



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Rose E. Scala School

08X071

**3040 Roberts Avenue
Bronx
NY 10461**

Principal: Phyllis Calzolaio

**Date of review: January 14, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Socorro Diaz**

The School Context

Rose E. Scala is an elementary and middle school with 1698 students from grade K through grade 8. The school population comprises 4% Black, 61% Hispanic, 28% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 22% 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 94%.

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	Focus	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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, instructional practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect and support school wide beliefs about how students learn best. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking, participation and ownership.

Impact

Teacher practices reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best. All learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills that yield high quality student work.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are committed to shared beliefs about student-centered instruction and student accountability for their own learning and behavior. A pedagogical shift on increased effective practices that focus on strengthening writing and reading instruction and fosters student independence is a team initiative that includes pedagogical best practices informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The school's instructional focus incorporates strategies that promote higher order thinking questions and discussion increasing the level of cognitive demand required of students during learning activities. The school uses Visual Thinking Strategies and its specific essential questions as a tool to elicit the students' perceptions and interpretation of art work, as well as, literature based text. In a grade 8 social studies lesson, students viewed a series of art work and newspaper articles to discuss the factors that impacted the United States foreign policy using these questions, "Do you know what happened to the Maine?" "What does each headline imply?" "Which do you think would have been the most reliable story? Why?"
- Students across classrooms produce work and engage in discussions that reflect critical thinking, creativity, innovation and problem solving indicative of student ownership of the learning process. Checklists and self-assessment forms used by students prior to turning in work demonstrate student accountability for their own learning. A grade 2 student response to feedback on her writing on the topic of a holiday season was "My writing goal is to use multiple details to support the topic I am writing about". In a grade 5 math class, students worked in partnerships using their class notes to review the definitions of improper fractions and mixed numbers based on their understanding of the lesson.
- During the vast majority of classroom visits ample student to student dialogue was observed, using academic vocabulary and evidenced-based accountable talk while working within their groups. Purposeful student groupings were seen in the across all classrooms. When asked, the majority of students were able to articulate what they were learning and why it was important. In a grade 3 literacy class students were learning about the experience of immigrants coming to Ellis Island and settling in the United States. In their flexible groups students were asked to form an opinion as to whether the immigrants should leave their country and face the challenges of coming to America. Other student groups were asked to write a narrative from the viewpoint of an immigrant child coming to America. What if you were on that ship? A third group was asked to develop a better system to check-in at Ellis Island based on the several books read. Before completing the group work students had an opportunity to talk at their tables and confer with their classmates.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The school ensures that curricula are Common Core aligned and tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills and are planned to engage all learners, including English language learners and special education students in all subjects.

Impact

While the school curricula are Common Core aligned to build coherence across grades and subjects, there are missed opportunities to strategically embed the instructional shifts and supports into the curricula in order to afford all students higher level tasks that prompt deep reasoning across grades and subjects leading to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Reading/writing and content area units of study integrate the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts across content areas, including tiered academic vocabulary, fluency, multi-step problem solving, argumentative writing and text-based responses. The Common Core aligned curriculum integrates technology throughout the learning process and provides students with a framework to work towards mastery of math concepts and adaptations from the instructional tasks shared at Engage New York and the Common Core Library.
- While unit plans included scaffolding and differentiation for ELLs and special education students and there was evidence of the use of differentiation and scaffolding in the units to ensure appropriate scaffolds were planned into the curricula for all students, the strategic integration of the instructional shifts including effective academic vocabulary development varied across some of the classrooms. For example the Day 2 of the Code X Unit 7- Do the Right Thing shows the following teaching point: “*SWBAT determine the meaning of unknown words and phrases.*” The scaffold identified for this lesson is, “*ELL students will receive the definitions for each word so that they have an understanding of the word. They will have to provide sentences using those definitions*”. In the grade 8 Math unit Growing, Growing, Growing, teachers included titles for each lesson in the unit. However, teaching points or objectives were not included.
- Lesson plans were designed to cognitively engage all students and required students to cite evidence, analyze information, develop claims and counter claims, and apply concepts to solve real world problems. For example, a review of a lesson plan requires students to analyze physical and chemical changes and their properties through a lab activity called “Penny Chemistry”. In a grade 7 math lesson plan students were asked to use proportions to calculate discounts and use this information to then apply the same skills to real world situations. In a third lesson plan, students were asked to identify key ideas and details in answering, “How does a difficult situation reveal an individual’s character?”
- Drop Everything Wednesday is used as a supplement to enhance specific targeted skills to support students’ higher order thinking skills. It is designed to tap into students critical thinking skills by the use of interpretation of visual arts, problem solving procedures, and the interactive read aloud that fosters discussions amongst students.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school uses common assessments in all subject areas, tracks student progress, and consistently checks for understanding.

