



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Max Schoenfeld School

09X070

**1691 Weeks Avenue
Bronx
NY 10457**

Principal: Kerry Castellano

**Date of review: December 9, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Cheryl McClendon**

The School Context

The Max Schoenfeld School is an elementary school with 1388 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 25% Black, 72% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 25% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. 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	Well Developed
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:

Well Developed

Findings

Common Core Learning Standards-aligned curricula integrate the instructional shifts and are foundational in promoting college and career readiness for all learners. Rigorous curricula and coherently planned academic tasks command all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, to demonstrate higher-order critical thinking skills in their work.

Impact

The implementation of strategically selected Common Core-aligned curricula drives instruction across all content areas resulting in instructional coherence and rigorous curricula accessible to all students across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses the Teachers' College Reading and Writing Project curriculum for its alignment with the standards. Sample lesson plans for K-5 Reading Workshop reflect a coherent structure comprising the Common Core-aligned teaching point and lesson goal, the mini-lesson, including explicit teaching steps, the active engagement (guided and monitored whole-class practice of the focal skill) and the teacher's guidance for students as they go off to apply the focal skill/ strategy in their independent work. Tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary words are also highlighted in lesson plans.
- The school's adapted Teachers' College curriculum is reflected in unit plans containing standards-based rationales and an itemized list of embedded Common Core Learning Standards, including Reading Informational text, Reading Literature, Reading Foundational Skills, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language Skills. Unit plans also contain essential questions, Depth of Knowledge indicators, formative and summative assessments and rubrics. Further, unit plans reflect the integration of social studies and science topics and skills in such units as: Community Workers, Countries around the World, Changing the World (Persuasive Speeches, Petitions, and Editorials) and lab reports and science books. An interdisciplinary project on the "Westward Expansion" engaged fifth grade students in researching this historical period through videos, internet resources, history books and primary resources.
- In English language arts, there is a Literacy Overview Map that plots out the units in reading and writing from September through May, across all grades. In math there are monthly pacing calendars on all grades. The school uses the *Go Math* program in grades K-5. In addition they are beginning the integration of *Engage New York* on grades K-2 providing for a more rigorous Common Core focus and deeper engagement of students in the instructional shifts in the early grades.
- Assessment-based differentiated plans to support struggling students, including students with disabilities and English language learners include infusion of: Universal Design for Learning strategies, guided reading, 'double dose' Foundations, English as a Second Language strategies, Achieve 3000, assistive-technology and Response to Intervention strategies in highly targeted instruction across grades and subjects.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, undergirding the curricula-aligned teaching practices that reflect an articulated ideology of how students learn best are the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the Common Core instructional shifts. However, student ownership of learning is not yet evident in some of the classrooms visited.

Impact

Established instructional practices such as independent work, guided group work and student to student discussion consistently support learning by all students. There are missed opportunities to maximize learning via engagement of all students in high level independent work across all classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- Within the majority of classrooms visited students were observed to be engaged in independent reading, writing, and computer-assisted tasks. Teachers worked with small guided groups in literacy and math and some interchangeably circulated amongst students who worked independently, monitoring their work.
- Student-centered facilitation was observed in some classrooms visited. In an Integrated Co-Teaching class, during the math period, groups of students were observed working with peers on large chart tablets to construct number bonds to name fractions. Another group tackled the same activity using the Smartboard and students with Individual Education Plans engaged in the math work using the computer.
- In a math class students were observed working collaboratively with concrete manipulatives to generate arrays that represented factors of a product. During the visit the teacher was observed working with two groups. However the group of students that demonstrated the greatest level of confusion, as evidenced by their creation of subtraction problems with counters, was not observed receiving similar support.
- In a majority of classrooms visited tasks pushed students to cite evidence from the text to support their responses to teacher generated questions. For example, in one class students had an opportunity to turn and talk to generate examples of a main idea and supporting details, based on their reading of a text, leading to a lively discussion with high levels of student participation in learning. However, student work viewed across classrooms did not consistently illustrate tasks that offered students multiple opportunities to select and pursue topics of their own for rigorous independent work.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across grades and subject areas, data from common assessments that are used to monitor student progress toward goals, on-going checks for understanding and student self-assessment are analyzed by teachers to make instructional and curricular adjustments.

