



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Dr. William Dorney Public School**

**08X072**

**2951 Dewey Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10465**

**Principal: MARGARITA COLON**

**Date of review: November 24, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Socorro Diaz**

## The School Context

PS 72 is an elementary school with 896 students from grade Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 21% Black, 69% Hispanic, 5% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 25% 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 92%.

## 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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Focus</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

# Area of Celebration

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

School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness and successfully partner with families to support student progress. Staff provides students with feedback, guidance and ongoing support that helps prepare them for the next level.

## Impact

A culture of collaboration between staff, students, and families that fosters high expectations for all permeates the school and offers a clear path towards college readiness for all students.

## Supporting Evidence

- The school's mission statement clearly defines high expectations for all. The staff depicts this as they seek to ensure that all students receive engaging, rigorous, and differentiated instruction. They set high expectations for success and prompt students to think deeply through questioning, inquiry, and application of knowledge. Efforts to ensure student learning is monitored through on-going assessment and self-reflection is encouraged. The student/parent handbook and weekly updates reinforce the school's mission.
- Every parent has received a grade-specific booklet of "I Can Statements" for English language arts (ELA) and Mathematics that clearly identify the grade expectations for their child's grade. These pamphlets were prepared in collaboration with teachers and instructional coaches. Student goals, academic and personal behaviors are communicated to parents through Interim Progress Reports and marking period report cards, regular newsletters from instructional coaches and the administrative team. Grading policy and school-wide goals are shared at Open House and on the school website in English and Spanish.
- Grade level teams facilitate parent workshops that address the specific needs of the grade and there is shared the school-wide instructional focus of academic vocabulary and the development of critical thinking skills. Parent Coordinator also offer multi opportunities to engage parents during workshops offered during the week and on Saturdays as evident by the long-year Parent Engagement Calendar.
- Goal setting is a multi-tiered effort for the school. Students set individual goals in reading, writing, and mathematics. Teachers develop class goals and collaborate with grade level colleagues in the development of grade goals. All goals include actionable steps towards achieving the goals, which promotes ownership of the outcome for teachers and students. Professional learning opportunities are planned that relates to the quality of feedback teachers give students. Teachers are guided by the administrative team in the types of feedback given to students to ensure best results in making the feedback clear and actionable. Teachers are required to model the techniques they learned in providing feedback so that students can do the same during peer to peer assessment.

## Area of Focus

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

Teachers create assessments and use rubrics aligned to the school curricula to provide students with actionable feedback. Data from student work product is used to adjust curricula and instruction.

### Impact

Students are aware of their next steps and articulate how they use teacher feedback to improve their work. Targeted support is provided across classrooms to ensure coherence in supporting struggling students. Yet, it is unclear as to how the school uses common assessments to support student progress toward goals so that all students demonstrate increased mastery.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use data from pre-assessments to work with students in creating individual student goal setting sheets aligned to key skills identified in the curriculum units. Literacy Profile Data packets for every student in grades K-5 has been developed by teachers and contain benchmark scores at various points across the school year on a comprehensive series of tests. The school is working on expanding this process to other content areas.
- Grade level common assessments, including Common Core-aligned rubrics, unit monthly assessments baselines, project-based assessments, unit/chapter tests, Foundations and vocabulary tests are administered across grade levels and content areas. These assessments are created collaboratively in teacher team meetings and rubrics are used to assess evidence of rigor and alignment to standards. A review of unit plans showed alignment to identified content standards for reading and writing as well as evidence of feedback from teachers and instructional coaches.
- Teachers in teacher teams discussed how they regularly use rubrics to grade student work and norm their practices to ensure a common lens among staff members. School-wide protocols for Looking at Student Work (LASW) including the identification of teaching strategies, strengths, challenges, to close the achievement gap for all students have been strengthened and shared with all teachers. The principal showed evidence of scheduled professional development to support teachers in the creation and use of rubrics and with providing feedback to students. Students spoke to how they use rubrics in class and with homework assignments to help them better understand their strengths and areas of needs.

## Additional Findings

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

School curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards, and academic tasks are refined using student work ensuring all students are cognitively engaged.

