



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Albert G. Oliver

Elementary School X093

**1535 Story Avenue
Bronx
NY 10473**

Principal: Jonathan Kaplan

**Date of review: May 22, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Renardo Wright**

The School Context

Albert G. Oliver is an elementary school with 416 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade five. The school population comprises 59% Black, 39% Hispanic, 2% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 28% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 93.0%.

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	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	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	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	Celebration	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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders have established a culture for learning that communicate high expectations to staff and families and are connected to college and career readiness. These high expectations are consistently provided to teachers and families through ongoing communication and collaborations

Impact

There is a supportive learning environment where school leaders communicate high expectations for professional learning and parent involvement leading to a path for college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- In September, school leaders provide a professional handbook for staff, teachers and paraprofessionals that outlines clear expectations and professional duties. The staff handbook also includes the school's mission, expected lesson planning, the use of preparation periods, and the expected professional attire and conduct.
- During the year, school leaders constructed a professional development plan based on the needs of teachers and the competencies of the Danielson Framework for teachers. For example, In September, teachers in the lower grades were provided professional development on administering Fountas and Pinnell running records. While in the month of October, all teachers were provided professional development on the Danielson Framework (3B) on questioning and discussion techniques to be incorporated in instructional lessons.
- Ongoing feedback to families to understand their children's academic and social progress is consistently made via phone calls, newsletters, emails, and progress reports and include a set of students' recommendations to support their needs and strengths in moving to their next academic level. During the parent meeting, it was shared that school leaders and teachers provide ongoing communication with them through phone calls, text messages, emails, and newsletters. In addition, parents expressed that all three administrators have open door policies, allowing them at any time during the school day to discuss their children's social and academic progress.
- School leaders have installed a parent bulletin board displayed at the front entrance of the school to provide parents with current information and activities happening at the school. Information and activities include parent workshops, Saturday programs, and summer camp opportunities. In addition, school leaders provide monthly calendars to families that include upcoming assessments, and special activities and events.
- In September, school leaders provide families with a Parent Engagement Schedule for Tuesdays during the school year. The schedule includes connecting social studies to art, how to get the most out of homework, preparing children for the science fair, and keeping children safe.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Although the school ensures that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts and include modifications to address the diverse needs of learners, there is a need to build coherence across all grades. Rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks.

Impact

Even though critical thinking skills and academic tasks are embedded into the curriculum so that all students are cognitively engaged there is a need to build coherence across all grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- Reviewed samples of curriculum maps across the different content areas provided evidence of alignment to the Common Core and included the instructional shifts. For example, in a 4th grade ELA curriculum map required students to explain how an author uses evidence to support key details in a literary or informational text. In a 5th grade ELA curriculum map, students are required to determine the theme of a story from details in the text, including how characters in a story respond to challenge.
- In reviewing a math lesson plan and an English language arts (ELA) lesson plan, modifications and revisions were made to address all classroom learners, especially English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. For example, an ELA lesson plan included modifications to address English language learners by allowing them to use pictures during the lesson to answer the essential questions. While a math lesson plan included manipulatives for students with disabilities to support them while problem solving.
- Reviewed samples of curriculum maps across the different content areas emphasize higher order thinking skills using the Depth of Knowledge Wheel and essential questions. For example, an 5th grade ELA curriculum map included essential questions that asked students, how do readers identify relationships and interactions in text and how do writers group information logically, with supporting visuals. A 5th grade social studies curriculum map included the essential question that asked students, how do issue of power, wealth, and morality influence exploration and colonization.
- Writing is embedded throughout curriculum maps and rigorous tasks are consistently promoted across curricula. For example, a 5th grade ELA curriculum map required students to write evidence from informational texts and support with analysis, reflections, and research. Additionally, students were required to gather relevant information from print and digital sources to summarize or paraphrase information in notes and include within all finished work.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, lessons are aligned to the school's curricula and provide multiple entry points into the instructional lessons for all learners.

