



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 75 School of Research and Discovery

Elementary School X075

**984 Faile Street
Bronx
NY 10459**

Principal: Marines Arrieta-Cruz

**Date of review: March 30, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Luz T. Cortazzo**

The School Context

P.S. 75 School of Research and Discovery is an elementary school with 611 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 27% Black, 71% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 20% 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 90.5%.

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	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	Additional Findings	Well Developed
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	Focus	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

All curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are revised using student work and data to support diverse student needs.

Impact

The school's curricular decisions build coherence that promotes college and career readiness for all learners. Across subjects, teachers make intentional decisions to emphasize key standards and target students' areas of weaknesses.

Supporting Evidence

- The reading, writing and math units of study align with the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Successful strategies include a focus on content vocabulary instruction. Students are able to articulate, cite and include content specific vocabulary in their writing, access grade-level complex text, engage in high quality discussions using text-based responses and problem solve through reading and writing.
- The school's use of Journeys and the Math in Focus curricula, which align to the Common Core Learning Standards, provide exposure to rigorous tasks and learning materials. Additionally, the school strategically incorporates the instructional shifts across grades by requiring students to cite evidence from texts, and use a balance of informational and literary texts in English language arts (ELA). Higher order thinking was evident.
- Teachers ensure that learners are able to access curriculum through thoughtful collaborative planning based on a thorough review of student work and data, as evident in the reviewed grade 5 literacy unit. School leaders, consultants and lead teachers in ELA and math support teacher work to analyze student work and assessment results. Through item analysis, staff members determine student performance and then plan purposefully to meet the needs of all students.
- In math, the shifts to focusing on fluency, providing deeper understanding of concepts, developing speed and accuracy, and applying learning to real world problems were explicit in reviewed curricular documents. This was evident in the grade 2 pacing calendar for the unit on "Understanding Measurement, Length and Time". Standards for mathematical practice included making sense of problems and perseverance in solving them. It also emphasized abstract and quantitative reasoning, the construction of viable arguments, and the strategic use of tools, such as rulers, yardsticks, meter sticks, and measuring tapes, thus promoting depth in planning.

Area of Focus

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

The majority of teachers engage in regular inquiry-based collaborative meetings during which they consistently analyze curricula, student work and/or data.

Impact

Teacher team practices have led to the implementation of Common Core aligned curricula, the strengthening of instructional practices and progress in student achievement for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- The grade 4 teacher team examined an item skills analysis from a recent simulation test and they revised their current ELA unit to re-teach the concepts identified as in need of improvement.
- Teacher teams meet regularly and extend their work during professional development on Mondays to modify assessments such as running records, on-demand writing, and Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) mid-year assessments that measure student progress on the Common Core Learning Standards. They also address gaps in the Journey's curriculum, or align assessments to meet students' learning goals for the grade.
- Grade level teams frequently share student work. However, at today's observed meeting, participants did not use a protocol to reflect on the implications of formative and summative data to inform changes needed to their own pedagogical practices.
- During the question and answer meeting with teachers representing each grade, teachers stated that at grade level team meetings, they regularly refine curricula, design improvement plans, and frequently use protocols to reflect on the implications of data results in informing changes needed to their own pedagogic practices.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School wide practices reflect a philosophy based on how students learn best that aligns with the Danielson Framework for Teaching to meet the needs of all learners. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

The school wide teaching practices enable students to produce work products that reflect high levels of student thinking and involvement.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade 5 ELA class for English language learners (ELLs), the teacher introduced students to the integration of knowledge and ideas in informational text using three sources of information to learn about electronic communication. Explicit, meaningful instruction using the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model helped the students to develop their skills in English. The teacher scaffolded the lesson to tap into students' prior knowledge. Vocabulary was introduced at the beginning of the lesson, and the teacher modeled by "thinking aloud" and engaged the students in a "turn-and-talk" activity, using visual and other aids. Furthermore, differentiated strategies promoted social interaction and helped exhibit students' strengths.
- In a grade 4 science class, students explored how forces and friction affect the motion of an object by conducting an experiment with a ball and inclined plane to understand how forces affect an object's motion. After watching an on-line demonstration of an inclined plane, the teacher asked the students to think-pair-share their prediction of an optical inclined plane. Students achieved success as they worked in pairs to complete activities regarding forces of motion at three different stations. They recorded their findings in a data table and shared their results.
- In a collaborative team teaching math class, students worked in groups using the four operations to solve word problems. They then worked in pairs to practice modeled strategies. They rotated to different stations that focused on specific skills, and recorded their findings on their data sheets. Peers checked each other's work while the teacher conferred with a small group of students.
- Grade 3 students were learning about a new genre of writing. Students learned that descriptive writing uses sensory details as they used visual prompts, partner work, turn and talk and written prompts.

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use common and created assessments, rubrics and grading policies. They consistently use ongoing checks for understanding that create a clear picture of student progress toward goals and make effective curricular adjustments and instructional decisions.

Impact

Effective assessment practices that consistently monitor student understanding allow teachers to adjust instruction so that all students make progress, including ELLs and students with disabilities. As a result, students are aware of next steps and are able to demonstrate increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- The school utilizes common assessments such as periodic assessments, on-demand writing, and MOSL mid-year assessments as well as weekly on the spot reading assessments, benchmark assessments and math unit tests. Furthermore, literacy end of unit tasks are aligned to social studies and science curricula.
- Across all observed classrooms, teachers engaged students in ongoing checks for understanding, student self-assessment and goal setting. For example, during classroom visits, teachers conferred with students during independent reading and writing, and students used rubrics and checklists in a grade 2 writing class to self-monitor and ensure that they were meeting task specific expectations. Similarly, in a math class, students solved problems and self-assessed with the help of a teacher created “Ninja Problem Solving Steps” checklist.
- All teachers use and create ELA, math and content area rubrics to provide written feedback to students. This is a consistent practice across the school, as evidenced on hallway bulletin boards and shared during the student meeting. For example, students learned that during the Revolutionary War, American colonists had to decide which side they were on, Patriots or Loyalists. The task for students was to write a letter to someone who is undecided or neutral from the point of view of a Patriot or a Loyalist, in which they try to persuade them to come join your side. Students were required to explain clearly the reasons why their reader should join their group. A student stated that the teacher’s comments, “your letter is well-organized with three well-chosen reasons and supporting details, next steps, check the accuracy of your conventions” helped him to continue to achieve high grades. A grade 4 persuasive writing rubric similarly provided feedback to the student.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school has established a culture for learning that consistently communicates high academic expectations for teachers and students with supports to achieve those expectations through the implementation of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. The school offers ongoing feedback to parents, providing them with a consistent awareness of their students' progress towards meeting expectations.

Impact

The school's collaborative culture of accountability supports high expectations for staff and students. The successful partnering with families ensures that all students own their educational experience and that they are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- Professional needs based inter-visitations, classroom observations and timely feedback from classroom visits discussed at teacher team meetings to norm practices create a strong accountability structure for meeting expectations.
- Teacher teams have created high expectations for student feedback, within all subgroups, and have created student friendly rubrics and reflection sheets that hold students accountable for review of their work, specific next steps and timely follow up planning. Additionally, a child study team provides guidance for teachers in best practices for supporting struggling students in the classroom.
- Monthly parent newsletters provide ongoing feedback to families and outline curriculum and assessments. In addition, interim progress reports outline student progress and next steps for parents to support their children. Parent workshops aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, Tuesday family engagement sessions and a monthly family night that brings all the stakeholders together to learn and talk around the needs of students exemplify the school's connections with families.