



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Mohegan School

Elementary School X067

**2024 Mohegan Avenue
Bronx
NY 10460**

Principal: Jeffrey Santiago

**Date of review: May 6, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Renee Peart**

The School Context

The Mohegan School is an elementary school with 659 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 25% Black, 73% Hispanic, 0% White, 1% American Indian, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90.0%.

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 teachers ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards, emphasize rigorous habits, and are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

School leaders' and teachers' curricular decisions promote college and career readiness, push scholars to deepen their critical-thinking skills, and ensure all learners, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, have access to cognitively engaging tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricular documents revealed that teachers include various resources to ensure the alignment to Common Core Learning Standards and the integration of the instructional shifts. For example, the math curriculum incorporates Harcourt Go Math! and EngageNY resources. The English language arts (ELA) curriculum incorporates Pearson Reading Street and EngageNY resources. In social studies and science, teachers use Harcourt and the New York City Scope and Sequence. Curricular maps include the various instructional shifts with a focus on academic vocabulary, writing from sources, text-based answers, and a balance of nonfiction and fiction text.
- Units of study include rigorous tasks that promote critical-thinking skills for all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities. For example, in a grade 3 ELA task, students were asked to conduct a narrative writing by completing a biography research project using multiple resources. The task included specific resources such as graphic organizers for ELLs and students with disabilities. In a grade 4 science task, students were asked to complete a performance task on data and measurement. Students were asked to explain their scientific hypothesis using data from a science lab experiment. In a grade 2 task, students were asked to create their own real-life word problems using 3-4 two-digit numbers and multiple steps to solve the math problems. The task included chunking directions and visual aids for diverse learners.
- Teachers review data and student work products to refine unit plans and lessons. For example, the grade 2 teacher team reviewed the ELA end of the unit 2 assessment and noticed students were struggling with sequencing and main idea. They revisited these skills in the ELA unit 3. Teacher lessons included re-teaching these skills. The grade 4 teacher team reviewed the Unit 2 Go Math Chapter assessment and noticed students needed additional support with rectangular area model. Therefore, they retaught finding the area in their math lessons.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, pedagogical practices reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best that consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula and opportunities to engage in high-levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Shared pedagogical practices are evolving into discussions at team and school levels, student ownership, and high-quality supports where all students have the opportunity to demonstrate higher-order skills in their work products.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders reported that they believe students learn best when teachers include rigorous questions and opportunities for student discussions in their lessons. This pedagogical belief was observed in 5 out of 8 classes. The school-wide inquiry team engages in consistent discussions on the school's shared belief as evidenced by a review of inquiry team agendas and minutes. However, the grade-level teams are evolving into consistent discussions on this pedagogical shared belief as evidenced by the teacher team interview. Teachers reported that they use the inquiry team as a model for their teacher team work and discussions
- School leaders reported that teaching strategies provide multiple entry points for all students, including low-, mid- and high-level scholars. Entry points and scaffolds include visuals, manipulatives, small group instruction based on skill set, tiered text, and differentiated instruction. While evidence of multiple entry points was observed in 5 out of 8 classes visited, there were missed opportunities to provide students with high-quality supports and extensions into the curricula. For example, in grade 5 math lesson, students worked on constructing a coordinate system on a line with some supports for diverse learners. In a grade 4 math class, students completed a do now on how to convert decimals into fractions with some supports for diverse learners. However, in a grade 3 ELA self-contained class, the teacher included a variety of strategies to provide high-quality supports such as graphic organizers, grouping students based on skill sets, chunking text, anchor posters, and differentiated task. Teachers have a school-wide focus of improving high-quality supports and extensions into the curricula.
- Although there was evidence of high-level student discussions across classrooms visited, the implementation of scholars owning student discussions varied across classrooms. For example, in a grade 2 ELA class, students worked with a partner to discuss facts and opinion statements. Then, they shared out their partners' responses and explained the difference between fact and opinion. However, in a grade 5 Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) ELA class, students conducted a presentation on the details from a story in the Reading Street Program. Students shared out and presented their details to the teacher and then the teacher asked other students to respond. There was a missed opportunity for student-to-student discussions as well as students taking ownership of this discussion.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teachers use assessments, rubrics, and consistently provide actionable feedback to scholars. Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and opportunities for students to self-assess their work products.