Impact

School-wide, learners were actively engaged and there were multiple opportunities to promote higher order thinking skills and high level discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, lessons were scaffold and differential for students to provide multiple entry points to the curricula and ensure all learners were actively challenged and engaged during the lessons. In a third grade math class, there were four groups of students working constructing Angles and Lines projects using popsicles sticks. Students performing at a higher level were placed in a group to construct polygons using their learned knowledge of angles and lines. In a kindergarten class, a teacher read a story *A Tiny Seed*, and instructed students to construct full flowers from seeds. While several students worked independently on their drawings, some students were provided graphic organizers and a teacher assistant to support them while constructing their flowers with the use of seeds.
- Across classrooms, teachers incorporated essential questions to promote high level thinking and discussions. In a fifth grade Integrated Collaborative Team Teaching (ICT) class, the lesson included the essential questions, how did the Age of Exploration change the world? Students were directed to list their responses in writing and then verbally share their responses with the group. While in a fifth grade math class, students were asked to turn and talk to their partners to discuss their responses/answers to the essential question that was being asked, how can you solve problems involving distance, rate, and time?
- During classrooms visits, classroom lessons were cognitively challenging to promote higher thinking skills. For example, in a first grade math class, students were assigned to groups while instructed to list of objects inside or outside the classroom that were shaped like a rectangular prism. The classroom teacher provided the students with extra time as they cognitively challenged themselves to address the assignment. In a third grade social studies class, students worked in groups to construct written projects on various natural disasters that occurred around the world based on the multiple informational sources that they read and researched.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and staff align assessments to curricula, and use of on-going assessments and grading practices to analyze data on student learning outcomes is to make instructional adjustments on the grade and classroom level. Teachers use ongoing checks for understanding to inform them of next instructional practices.

Impact

The school's use of common assessments, data analysis, and feedback allows teachers to make thoughtful instructional adjustments at the classroom and grade levels to improve students' outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- During classroom visits, teachers checked for understanding during the instructional lessons. Teachers used *math mind quick checks*, thumbs up, writing check lists, exit slips and various questioning strategies to assess students' understanding during the lessons. In a first grade math class, the teacher used a Go Math, *Math Mind Quick Check* to assess students learning during the lessons. The *math mind check sheet* required students to write what they were learning during the lesson. The teacher walked around the class to observe students' answers. The classroom teacher made a few minor lesson adjustments when she noticed a few students couldn't express their understanding. While in a second math class, the teacher used a quick check questioning sheet to assess students' learning. The sheet included the names of the students and a check was placed next to those students who missed or were unable to answer certain questions from the assigned lesson.
- The school has a grading policy that detailed a standard based grading rubric for all subjects. During the visit, the use of content rubrics accompanied by meaningful feedback from teachers to students was evident in hallways and classrooms. Comments included, 'glows and grows' on students' work samples. While visiting classrooms, several students' work samples inside folders included actionable feedback from classroom teachers that was aligned to content specific rubrics.
- In September, school leaders provided school wide benchmark performance assessments, NYC Schoolnet, in both reading and math. The results from these assessments provided school leaders and teachers with complete data item analysis of students. Results have led to instructional adjustments at the classroom and grade levels as well as the grouping of students across the grades according to their reading and math levels. In addition, the school uses Teachers College benchmark reading levels in Fountas and Pinnell for ongoing monitoring and assessing students' reading levels throughout the school year.

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

The majority of teachers participate in teacher-led, structured professional learning and collaborations, working together to analyze students’ work and data to improve classroom practices across the school.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has strengthened teacher collaboration resulting in instructional adjustments and changes in pedagogical practices to improve student outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teachers’ work, including teacher classroom practice, assessment data, and student work for students they share or on whom they focused. During the visit, third grade teachers met to review and discuss one of their colleague’s student math assessments. The team used an ‘inquiry like’ approach as they analyzed and discussed a student’s math assessments. After reviewing and discussing the students’ assessments, an Inquiry Group template is used to inform the team of the next steps. For example, the template includes three questions to inform teachers of next steps: What did the task ask the students to know and be able to do? What were you noticing from the students work sample that show evidence of strengths and/or areas of improvement? How will you adjust instruction to increase to student achievement and what changes will you have to make?
- School leaders ensure that teachers engage in ongoing professional dialogue and collaborations in reviewing the instructional focus, looking at students’ work and data, and the implementation of questioning and discussion techniques based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching. A reviewed professional plan for the 2014-2015 school year outlines the opportunity for all teachers to meet weekly for professional trainings and collaborations. Teachers are afforded the opportunity to engage in professional book studies and inquiry work that would lead to improving pedagogical practices and students’ performance.
- The school has incorporated a Child Study team, which meets biweekly to discuss students that are having academic, behavioral and/or social-emotional challenges in classrooms. Classroom teachers provide the team a list of names of students who are having difficulties in making academic and social adjustments inside the classroom. The team reviews the teacher’s antidotal notes and look at the students’ work and social history at the school. The team is beginning to look for researched based interventions that can be shared with the teacher to support the student in achieving academic and social success. During the meeting, team members shared that curriculum and instructional adjustments that have been made to accommodate the learning needs of identified students.