



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Milton Fein School

Elementary School X007

**3201 Kingsbridge Avenue
Bronx
NY 10463**

Principal: Frank Patterson

**Date of review: February 12, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Matthew Angell**

The School Context

Milton Fein School is an elementary school with 725 students from grade kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 7% Black, 76% Hispanic, 10% White, 6% Asian students, and 1% American Indian. The student body includes 21% English language learners and 5% 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 95.8%.

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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Additional Findings	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across grades and content areas, curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Curricula refinements based on student data have resulted in school-wide coherence and promote college and career readiness. All students have access to curricula and tasks that are cognitively engaging.

Supporting Evidence

- All grade teams have scheduled weekly common planning time to monitor and review student outcomes and make adjustments to curricula. Teachers use protocols to identify the required depth of knowledge in academic tasks, multiple entry points to support students, and scaffolded questioning for engaging students in discussion.
- Academic tasks and common assessments are reviewed by teacher teams and modified to ensure all learners have access. This year, English language learner teachers conducted professional development, for the whole staff, on tiering classroom tasks and assessments for all learners. A review of teacher's lesson plans, class work folders, and assessment binders reveals that teachers have embedded these strategies within their planning.
- The school conducts lab sites to model for teacher's best practices developed in teacher teams or connected to the school wide focus on questioning or assessment. The lab sites are created to address staff needs, such as training new teachers, or to allow teachers to give feedback on new strategy initiatives. For example, this year's school wide focus on assessment and multiple entry points has been modeled multiple times in lab sites by teachers identified through the observation cycle as being highly effective. Teachers reported more prepared for their grade team meetings in creating supports for students after viewing strategies in a classroom.
- A review of the school's curriculum maps and unit plans reveal essential questions, instructional shifts, Common Core Learning Standards, scaffolds, and differentiated academic tasks included in all maps. Across all classrooms teachers consistently planned, according to school shared templates, and created scaffolds for a variety of learners within their classrooms. For instance, a first grade writing lesson, within the "Making Choices" unit, had students revising their writing ensuring that they were using textual details. The teacher planned four tiered centers for students based on class assessment data. Each center provided different supports for learners including a group that receive practice in writing conventions before starting the task and another group which was provided temporal words as sentence starters.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Across classrooms student work and discussions reflected high levels of student thinking.

Impact

Although teachers did plan and implement multiple entry points within their classroom they were not yet strategic across all classrooms. Similarly there were some missed opportunities for students to take ownership over their work.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, students were provided multiple entry points and scaffolded tasks, such as flexible grouping, differentiated assignments, vocabulary supports, group work expectations with data collector, and visual extensions. For instance, in a kindergarten classroom the teacher guided the whole class through a lesson, using a SMARTboard, on using tens frames for numbers up to twenty. During whole group, the teacher allowed students to turn and talk about difficult questions and monitored student thinking. After the brief mini-lesson, students were assigned groups based on proficiency and the teacher handed out differentiated assignments to each group. However, in the third grade classroom, students were having group discussions about the differences between hammerhead sharks and whale sharks. Although students were engaged in the topic, some groups spoke of their own thoughts with no differentiated questions, text, or supports in the groups which limited some student's ability to demonstrate higher order thinking.
- Across classrooms, students were engaged in group activities to produce meaningful work products. For example, during third grade math lesson, the teacher asked higher order questions and employed wait time during a mini-lesson on finding an unknown side length of a polygon with a known perimeter. Students shared a variety of strategies to find the missing side after a turn and talk. During group work, students solved problem sets, with some groups using geoboards, through collaboration and sharing of strategies connected to the mini-lesson. However, in some classrooms there were missed opportunities to engage all students in collaborative problem solving.
- Across classrooms students were provided the opportunity to discuss with their peers and evaluate both their own work and partners. During a fourth grade math lesson students were given checklists and reflection sheets to use during group work. Students had to solve a problem set and then discuss with a partner how they got their answers. Students were observed explaining to their partner where they made a mistake and used appropriate academic vocabulary to explain to their partner the correct mathematical concept. Students filled out a reflection sheet about their own understanding of the standard. In contrast, during a 1st grade math class students were seated in groups, but did not collaborate in problem solving or review each other's work thereby limiting some student proficiency with the objective and ownership over the material in the class.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The school uses common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress toward goals across grades and subjects, track progress, and adjust curricula. Across the vast majority of classrooms teacher's assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

