



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Mount Hope Centennial School

Elementary School X028

**1861 Anthony Avenue
Bronx
New York 10457**

Principal: Stephen Beckles

Date of review: January 29, 2015

Lead Reviewer: Tammy Pate

The School Context

Mount Hope Centennial School is an elementary school with 747 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5th. The school population comprises 20% Black, 79% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 33% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 91.0%.

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	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	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and content standards, integrate the instructional shifts, and curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

The purposeful decisions to build coherence through Common Core Learning Standards alignment effectively promotes college and career readiness for all students so that a diversity of learners, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs), have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses a combination of two major curricula; Core Knowledge and Expeditionary Learning. This decision was the end result of student work that surfaced a greater need for focus on phonemic foundations, and non-fiction text analysis. To this end, the school added a “mirror genres” across content areas. This allows all subject teachers to create units and lesson plans that engage the same historical context and vocabulary.
- The school utilizes curriculum supports from Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Specifically, the school incorporates the PreK-12 English Language Proficiency Standards Framework across all grades and content areas in order to provide targeted supports for the 33% English Language Learners currently enrolled in the school. One example of this inclusion is their application of standard 1 (communicating for social, intercultural, and instructional purposes). Lesson plans across content areas include group activities and student share outs.
- English language arts (ELA) curriculum maps reflected changes and adjustments to pacing, materials used, and pedagogical needs of students based on interim assessment data. After analyzing last year’s ELA outcomes, the school noticed students had the most difficulty in the following three areas: determining the most correct answer among similar choices, determining meaning based on picture captions, and word meaning in context. These noticings were most significant for students with disabilities and English Language Learners. To address these noticings, the school adjusted the pacing calendar and reorganized content units to better meet the demands of the state test. They also incorporated Imagine Learning and K-2 Waterford both of which include online bilingual literacy support, critical reading and word study, and curricula modifications for students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies and academic tasks immerse all students in rigorous work and discussions that foster higher-order thinking and learning. However, instructional strategies do not illustrate optimal use of extensions to evoke student ownership of learning.

Impact

While academic tasks promote student progress towards being college and career ready, there are missed opportunities to further deepen student learning via completion of tasks that allow all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners, to demonstrate high levels of ownership of learning.

Supporting Evidence

- According to the School Self Evaluation Form (SSEF) the school-wide instructional focus is to ensure that reading and writing is grounded in evidence from the text, that students are provided multiple opportunities to converse with one another, and that math instruction allows for the development of fluency and dual intensity. An example of this practice was observed in a 4th grade math class. Students were grouped based on the results of a previous unit test. Two groups work independently and one group worked with the teacher. In the group working with the teacher, students were asked to identify the steps to solving an equation. After presenting their steps, the teacher then asked them to have a conversation with each other about their individual process. One student stated that she used the process of regrouping. Another student said he used the divide, multiply, subtract, bring down, and repeat (DMSBR) strategy. Another student shared yet another strategy. When all students finished sharing, the teacher challenged them to borrow their class-mate's strategy and solve another equation.
- The SSEF shared that teachers incorporate multiple points of entry, with supports and extensions for learning, differentiation of instruction, use of technology, Universal Design for Learning, and hands on learning experiences in math. Additionally, students are engaged in individual, small group, and teacher guided activities (which essentially follows those attributes usually associated with the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol SIOP Model), that are tiered to meet all student needs including the needs of English Language Learners. An example of this practice was observed in a third grade writing class where students used animal characteristics charts completed during a recent field trip to the Bronx Zoo to complete an interactive writing task. The use of bilingual vocabulary supports and writing organization charts would have provided multiple entry points and high-quality supports and extensions into the curricula so that all learners, including ELLs and SWDs
- The school is currently focusing on higher order thinking questions (based upon Depth of Knowledge levels 3 and 4) to promote discussion amongst peers. During a visit to a fifth grade writing workshop class, students were observed participating in group discussion based on higher order thinking questions. The teacher opened the lesson by asking students to refresh each other on the genre focus historical fiction. She then asked student to explain if and how Esperanza Rising qualified as historical fiction. Students spoke to each other about the story setting and the Mexican depression of 1930. They resolved that the text is historical fiction because although the character was fictional the events in the story actually happened in history.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas and teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Assessment results are used to adjust curricula and instruction so that teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school shared that teachers grade tasks and assessments, analyze data, and then adjust their instruction based on this new evidence. Evidence of this was observed in the school's data analysis structures. Teams agree upon standards to be assessed based on previous year summative assessments, Measures of Student Learning results and unit tests. Teachers also use a Formative Assessment Tracker which is a form that lists each standard to be addressed during a unit. Each student's name is listed on this form and teachers rate their performance on each standard based on class participation, writing, and presentation. From these data, they identify high leverage standards to focus on. These standards are taught and assessed using Expeditionary Learning resources. From there, results are shared in teams and weekly units are planned vertically by content and horizontally by grade. Lesson plans include references to assessment results.
- Teachers provide for on-going student self-assessment. This is accomplished using think-pair-share questions to check understanding, entrance slips/exit slips, review of student work (according to checklist/criteria/rubric), and activation of prior knowledge. Lesson plans and activities consistently evidenced the use of multiple forms of checks for understanding with the majority of these checks occurring student to student. Questioning is scaffolded and tiered for groups of learners. Teachers use graphic organizers for students to record their thinking. Questioning is made interactive during instruction including question wheels, grab and go question starters, and question stems with levels on student desks.
- The school produces kid-friendly Common Core aligned rubrics in all subjects. Students use these rubrics to assess their own and their peers. Pre-kindergarten-grade 2 uses rubrics with "I Can" statements. The rubrics contain four levels including novice, apprentice, practitioner, and expert. There are three categories for evaluation including, understanding, use of strategy/reasoning, and communication of ideas. Children also use non-verbal assessment protocols including "Five Fingers", and "Red, Yellow, Green Cup". Work posted on bulletin boards includes teacher and student feedback that uses "I Can" statements and every bulletin board had a posted task and rubric.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