Impact

Teacher feedback provides all learners with detailed information of their next learning steps and teacher assessment practices result in consistent adjustments to meet diverse learners' needs.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders reported that teachers check for understanding using class discussions, exit slips, taking the pulse of class through questions, and teacher observations. School leaders also reported that teachers check for understanding and record students' strengths and struggles. Visits to classrooms revealed that these checks for understanding are included in teacher lessons. For example, in a grade 3 ICT math class, the students worked in groups to identify intersecting, perpendicular, and parallel lines. The special education teacher and the general education teacher recorded data and adjusted the lesson based on students' responses. In a grade 3 self-contained ELA class, students worked in groups on fact and opinion, the teachers recorded students comprehension skills, how students stayed on task, and how learners self-assessed their work.
- School leaders reported that students self-assess their work by using age-appropriate checklist teacher-created rubrics as well as EngageNY rubrics. Throughout the school building, there was evidence of student work displayed on hallway and classroom bulletin boards as well as in student portfolios with student checklist, self-reflections, and peer editing. Furthermore, during the student interview, all students confirmed that their teachers give them a rubric before they complete each task. Students also confirmed that after the task is completed, they have an opportunity to use the rubric to self-assess their work. Lastly, the teacher gives them a score with rubric-based feedback.
- School leaders and teachers provided evidence of assessment and rubrics used in lessons. The teachers use assessments such as end of the unit assessments, Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), performance tasks, and teacher-created assessments. Rubrics are used to assess student work products and provide actionable feedback which includes a glow, grow, and a how. A review of student work products revealed that teachers consistently provide actionable feedback that informs students of their next learning steps. For example, on a math task, a student received feedback that said, "I like that you filled up the lines when attempting to explain questions one and two. You used great math vocabulary words and details to explain your thoughts. Next step, be careful to circle key words in addition. When rounding, be sure to look at the underline digit and then use the digit to the right to determine if the number is rounded up or if it stays the same." On an ELA task, a student received feedback that said, "You did an awesome job. The organization of your writing has really improved. I love your use of sequence words. Next time, let's work on writing a more detailed topic sentence. "

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations to the staff and have a system of accountability for instructional expectations. School leaders communicate high expectations to families that connect to a path of college and career readiness.

Impact

Staff is aware of school-wide instructional expectations. Families receive ongoing information on student progress that helps them understand school-wide expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders inform the staff of school-wide instructional expectations through weekly emails, staff newsletters, the staff handbook that has sections on the school’s instructional expectations, and professional development sessions on guided reading, Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts of academic vocabulary, writing from sources, and text-based answers and Danielson Framework for Teaching components of questioning and discussion and using assessments,.
- School leaders hold teachers accountable for instructional expectations through data chats, informal and formal observations where teachers receive written feedback aligned to Danielson Framework for Teaching, and teacher team meeting outcomes where all teams are expected to submit agendas, minutes, and next steps to the principal.
- School leaders and staff communicate expectations to parents through parent workshops on topics such as Common Core Learning Standards, English as a Second Language, how to overcome test anxiety, anti-bullying prevention, and housing support. Furthermore, the school staff communicates high expectations to parents through Tuesdays' parent engagement time where parents meet with teachers to review student report cards, progress reports, curricula expectations, and resources to support students at home. Parents receive information on resources such as the *Myon*, online reading program. One parent said, “I see improvement in my child and because of this school he is ready for middle school.” A second parent said, “The school keeps us informed about everything and everything goes home in English and Spanish.”

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 consistently connect to the school’s instructional focus of increasing rigorous questions to promote student discussions and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Distributed teacher leadership structures are in place school-wide.

Impact

The work of the teacher teams results in strengthening the instructional capacity of pedagogical practices. Teachers instructional input affect student learning school-wide.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has an inquiry team that meets 1-2 times a week to examine the work of selected students, ensure implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and develop academic action plans for each student discussed at these meetings. Members of the school’s inquiry team will provide academic intervention services to the selected inquiry students. The inquiry team uses Mondays' professional development as a platform to turnkey inquiry work to the entire staff. School leaders, coach, and Cambridge consultant support the work of the inquiry team.
- The school has grade-level teacher teams that meet weekly to engage in professional collaborations where they review student work and discuss how to improve pedagogy. For example, during an observed grade 3 teacher team meeting, teachers displayed student work using an Elmo and discussed a sample student-writing essay. One teacher presented information on the task, student checklist, and the rubric used to assess student writing. Teachers discussed strengths and weaknesses of the student writing. Each teacher had a role in the meeting. As teachers discussed the strengths and weakness, one teacher recorded the outcomes as well as next steps. Teachers discussed that in forthcoming lessons they would support students with writing format, contractions, and vocabulary development.
- School leaders reported that they seek out teachers’ instructional advice so that the school community collaboratively makes decisions to support student progress. School leaders also reported that the professional development committee meetings serve as a platform for teacher leaders to share their instructional ideas. Teachers have a voice in school-wide instructional decisions such as topics for professional development and curricular choices. For example, teachers decided that Pearson Ready Gen program was not fully meeting their students’ academic needs so they purchased Pearson Reading Street Program to support diverse scholars’ needs.