



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**David C. Farragut**

**Elementary School X044**

**1825 Prospect Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10457**

**Principal: Melissa Harrow**

**Date of review: November 18, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Timothy Behr**

## The School Context

David C. Farragut is an elementary school with 320 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 34% Black, 63% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian, and 1% American Indian and Multi-Racial students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 89.0%.

## 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	Additional Findings	Developing
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	Additional Findings	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	Focus	Developing
<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	Celebration	Proficient
<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	Additional Findings	Proficient

## Area of Celebration

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

School leaders consistently convey high expectations and provide training to staff and parents connected to a pathway to college and career readiness.

### Impact

Embedded plans and the use of a variety of strategies that keep all constituents well informed of the school's high expectations nurture pedagogy, accountability, understanding of college and career pathways, and parents as contributing leaders of the school community.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate high expectations to faculty and staff through weekly Monday Letters. They use this tool to report low-inference data collected during instructional walkthroughs communicating feedback through the lens of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Current professional learning activities support teachers in developing multiple entry points during lessons. Feedback to teachers indicates that classrooms are incorporating at least one form of differentiation during instruction. For example, tiered activities in a kindergarten class include students reading a book via pictures, while some read using illustrations to make sense of text, and others focus primarily on text using illustrations to support their understanding.
- Professional development activities are designed to support individual learning experiences based on teacher input. Using this feedback the school is focusing on planning and preparation, analysis of current curriculum units for alignment to Common Core Learning Standards for English language arts, the Danielson rubric, lesson plans, identification of exemplar work, and use of student data to determine impact on student performance.
- A weekly parent information letter in English and Spanish versions informs parents of upcoming workshops and strategies used to support students in meeting Common Core Learning Standards toward readiness for college and careers. Parent participation on committees such as social media, yearbook, spirit activities, career day, as well as participation in coordinated classroom visits have increased parental involvement at the school. Ninety-three percent of parents are satisfied with the school culture as reported in the 2013-2014 School Survey.
- School leaders hold teachers accountable for achieving set expectations. Teachers establish goals for themselves based on an analysis of the previous year's Advance ratings. Goals are shared with colleagues to enhance collaboration and sharing of best practices.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

Although the school is prioritizing professional development activities for using common assessments to monitor student progress and for informing curricular and instructional adjustments to address the needs of all students, the use of assessment results, ongoing checks for understanding, and student self-reflection varies across classrooms.

### Impact

Common assessments aligned to curricula and daily assessment practices are not fully established, so that effective adjustments are not made to meet all learners' needs.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school uses a variety of assessments including: i-Ready, Common Core aligned English language arts and math assessments, Fountas and Pinnell independent reading levels, and GO Math! unit assessments for the purpose of monitoring student performance and progress. However, the results are not used consistently across grades and subjects to adjust curriculum and instruction.
- In all classrooms observed, a new process developed to improve practice by incorporating a posted mastery objective assists both teachers and students to be explicit regarding a lesson's content and purpose and to evaluate performance.
- In a kindergarten class, the teacher engaged the students in a few "turn and talks," which required them to make predictions and use their "picture power" to identify words on the page. Similarly, in a second grade English as a second language (ESL) class, the teacher used "thumbs up" to gauge student understanding about community workers. In addition, in an integrated co-teaching third grade math class, the teacher used a "thumbs up" in response to the question, "Can you solve this problem counting by 4's?" However, these checks for understanding were not pervasive across the school.

## Additional Findings

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

The school is strengthening its curricula planning to increase rigor in academic tasks in teacher-developed instructional units and in Common Core aligned English language arts and math assessments in order for lessons to consistently promote higher levels of thinking and cognitive engagement for all students.

