking sheet.
- In some classrooms visited, teachers were observed adjusting instruction to meet the needs of a variety of learners. For example, during a Socratic Seminar in an Integrated Co-Teaching classroom, both teachers monitored for understanding through copious low-inference note-taking, interjecting where appropriate to bring the students back to the guiding question. However, in other classrooms, limited monitoring of student learning resulted in uneven support for students, especially those students who had already mastered the learning targets. For example, in a second grade self-contained special education classroom during a lesson on addition using word problems, it was evident that assessment data had not been used to carefully plan the learning experience. A series of rapid-fire questions resulted in limited student understanding of the concept and uneven engagement. Furthermore, a significant amount of time was spent with students sharing out how they solved the problem while several students simultaneously continued working or became disengaged with the task.