School leaders and teachers are able to effectively adjust their curricula so that all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, demonstrate increased mastery. Teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs and students are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Common assessment data for individual students across subjects, in each grade, is captured on a school created student assessment matrix (SAM). Teachers, multiple times a year, sit down with school administrators to review and analyze student progress. A review of class SAMs shows that teachers identify trends among subgroups and also identify trends in student progress. On each student's desk within each classroom students had a goal sheet taped to their desk from the last common assessment and students were able to elaborate on their goals in class.
- Students stated that they receive rubrics and checklists for almost every assignment. Students were also able to speak to their goals and what they were working on in class. For instance, in one class, student stated that she was working on finding the best text evidence to support her claim. Another, student stated that he was working on writing stronger conclusions, because he has a tendency to just rephrase his introduction. In classrooms, students were seen using checklists and rubrics to guide their work. For instance, in a four/five bridge English language learners social studies lesson, students were engaged in group discussions and were working on group participation, as well as social studies content. Each group member tracked how many times each person spoke and had a group participation rubric so that they could assess their participation and give feedback to their group members.
- In addition to the SAM for each class that looks at individual student performance over time, school leaders also create item analysis for all common assessments so that teacher teams can adjust instruction and create scaffolds for student learning needs.
- Across the vast majority of classrooms teachers employed varied checks for understanding, including turn and talks, cold calling, strategic questioning, and one-to-one conferences, to make effective adjustments to their lessons based on the information they learned from the students. For instance, in a 1st grade English language learner's class during an English language arts lesson, students were working on revising a writing project using a checklist and colored pencils. Students had to identify what their writing had and what they needed to elaborate on or add. Students worked as individuals and in pairs. One student told her partner "So, one thing, who is "he?" I don't know who "he" is. You want to explain more." The teacher worked with a strategic group in the back of the room.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training related to school goals, Danielson Framework for Teaching, and the Common Core Learning Standards. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness and successfully partner with families.

Impact

Staff accountability structures have created a culture of mutual accountability. Families partner with the school to support student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- The school partners with parents through a variety of workshop models. On Tuesdays the school provides workshops for parents on testing and Common Core Learning Standards. Once a month the school provides workshops in which teachers go over strategies that they use in the classroom and then parents visit their child's classroom to see the strategy in action in order for them to extend learning at home. Also, there are monthly "coffee house" meetings for parents with flexible agendas based on parent feedback. This meeting ensures parents have a voice in the school.
- School leaders conduct cycles of observation with frequent feedback to teachers as well as multiple data meetings per year following common assessments. Teachers reported eagerly awaiting common assessment data from administrators to begin analyzing results and progress for their students. Teachers prepare for the meeting and stated that every meeting ends with an administrator asking, "So what can I do for you now to support you?"
- School leaders believe very strongly in attendance of staff and students as being crucial to success and progress. Teachers stated they shared the belief and the entire staff strives to be in school every day. Teacher attendance is at 98% and student attendance is at 96%.
- A professional development committee collaborates with school leaders to review teacher observation data, student data, and teacher feedback when designing professional development opportunities. This year's professional development is centered on Danielson's Framework for Teaching in the areas of questioning and discussion as well as student assessment. School leaders recognize highly effective teaching practices and teachers facilitate many professional development workshops.

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

Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work including classroom practice, assessment data, and student work. Distributed leadership structures are embedded so that there is effective teacher leadership.

Impact

Teacher teamwork has resulted in improved teacher practice for all staff and mastery of goals for groups of students. Teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams analyze a variety of data, including classroom practices, to improve student progress. The English language learner team was observed, using a protocol, looking at student work, from a recent assessment, and lesson plans aligned used leading up to administering the assessment to analyze the effectiveness of their multiple-entry points, tiered task strategy. Whereas the majority of students in their focus group made progress, some students either did not yet make progress or didn't make enough progress to move to a higher tier. Teachers reviewed the student work to identify strengths and next steps for students. They identified scaffolds and task modifications for the upcoming unit to help students access the assignment.
- The school conducts "lab sites," wherein teachers model strategies, or best practices, and colleagues observe using a protocol. They use these lab sites to roll out best practices created by teacher teams or to set clear expectations for pedagogy. For instance, the 5th grade teachers, in conjunction with school leaders, created a ReadyGen lesson template to increase the rigor of academic tasks and deepen writing habits within the curriculum. Teachers observed sample lessons and gave feedback to the team. The lesson template is currently used across grades in planning English language arts lessons.
- Each grade team has a grade team leader who plans agendas, maintains team records, facilitates meetings, and consults on the administrative cabinet. Grade leaders meet regularly with school leaders to share team progress towards school wide goals and provide feedback on teacher needs. Teachers reported being able to go to school leaders with any issue and working together to solve it.