



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Claremont Community School**

**Elementary School X042**

**1537 Washington Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10457**

**Principal: Lucia Orduz Castillo**

**Date of review: February 4, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Leticia Rodriguez-Rosario**

## The School Context

The Claremont Community School is an elementary school with 460 students from pre-k through grade 5. The school population comprises 41% Black, 56% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 25% 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 90.0%.

## 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>Proficient</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>Developing</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>Proficient</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>Proficient</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

All teachers engage in inquiry-based collaborations that strengthen teacher practice in the implementation of the Common Core Learning standards (CCLS). Teacher teams consistently analyze student data and student work.

### Impact

Data driven professional collaborations among all staff result in the improvement of teacher practice and improved student outcomes.

### Supporting Evidence

- As part of regular and systematic analysis of student work and data, school teams engage in a five step inquiry cycles: step 1 collect and analyze data and construct class focus, step 2 construct or adapt lessons to incorporate class focus, step 3 peer observations, step 4 lesson share/debrief and then step 5 data review. Data is collected and entered into data action plans. These plans are then used to refine curricula and teacher moves. For example, in a kindergarten unit called *Road to Knowledge* teachers focused on text features and the use of supplementary texts to provide students with more examples to better support student outcomes, after reviewing the trends in student work products.
- Teachers at team meetings conveyed that the sharing of teaching practices and strategies contributes to ongoing improvement in students' performance on tasks, as evidenced by student work samples across content areas. Students are able to reflect on their own progress and provide other students with constructive feedback across subjects. For example, in a fourth grade lesson on the division of decimals a student wrote the following feedback to a peer: "Remember to check your multiplication, some strategies are sing our songs, or ask a buddy." "Remember to practice the multiples of fives and remember to say the multiple slowly for your answer." "I loved that you lined up your decimals and also I loved that you put your place value each in the correct place."
- Teachers utilize protocols that provide a structured approach to looking at student work to inform and implement adjustments to lessons as needed to accelerate student mastery of Common Core Learning Standards. For example, after looking at a kindergarten student's writing sample teachers shared the following feedback: Warm feedback, "The child definitely knows that there are four wings on the insect, that's a good detail." Cool feedback, "Label the picture, explore the possibility of show me more, make sure to draw a picture that matches the information in the book." The presenter of the work responded, "I have to teach him how to use the book to look for the details, give more support with the questions when the student dictates information to the teacher, remind him about different resources we have in the room, sentence starters, prompts..."

# Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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## Findings

Across classrooms, lessons do not consistently include multiple entry points and questioning strategies that lead to high levels of student engagement and participation in peer-to-peer discussions.

## Impact

Inconsistencies in teaching of strategies and practices result in uneven engagement of all students in learning experiences that include peer to peer discussions.

## Supporting Evidence

- The implementation of strategies that result in effective questioning to support student learning in all content areas and grades is a developing practice. For example in one English language arts class, the teacher posed questions that asked students to identify the theme of the text and although some students were able to engage in the task with evidence of deep understanding, the majority of the students had misconceptions as to the theme. The teacher's use of questioning did not promote critical thinking or elicit understanding, as evidenced by several students focusing on minor details unrelated to what was required of them for successful completion of the task.
- Teachers create entry points to learning via modeling instructional concepts and presenting content in varied ways. However, these practices are not yet evident across classrooms. For example, in an English language arts class, a teacher modeled how to support opinion writing using her own exemplar. Students were then asked to develop their essays in partnerships. As students discussed their essays, many did not demonstrate understanding of steps in the writing process, nor were they able to generate examples that supported their own opinions in essay writing.
- Teacher engagement of students in peer to peer discussions was evident in some classrooms. For example, in a math class, through the use of a song the teacher supported all learners in interactions that promoted understanding of math concepts. Students were chanting and were able to use academic language to articulate their learning as well as that of their peers. One student referred his partner to a process chart in the classroom as they discussed the task. This level of engagement in peer to peer discussions was not seen in some of the other classrooms visited.

## Additional Findings

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

School curricula is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and incorporates the instructional shifts. Teacher teams consistently use student work and data to refine curricula across content areas and grades.