Impact

Regular analyses of data from ongoing assessments facilitate necessary instructional and curricular modifications that meet the learning needs of all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers administer baseline, beginning of year and end-of-year assessments in writing and math across the grades. Running records are administered throughout grades K-5 at four benchmark periods throughout the year. Periodic assessments are administered through Schoolnet. End-of-unit assessments in reading and writing are administered and iReady technology-linked assessments in reading and math are administered, providing multiple sources of data about students' progress towards learning targets.
- In accordance with the school's focus on component 3D of the Danielson Framework, "Using Assessment in Instruction", teacher teams and the administration graph, chart and analyze data from all common assessments to make curricular and instructional adjustments. For example iReady assessment data illuminated a deficiency in foundational skills for many students in second grade. In response to this finding, the Wilson Foundations Literacy program that was implemented throughout grades K-1 has been extended to support targeted second grade students. Class records containing the curriculum-based measures reflect progress in phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension for all second grade students who have participated in this intervention program.
- Using the "Tracking My Progress" self-assessment packets, students track their progress with specific skills through graphing, reflect on their beginning and end of unit proficiency, document it and set goals on the goal planning sheet. These goals are reviewed with the teacher at designated points throughout the year, allowing both teachers and students to measure progress in relation to the goals.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training to support teachers in meeting those expectations. School leaders and staff communicate the school's high expectations and provide feedback to inform families of student progress towards meeting the expectations.

Impact

The comprehensive communications systems and supports enable teachers to meet the high expectations placed upon them as professionals. The communication of expectations and feedback about student progress towards those expectations helps families support their children at home.

Supporting Evidence

- A year-long comprehensive professional development calendar offers all teachers a choice in professional development sessions within two cycles. It includes staff training in topics such as, "Using Webb's Depth of Knowledge to Promote High-level Questioning and Critical Thinking, Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching", and "Book Clubs and Vocabulary-building."
- The instructional coaches are employed in a 50/50 model wherein fifty percent of the week each coaches and during the other 50 % each teaches in their area of specialization and hosts a lab-site for other teachers, providing professional development support that help all teachers meet instructional expectations across the school.
- Parents stated that the school provides I-Ready, Think-Central and ABC Mouse websites for their children to receive extra academic support at home. In addition, during the parent interview, a parent of a student with special needs stated that the school is working with her to support her child's academic needs. Another parent of a child in the special education program stated that her child "changed" at this school. She stated, "He gets special attention and everyone knows him."
- School leaders and teachers distribute monthly newsletters outlining units of study to families of students in all grades and keep families informed of their children's progress through email, weekly memos, and parent workshops.

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

The majority of teachers engage in structured inquiry-based teacher-team collaborations and consistently analyze student work and assessment data within the context of and measured by the Common Core Learning Standards.

Impact

Schoolwide analysis of student work and performance trends strengthens teachers' abilities to support student progress. Participation in inquiry-based professional collaborations fortifies all teachers' instructional capacity.

Supporting Evidence

- During an observation of the literacy lead teachers' vertical teacher-team meeting, the teachers planned short term goals for the upcoming non-fiction units of study. Team members discussed the trends that are evident across the grades in regards to students' proficiency with grade and unit specific informational writing linked to Common Core Learning standards. The planning was charted detailing area of focus and targeted standards across grades K-5.
- Horizontal grade teams engage in an inquiry focus by examining pre and post unit assessments, collaboratively discussing trends that surface. On a weekly basis this informs instructional modifications and strategic grouping of students for guided instruction and Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions.
- The assistant principal of special education leads a professional learning community of special educators in studying the various Integrated Co-teaching Team modalities. First the teachers collaboratively plan the lesson, then they observe two teachers implementing the lesson through the chosen modalities and finally they all debrief the observation. The next round of teacher team inter-visitations will focus on differentiating to reach lower and higher achieving learners.