### Impact

The school's curricular decisions build coherence and refinements of academic tasks provide access to curricula promoting college and career readiness for all learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school has opted to utilize the Common Core aligned Ready Gen and Go Math programs for literacy and mathematics respectively. Last summer teacher teams and colleagues from another school teamed up to analyze ReadyGen units to ensure that all literacy standards were being addressed. As a result, key units and modules were selected to deepen students' understandings and these modules were aligned to social studies and/or science scope and sequence documents.
- Instruction reflects the six shifts for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics by ensuring students have numerous opportunities to interact with complex text, cite evidence in verbal and written responses, use academic vocabulary, and develop higher order questioning skills. In mathematics, the instruction reflects the shifts by engaging students in rigorous, focused instruction to develop fluency and application of math concepts. Reviewed curriculum maps reflect these shifts. For example, a math curriculum maps for grade 2 show fluency expectations for addition and subtraction within number 20.
- The administrative team and teachers explained how curricula and tasks are purposely planned and refined using student work collected from benchmark assessments and student classwork. For example, in reviewing a first grade literacy unit overview teachers used the data from a previous performance based assessment to develop the instructional tasks and students' enduring understandings for each lesson in the unit. In math, a grade 4 unit shows the data for all students from pre and post assessments and how teachers purposely adapted some of the lessons to meet the needs of all learners through a series of scaffolding activities.
- Student work and tasks displayed in corridors are aligned to standards and accompanied by rubrics with specific actionable feedback. During the student meeting, students shared a piece of work that they were proud of and they articulated how rubrics provided next steps to make their work better. One student showed his three drafts before creating his final written work. The feedback provided through this process assisted the student in developing rubric aligned writing.

**Findings**

Across classrooms, teaching strategies were consistent in providing multiple entry points into the lesson and student discussion reflected even levels of student understanding.

**Impact**

All learners are actively engaged and there are multiple opportunities to promote higher order thinking skills.

**Supporting Evidence**

- During the leadership interview, the principal and assistant principals articulated the school's expectation on student engagement through the entire lesson, by use of the total participation technique. In addition, it was shared that content vocabulary is embedded in all the lessons, in tier 1, tier 2 and tier 3 words. In most classrooms visited, students were engaged and involved in appropriate challenging tasks. In an Integrated Co-teaching (ICT) class, students were grouped by levels and instructional activities were differentiated. A group of students was working on iPads using the Reading A to Z Kids program RAZ-Kids while another group was working independently; a third group was working with a teacher using text evidence from, *At the Root of it*, to identify roots and answer questions. A final group was working with another teacher using concrete examples of roots and identifying the types of roots using content vocabulary, such include creep, grab, grip, tangle, flexible, minerals, weave, adsorb, capture, surface, sturdy, rely, and gust.
- In classrooms visited, teachers asked questions to call on students and share their thoughts or extend their thinking. In an ICT class the teacher asked her small group to observe their plant roots and document their noticing. What type of root do you think you have? How do people and animals rely on roots? Ask a question you are still wondering about. In a social studies fourth grade class students were divided into two tribes: Iroquois and Algonquian. Both groups were asked to conduct research on their tribes through multiple media sources and answer the following questions: What were the similarities and differences between the two tribes? Why was nature so important to both cultures? What kind of shelter did the two groups build and why? How does it compare to the way we live now?
- Across classrooms students worked collaboratively and were actively engaged in the discussions within their groups. Students were able to articulate the work of the group and have an understanding of the material being covered. In a math class students were using the distributive property to find products. Several students in one group were able to unlock the problem using arrays and breaking them apart; they were also able to explain their reasons and draw conclusions. In another class, students were answering text dependent questions. They were also able to articulate the task's expectations.

<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**

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based collaborations that promote student achievement and strengthen teacher practice. Shared leadership structures are embedded in the work of teacher teams, coaches and the administrative team.

### **Impact**

The work of teacher teams has strengthened teacher collaborations resulting in improvements to pedagogical practices and a stronger voice in key decisions affecting supports for student achievement.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers participate in various teams on a weekly basis. There are teacher teams at grade levels, content based, vertical and horizontal, professional learning communities, Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) and common planning. During these meetings teachers plan and adjust curriculum and ensure alignments to the Common Core Learning Standards
- Teachers shared how they regularly meet in grade and content teams to examine student work and use that data to provide feedback to students. At the beginning of the teacher team meeting observed, teachers were engaged in reviewing the latest math assessment data for all kindergarten students in two classes. They discussed the changes needed to improve student performance and the supports students will need. Math center activities created by teachers were reviewed and adjusted during and after the implementation. For example, one of the teachers in the teacher team meeting shared two math activities that were developed to meet the outcomes of the unit and to reinforce a clear understanding of math concepts.
- Teacher teams have established protocols to conduct their meetings, including definitions of meeting behaviors, agendas and minutes. They perform a wide range of critical roles that include analysis of assessments and data, norm scoring decisions for assessment tasks across contents and adjust and select key instruction ideas from the selected curriculum. Critical decisions relating to instruction are an essential function of these teams. For example, an English language arts(ELA) teacher team for grade 4 revamped an entire unit of study to ensure students had multiple opportunities to interact with complex text, cite evidence in verbal and written responses, use academic vocabulary and develop higher order questioning and thinking skills.