



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**The Melrose School**

**Elementary-Middle X029**

**758 Courtland Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10451**

**Principal: Kerry-Ann Hazell**

**Date of review: March 9, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Luz T. Cortazzo**

## The School Context

The Melrose School is an elementary-middle school with 738 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 33% Black, 64% Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 1% other students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 25% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 91.1%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers engage in structured professional collaborations on teams, and they consistently analyze assessment data and student work so that plans are adjusted, meeting students' needs.

### Impact

A focus on shared responsibilities has built capacity and has resulted in strong reflection of teacher team instructional practices and improvement in student achievement and progress.

### Supporting Evidence

- A job description for lead teachers details the inquiry process expected for all teams and supports for leaders working with their respective teams. Archives of the teams work are kept on the school's website. Consequently, the administrative team holds teacher data talks and student data talks to evaluate the supports given and received.
- During weekly grade and department team meetings, teachers use Looking at Student Work and Co-Planning for Success protocols. For example, during the math and science department team meeting, the team was observed using the Looking at Student Work protocol to identify trends, areas of strength, and areas for improvement for targeted lowest third students.
- Reflecting the work of teacher teams in identifying the lowest third target population for interventions, and their refining the school's Common Core aligned curricula and assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math, the school has met its target in the Student Closing the Achievement Gap section of the School Quality Guide. Furthermore, there has been an increase in (ELA) progress for the lowest third.
- All teachers' participation in instructional rounds, a peer observation of classroom practices, addresses the school's goal to enhance teacher pedagogy and provide every opportunity for students to engage in meaningful conversations. Teachers observe the transference of information culled from authentic conversations during professional development and then share reflections of the instructional rounds during discussions at team meetings, as evidenced during a grade 1 visit. Moreover, a review of last year's Learning Environment Survey (LES) indicates that 100% of the staff strongly agree that working together in teams improve their instructional practice.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

Teaching practices, anchored in common beliefs, are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts, and provide consistent instructional supports for students.

### Impact

Across most classrooms, multiple access points support student engagement in rigorous tasks. However, supports and extensions are not always strategically planned so that all learners, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs) have opportunities to be highly engaged and demonstrate analytical thinking.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across most classrooms, there was evidence of clear teaching points and lesson planning aligned to the workshop model. Teaching strategies included teachers using and requiring students to use subject specific vocabulary.
- In a small setting bilingual class students were working in math groups and able to explain their goals and next steps. Some students were engaged in partner work, while others were grouped with the teacher.
- In a grade 6 ELA class, students were eagerly writing in their source books while the teacher was completing a conference sheet to indicate their progress. Students were able to articulate the teacher's expectations of the task and the tools they needed to use to "be good writers".
- In an Integrated-Collaborative Team Teaching class, during reading workshop, students read a biography, discussed the sequence of events, and engaged in turn-and-talk and picture walks about the order of events in the story. Although the lesson plan stated that students would be given tasks on varying levels of difficulty, the teacher dominated the lesson, so that there were few opportunities for students to work independently on tasks that offered an extension into more academically challenging material.
- In a social studies class, students examined how the Native Americans viewed the newcomers to gain a clear understanding of the Westward Expansion during the 1700's and 1800's. Students examined a map key/legend, analyzed, and discussed why it was difficult to travel west during that time period. Furthermore, they were asked to demonstrate their understanding of the task by writing a prediction about how they thought the relationship between the settlers and the Native Americans would evolve. Similarly, in a math class, students applied skills of math, by adding fractions with like denominators.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

All curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards. Curriculum maps indicate that challenging tasks are developed with the assistance of resources from engageNY Common Core Library and revised using student work and data to support diverse learners.