Impact

The school's systems to monitor progress through data analysis, as well as, during instruction are used regularly to guide adjustments in curriculum units and lessons to meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Assessments are administered in September, both in ELA and Math, as baselines to support instruction. Also, unit tests are administered at the end of each unit; Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA) are administered three times a year and results are used to form flexible groups, select academic intervention services (AIS) recommendations and inform adjustments to the curriculum as needed. Common baseline assessments (MOSL) are administered in the fall. A second MOSL is administered in the winter and then a final one is administered in the spring. This allows teachers to do an item analysis and identify student strengths and area of needs.
- Teachers use data from pre-assessments to work with students to develop individual goals aligned to key skills identified in units. For example, all math and science teachers have administered pretests and students have created individual Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-based (SMART) goals based on student outcomes. The 8th grade math teacher team made revisions to their Exponents, Scientific Notation unit after looking at the New York State item analysis. Three new lessons were added: Correcting Improper Scientific Notation, Word Problems Involving Scientific Notation and Distance .vs. Time Graphs. A school wide system, Skedula, is available for teachers to track students' progress and for parents to be able to see their child's performance and tests results.
- Ongoing checks for understanding include pre-planned questioning, problem solving rubrics, Think-Pair-Share, conferencing notes, exit slips, self-assessment check lists, Red-Yellow-Green and hand signals. These are used to adjust instruction to meet student learning needs. Students are required to cite evidence during class discussions and when answering questions. In a grade 8 English language arts class students were asked to analyze multiple accounts of the sinking of the USS Maine in order to determine how yellow journalism affected American opinions of war with Spain. During class discussion, students cited evidence from a series of instructional resources used in class. In classrooms visited, students were observed using exit slips, rubrics to self and peer assess, and to track their own progress. For example, in a grade 8 math class student completed exit slips with different level of difficulty depending on student ability and understanding. These slips were labeled BA, MA and PHD in analogy to emphasizing the levels of degrees in higher education to differentiated levels of difficulty and high levels of learning.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to entire staff. Leadership and staff successfully partner with families to support student progress towards high expectations connected to college and career readiness.

Impact

The school has a culture of mutual accountability and staff takes ownership on improving their practice and creating true partnerships with parents that result in increased student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- During faculty conferences, teachers are informed of supervisory assignments, lesson plans expectations, training opportunities, safety and emergency measures, academic and behavior intervention practices, collaborative team meetings, and program schedule changes. News and announcements are communicated to families via the school web-site. This information is posted and hyperlinked to provide easy access to stakeholders. The entire faculty is dedicated to providing exemplary public education for their students. Each staff member takes an active role in ensuring all students excel academically. During cabinet meetings the administration team shares with grade team leaders, a data specialist, and coaches school professional development and training opportunities. This time is also used to share effective practices.
- During the initial planning meeting and end of year conferences with teachers, school leaders discuss expectations and goals for the year, observation options, Measures of Teacher Practice and Measures of Student Learning. Teachers engage in multiple professional development opportunities. New hires participate in summer teacher professional development training in August to familiarize themselves with the school's goals, policies and instructional focus. Teachers participate in study groups engaging in discussions of current research reading on effective pedagogy. Three teachers have been selected as Model Teachers to share their practice through the Showcase Schools Initiative. Science teachers participate in the Scientist in Residence Program that enhances science projects through authentic research.
- During the parents meeting they shared that teachers communicate with them consistently through emails, phone calls, notes sent home and general messages on the school web-site. In an effort to create a strong home-school partnership with families to support college and career readiness, the school hosts events such as, Parents in the Classroom, Student of the Month, Breakfast with the Principal, student assemblies for both parents and students. Monthly Parents in the Classroom events provide parents an insight into classroom life and how to support their children at home. The Parent Coordinator facilitates a weekly Book Club, where parents come together to learn about and discuss educational issues with an emphasis on preparing students for college and career readiness. In addition, the school offers a Character Education Program that introduces ideas and creates accountability for student behavior and achievement. The program is supported by lesson plans created by the guidance counselor in collaboration with classroom teachers. These lesson plans set expectations and tie behaviors to future successes in college and career.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

All teachers engage in consistent analysis of teacher practice and student data within inquiry-based structured professional collaborations. Distributed teacher leadership is embedded in their effective work which improves learning across all areas of the school.

Impact

School-wide instructional coherence is seen throughout all classrooms and teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect teaching and learning across the school resulting in increased student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams promote the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts by working collaboratively during common planning periods, and targeted inquiry work. Instructional practices help ensure that Common Core implementation is consistent across the entire school. Teachers utilize the K-8 Continuum for Assessing Narrative Writing aligned with the Teachers’ College Reading and Writing Project to determine next steps and create multiple entry points for whole class, small group, and individualized instruction. Teachers use this time to analyze student work, conference notes, checklists and assessment data in order to drive instruction. In addition, results from curriculum assessments and performance tasks are also used to identify opportunities to provide entry points for small group and individualized instruction.
- All teachers meet twice a week during grade and department team meetings to analyze student data, review student work products, and share student academic performances as well as social emotional progress. In addition to these regular scheduled meetings, a majority of the teachers work in smaller informal learning groups during their preparatory periods, or communicate through emails to discuss best practices and individual supports for specific students who may need additional support. These practices enable teachers to be responsive to student needs while planning for instruction. The planning involves creating of flexible groupings, development of higher order thinking questions, and collection of resources to support the teacher’s lesson. In a teacher team meeting observed, teachers used the “Surfacing the Gap” protocol to examine student work to identify the student’s thinking, comprehension, reasoning and organizational structure and formulate next steps.
- Distributed leadership has been developed by empowering specific teachers to lead collaborative professional learning communities. During these meetings, the Literacy and Math Specialists, consultants, and lead teachers act as facilitators to lead discussions regarding the delivery of instruction. The Data Specialist provides assistance on looking at student work and assessments results in order to drive and adjust instruction. These designated teachers, specialists, and consultants are the core of the school’s Professional Development Committee, which facilitates school-wide and small group professional learning communities as evident by teacher schedules and the school’s professional development plan. Professional development is planned upon results of teacher surveys as well as classroom observations.