School leaders and staff provide training and have a system of accountability and offer ongoing feedback to help families understand student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders begin the school year with individual meetings with all school staff. During these meetings the expectation and professional development needs are discussed. A plan is crafted that informs the professional growth plan for the year.
- An observation of ADVANCE teacher observation data revealed the connection between the school's instructional focus and administrator observation lens. Feedback and assessment of observation was accurate and thorough and include praise and resources for developing teacher capacity.
- The school uses an *At a Glance* document to communicate with each other and families. This document contains calendars, assessment information, requests for participation, professional development opportunities and upcoming workshops.
- The school has a focus on college and career readiness. They consistently build rigorous practices and fluency into activities. In writing, students are expected to express ideas with clarity and cite text. These requirements are part of their student-friendly rubrics and are also listed as "I Can" statements. Students produce short and long-term writing assignments that include rubrics and student to student assessment and feedback. Students shared that they enjoy giving each other feedback because it helps them think about an activity like a teacher.
- The school uses partnerships to support high expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness. These partnerships also provide opportunities to parents to participate in their child's education and track their progress. The school currently partners with: Experian Corp. Tutoring Services, Bronx Art Ensemble, Studio in a School, Scarsdale Strings, Barnes and Noble, and Double Dare (Teaching children good decision-making skills).

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts, and distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

The strengthening of the instructional capacity of teachers has built leadership capacity and teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams use team meetings as an avenue to promote the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shift. Grade level planning is a regularly scheduled event that occurs weekly. These meetings include activities such as analyzing assessments, planning instruction, and reviewing curriculum. The teams also include members responsible for summer curriculum writing and weekly professional development facilitation.
- Teacher teams use protocols to look at student work. During an observed meeting, teachers used the ATLAS, Learning from Student Work protocol. During this meeting, a grade five Expeditionary Learning Mid-Unit assessment was reviewed. The work of five students was presented and teachers used the protocol and the assessment unit to determine if the week's instruction had yielded the objectives of using evidence to analyze findings. The team noticed a wide range in student responses and decided to adjust the timeline for the next unit and to revise the current exit tickets to include a task that required a direct quote from the text.
- The school has several levels of distributive leadership. Each content area has a lead teacher; each grade has a team leader. There are three content/instructional coaches, all professional development is teacher-led, new and challenged teachers have peer mentors, model teacher lab sites. Teachers shared that they feel empowered in selecting professional development opportunities based on their individual needs and they love the fact that they always have the opportunity to facilitate for their fellow teachers.
- The school uses various levels of analysis to understand and affect student learning. These include item analysis, such as math and literacy standardized assessment results, are aggregated for the grade and content area to surface trends. There are on-going in house assessments to make adjustments to curriculum and inform individual student progress. Finally the school uses on-going item analysis of in house unit and measures of student learning assessments that contributes to identifying areas in need of improvement and forecasting performance on state summative assessments.