### Impact

Increased focus on curricula work is beginning to integrate higher order thinking, questioning and discussion techniques within lessons.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are beginning to reference Webb's Depth of Knowledge matrix and Bloom's Taxonomy to strengthen rigor and higher order thinking skills. For example, students in a grade 4 class were asked to cite details from a nonfiction story about wolves and make inferences using specific story details to support their rationale.
- Although a review of the school's curricular documents reflects an emphasis on higher-order thinking skills, such as crafting and testing thesis statements, using stories as evidence, citing text evidence, creating literary essays, and adding depth to writing, rigorous habits to cognitively engage a diversity of learners were not consistent across grades and subjects. For example, in an early childhood class, the focus for a writing lesson was to improve time-on-task and volume of writing.
- An Individual Education Plan (IEP) coach and ESL teacher work directly in classrooms to assist in providing students access to curricula by co-designing classroom instruction that is related to student IEP goals and achieving success in the New York State English as Second Language Aptitude Test. In addition, teachers of Integrated Co-Teaching classes (ICT) plan collaboratively, using a variety of techniques and tools, such as modeling, colored pencils, and math grids to engage a wide range of learners cognitively. However, the practice of using student work and data to refine curricula or academic tasks was inconsistent across classrooms observed.

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

Teaching practices emanate from a set of beliefs rooted in personal and collective ownership that is informed by the Danielson framework and aligned to curriculum that promotes students' progress.

### **Impact**

The administrations' emphasis on ownership in learning is prioritizing teachers' attention to pedagogy and creating multiple curriculum access points for students.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The school's belief is based on students taking ownership of their learning to attain improved levels of achievement. The schools' instructional focus centers on students' and teachers' ownership of their learning journey. The principal states that this objective directly relates to highly effective practices leveraged by the Danielson Framework, and demonstrative in the transfer of acquisition of knowledge to students while teachers serve as facilitators. During most classroom visits this was confirmed.
- Turn and talks, visual aids, and modeling are consistent pedagogical practices that provide all students access to instructional activities. Teachers plan collaboratively to enhance the incorporation of multiple entry points, supports, and extensions to aid student learning. They continually reflect and ask themselves, "How can I help students to demonstrate mastery of academic skills?"
- Across classrooms teachers ask open-ended questions in order for students to reference previously learned content. For example, in a fifth grade math class, students were observed using domain specific vocabulary such as, product, factor, and exponents to explain and compute problems to find patterns and products when multiplying by powers of ten. In addition, across classrooms, student conversations and writing products reflect the use of cross content vocabulary and application of learned skills by citing text-based evidence.
- The 2013-2014 New York City School Quality Guide indicates that the school is meeting its Student Progress and Student Achievement targets for all students and indicates effective classroom practices to meet the needs of all students.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Team teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Teachers are engaged in collaborative inquiry that is strengthening teacher capacity to refine curricula and data analysis skills, improving teaching and learning.

### Impact

Instructional coherence and student achievement are improving throughout the school due to teachers' successful collaboration.

### Supporting Evidence

- All teams across grades incorporate a gap analysis protocol in analyzing formative and summative assessments. They identify content area strands that require re-teaching to set, monitor, and adjust instruction for meeting Common Core Learning Standards and improving student outcomes. Teachers enter formative and summative assessment data into a Google document for record keeping, collaboration, and analysis of data to surface gaps in student learning to inform instructional decisions.
- Teams of teachers use lesson plans as a lens to view instructional practices and to identify where Common Core Learning Standards instructional shifts are required and where content knowledge needs to be increased. Teams are focusing on questioning and discussion techniques and providing multiple entry points to determine the best instructional change strategies that promote student engagement and learning.
- The school has four key teacher leaders (achievement coach, IEP teacher, academic intervention teacher, and behavior management teacher) that organize summative and formative data for teachers and who consistently drive the work of teachers in matching their next steps with the expectation of the Common Core. For example, the achievement coach conducted an open discussion that resulted in a school-wide decision that all lessons will have a mastery objective. The IEP teacher provides a key role in supporting teacher's work in differentiation of instruction to ensure that IEP mandates are met. The academic intervention teacher provides differentiated instructional strategies for teachers in order for their students to achieve success. The behavior management teacher works with staff to ensure that there is a safe and supportive learning environment.
- Teacher teaming and professional development on setting objectives and evaluating progress toward mastery are the school's current vehicles to build teacher capacity in using different types of data to adjust curriculum and instruction.