### Impact

The school's curricula decisions build coherence, and promote college and career readiness. Across subjects teachers make intentional decisions to emphasize key standards and target students' areas of weaknesses.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school's use of Journeys Common Core literacy curriculum in the elementary grades, the Reader's Journey literacy curriculum in the middle grades, and the math curriculum Connect Mathematics Project (CMP) and TERC Investigations, provide exposure to rigorous tasks and learning materials. Additionally, the school strategically incorporates the instructional shifts across grades by requiring students to cite evidence from texts, and in the use of a balance of informational and literary texts in English language arts. Higher order thinking was evident in the grade 6 Reader's Journey English language arts unit, and pacing calendar.
- The reading, writing, and math units of study are aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards instructional shifts. Successful strategies include teachers constantly building the vocabulary students need to access grade-level complex texts, text-based responses, and problem solving through reading and writing.
- Teachers ensure that learners are able to access curriculum through thoughtful collaborative planning based on a thorough review of student work and data, as evidenced during the grade 4 math department team meeting. School leaders and lead teachers work to unpack observations of student work and assessments. Through item analysis, staff determines student performance and then plan purposefully in order to meet the needs of all students.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### **Findings**

Across classrooms teachers use common assessments, student work, and checks for understanding, to determine student progress towards goals across grades and subject areas and adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level.

### **Impact**

Well-coordinated and strategic use of ongoing checks for understanding and actionable feedback impacts effective adjustments to curricula and instruction and meets all students' learning needs.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Across grades and content areas, rubrics are aligned to the school's grading policy and upper grade students state that their teacher's feedback helps them know their strengths and they are able to plan for next steps that have led to improvement in their learning process.
- The Looking at Student Work and Co-Planning for Success protocols are the lenses used to adjust instructional practices, as they are grounded in clear evidence from student work and checks for understanding. At teacher team meetings, members of the teams examine student work and adjust their instructional practices to meet all students learning needs.
- Students explained what resources they use to check for understanding. There are task checklists for each content area, a 3-point Holistic Rubric for math, and a writing rubric that is comprehensive and user friendly. As a result, students state that it is "easier for them to get good grades because they know exactly how to apply the rules for writing or math to meet expectations".
- Teachers regularly use conferring logs and rubrics relative to student work to serve as ongoing checks for understanding for all students, including ELLs and SWDs. This allows teachers to provide students with targeted and actionable feedback that results in self-reflection and improved mastery of learning goals as evidenced by student projects shared during the student meeting.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### **Findings**

The school has established a culture for learning by consistently communicating cohesive high academic expectations for both teachers and students to achieve those expectations through the implementation of the Danielson Framework and the instructional shifts.

### **Impact**

Accountability and collaboration are structures that support the school's high expectations for families, staff, and students, creating a link between next steps for learning and student achievement that ensures that students, including high-need subgroups, own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Ongoing feedback to families is surfaced in the Melrose monthly newsletter, professional calendars, and parent workshops, creating academic dialogue that reinforces the strong culture for learning that resonates throughout the school. During the parent meeting, parents stated that through open communication that involves students, teachers, and families, they are able to work with teachers to support their children at home and outside of school experiences. Parents are provided with information regarding open houses for Academic academies, extra-curricular activities, and Family Fridays. Additionally, the school offers High School Regents preparation for Living Environment, and Algebra 1. Twenty six percent of the students received high school credit, and scored at the top of their peer group.
- During the parent meeting, every parent was able to speak to the school's vision of academic rigor, authentic conversations, complex thinking, student-centered learning, and a commitment to the whole child through social emotional development, such as advisory, in the middle grades, and Second Steps in the elementary grades, as well as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS).
- Professional needs based inter-visitations, classrooms observations, and timely feedback from classroom visits is discussed at teacher team meetings to norm practices, while creating a strong accountability for all staff in meeting school wide teaching expectations. Furthermore, the practice of 'Instructional Rounds' allows for critical peer feedback. Teachers celebrate each other's classroom work, citing areas for celebration and areas in need of improvement. For those areas in need of improvement, as observed during the visit, colleagues offer suggestions that are used to improve other staff members' practice.