### Impact

All students have access to curricula that is consistently adjusted to offer them cognitively engaging learning experiences that prepare them for college and career.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders in conjunction with key staff have chosen CCLS aligned curricula. The school uses Pearson Core Ready Series as the principal tool for the English language arts curriculum which is supplemented with “Ready New York, CCLS”. *Go Math* is used for math and the school is focusing on problem solving performance tasks and high leverage standards. They are using the New York City Scope and Sequence for social studies and science.
- The school leader brought in a consultant from Lit Life to support the development and alignment of curricula to CCLS and to meet the needs of all learners. Lit Life works with teacher teams to adjust curricula to the CCLS and to school data.
- Units of study illustrate alignment to the instructional shifts, using current topics. For example, students were asked to write a persuasive essay on whether or not they felt the Apple Smart Watch is the coolest idea.
- The school has developed a data action plan which reflects use of findings from formative data and data collected from student work analysis to revise curricula in order to address gaps in learning. Teacher teams use this information when planning for the next lessons/units. For example, in the *Power to Persuade* unit, graphic organizers were incorporated to support all students in their ability to identify opinions from texts as well as to incorporate and support their opinions on writing tasks.

**Findings**

The school develops and uses assessments aligned to the Common Core Standards and the school's curricula. Common assessments are used to monitor student progress and to inform refinements of units of study.

**Impact**

Students receive feedback from teachers about their performance on assessments, and teachers adjust units and instructional practices based on student data.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school uses common assessments across grades and units to monitor student progress. For example, *Fountas and Pinnell* assessments are used to monitor student reading progress, *Core Ready* unit assessments are used to monitor mastery of CCLS, *Go Math* performance tasks are used to monitor mastery of math strands, and science and social studies unit exams support the monitoring of progress in those subject areas.
- Based on ongoing analysis of assessment data, the school leader identifies groups of students and aligns supports based on their needs. For example, the school leader has identified a group of students called the "Magic 50" and these students are provided with additional instruction through targeted programs afterschool to support their progress.
- Teachers provide students with targeted actionable feedback on student work based on rubrics. For example, on a science task the teacher provided a student with the following feedback: "You are a science practitioner. You were able to make the connection that the black moths blended into the black trees caused by pollution from the Industrial Revolution. Your next step is to refer to the text or your data to support your answers. For example, you could say, 'according to the text'. Also, in order to become an expert at adaptations, think about further research. For example, how are animals adapting to the destruction of the rainforest?"
- During a mid-chapter check teachers analyzed a piece of student work using a graphic organizer divided into three sections: noticings, evidence of non-negotiables, and next steps. As a result, of the data gathered and analyzed, the student rubric was fine tuned to ensure that students provided multiple examples and or evidence to support their point.

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

The school leader consistently communicates high expectations to all stake holders and offers supports that help them meet the expectations.

### **Impact**

The school's high expectations for learning by all are shared with all stakeholders who work collaboratively with each other to ensure that all expectations are met.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The school has an extensive Positive Behavior Intervention System program that revolves around three expectations: be respectful, be responsible, and be caring. In addition, there are periodic events, parent newsletters, incentives, and a Student of the Month award which reinforce parent and student awareness of these expectations.
- High expectations are communicated to staff through memos, team structures, and professional development sessions. In alignment to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, all staff members receive training in topics such as using effective questioning to engage students in higher order thinking and strategies for improving levels of student engagement in learning. Staff members who succeed in meeting the school's high expectations are publicly recognized via "Faculty Friday Shout Outs".
- The school is in the process of becoming a community school and is committed to college and career readiness for all students. For example, there is a partnership with *Bronxworks* to deepen student engagement in college and career readiness activities. High expectations are emphasized in the curriculum and through technology classes, students are exposed to computer coding to lay the foundation for technology related careers, further contributing to their progress towards college and career readiness.
- Parents are informed of the school's expectations via monthly parent newsletters, School Messenger, parent engagement events such as "News with Orduz" and, "Children at Work Day", as well as parent workshops and information fairs, all of which empower them to help their children meet the expectations. To keep families informed about their children's progress towards readiness for their next grade, the school sends home report cards and progress notes and teachers host weekly meetings with families.