



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

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2014-2015**

**The Eagle School**

**Elementary School X140**

**916 Eagle Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10456**

**Principal: Paul Cannon**

**Date of review: January 30, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Sheila S. Gorski**

## The School Context

The Eagle School is an elementary school with 647 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 35% Black, 61% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 23% 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 89.0%.

## 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>Celebration</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>Focus</b>	<b>Developing</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>Additional Findings</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

The school ensures Common Core aligned curricula and makes purposeful decisions across the subject areas and grades, consistently refining the curriculum and meeting the needs of all students.

### Impact

School leaders and staff align curricula and academic tasks to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts, informed by student work analysis so that refinements cognitively engage all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school utilizes the Common Core aligned *ReadyGen* Program in English language arts supported by NY Engage resources, leveled libraries and a Balance Literacy approach to guided reading. *Ready Gen* modules are used for their design which includes performance based assessments, anchors and supporting texts, goals, big ideas, enduring understandings, essential questions and standards covered in each unit. Additionally, the school has taken an interdisciplinary approach to science and social studies using modules that include content area topics, and use *History Alive* textbooks, interactive student notebooks in grades 3 through 5 to support students in content area information in social studies. To build student background knowledge in the area of science, the school uses *Harcourt Science* textbooks. In math, the school has implemented, *Go Math!* and its resources to support the math program which include, "*Think Central.*" Resources are selected based on student needs and incorporated in lesson plans.
- Data analysis of student writing indicated that the *ReadyGen* Program afforded limited writing support so the school leadership and staff members reviewed the curricula modules and designed curriculum maps that included modifications to ensure that the writing was addressed and included the instructional shifts. For example, curriculum maps now include argumentative writing with text-based evidence to support arguments and counterarguments, as well as, numerous genres to create a balance between narrative and non-narrative writing. Likewise, data-analysis identified fluency and problem-solving as learning gaps. The school math curriculum maps depict refinements to include supports that address fluency and problem-solving steps. To support the math program the school uses the Tiers. Tier 1 may include, Response to Intervention (RTI) activities, Tier 2 may contain cross-curricular activities and Tier 3 may consist of, "extend the projects" activities.
- Across the classrooms, lesson plans consist of objectives with, "I can" statements. They also include, an aim, standards, a "Build Understanding," a "first read" of the lesson, an "explore text," a "read together," and a second read of the lesson which requires a close reading. In addition, plans use a focus reading, which includes vocabulary, text-based conversation, language analysis, independent reading, and a reading wrap-up. A review of units, curriculum maps and the professional development indicates that professional development, grade meetings and curriculum mapping teams, have ensured the school-wide effort to provide supports embedded in the curriculum maps such as, *Fletcher's* phonics which is a visual support, Depths of Knowledge levels and thinking maps to meet student needs across all content areas.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide entry points into the curricula. Student work products and discussions are at uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

### Impact

The use of entry points, scaffolds and questioning techniques and discussion across classrooms reflect inconsistent comprehension levels and student engagement, hindering participation, and demonstration of thinking at high levels for a diversity of students.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal has established an atmosphere representing the school belief entitled, the "Environment Brand"(EB) which identifies consistent key elements and practices in all classrooms. The principal and staff also see the environment brand as representative of its school Identity. All classrooms visited were illustrative of the EB with data centers, experiential charts, support charts, product and content boards, and word walls across the content areas, a meeting area, interactive centers, classroom libraries, and a variety of resources. Every classroom maintains student growth promotional portfolios, work folders in reading, writing, math and the content areas. Classroom routines are in place in some classrooms with transitional activities and students are generally familiar with movements and resources, such as a diversity of thinking maps available for student use.
- During classroom visits, some students were observed working in pairs or at centers in groupings. Teachers were also noted working with a student group. However, classroom environments were not always conducive to student activities. For example, in a grade 3 classroom some students were seated in long rows reading independently with limited guidance provided so that students would know the expectations for the next part of the lesson. After a given time students were expected to move to the next center, but centers were not always identifiable and the classroom setting was not arranged to afford easy movement. Students appeared confused as to what to do and how to do it. Although the students were compliant and management was effective, students were not always informed of what to do next.
- Conversations with students indicated limited understanding of the lesson in some classrooms. For instance, in a first grade class students working on regrouping were asked the question, "How many pets are in the shelter?" "What does it look like?" Such questions prompted one-word responses. Most questions asked were at recall levels, or literal questions, limiting students from showing their thinking and participating at higher levels. In a grade 5 classroom, the teacher used the SMART board to reflect a circle map to elicit student knowledge of fractions. Students had fraction strips on their desks. Students were required to use models to add fractions with unlike denominators, as the teacher posed the question, "What are fractions?" Student responses remained at one-word answers and some had errors, such as "multiplication" or mixed numbers. The lesson went on with limited effort to probe deeper thinking or correct responses. A review of student growth promotional portfolios, and work folders indicates that classrooms portfolios follow students, and maintain student work folders. Yet, student work products in portfolios and folders reflect uneven levels of student thinking, and discussions did not always include all voices.

## Additional Findings

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

Teachers use common assessments aligned to the curricula and determine student progress toward goals. Curricular decisions are informed by student work analysis.

### Impact

The use of student data to monitor student progress is consistent in the majority of classrooms, so that teachers give actionable feedback to students and make instructional adjustments to meet the needs of all learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- An assessment calendar informs all staff members via a timeline that depicts all assessments beginning with baselines, interim checkpoints, such as, during this month where all teachers administer round 3 of running records, and during the middle of the month all grades have due dates to submit student portfolios for review. Others include *Rally* and *TUNEin to Reading*, online programs used as interventions for targeted students. The school's grading policy uses a measure of range on a scale between levels 1 and 4 so that there is a common language for all teachers when assigning percentage ranges. For example, a level 3 student is considered on-grade level and quantitatively the conversion is between 80 and 89 percent. Teachers also provide actionable feedback to students during conferences and in written form. During a student meeting a student stated, "The teacher wrote on my essay that I had excellent use of figurative language and sequence, but that I have to be careful how I use commas and that I should avoid fragments."
- Across classrooms, teachers utilized the English language arts and math Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) baseline assessment data to understand the academic needs of all students. Indications of the need to deepen student thinking and the use of text-based evidence in writing have prompted the school to emphasize the use of common assessments aligned to student needs; such include: student friendly rubrics aligned to performance tasks, On Demand writing prompts, and conference notes. Running records are administered across all grades four times per year to assess reading fluency and comprehension.
- Teachers administer beginning, middle and end of year *ReadyGen* and *GoMath!* assessments to monitor individual and student group progress toward goals. Teachers also make instructional adjustments such as moving a unit up in the calendar to strengthen skills and meet the demands of the Common Core Learning Standards. All teachers use common rubrics ensuring coherence. For example, the narrative writing rubric is used in all grades incorporating a measure of range on a scale between levels 1 and 4 and examines the writing focus, organization, development, language and vocabulary, and conventions. This affords all students a deep familiarity and understanding of what is being assessed and how consistently they grow in those areas from grade to grade. In each grade, the rubric identifies the criteria for each of the categories. For instance, while in third grade the category for development requires student's narratives to contain dialogue, vivid descriptions and character experiences and responses to obtain a level four; In fifth grade, students are required to effectively use dialogue and descriptions, pacing, and other methods to develop events and character's responses to events in order to obtain a level 4.

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

School leaders communicate high expectations to the entire school community via the Danielson Framework for Teaching regarding professionalism and student achievement. The school provides support for families assisting them in helping their children meet those expectations.

### Impact

Ongoing and sustained communication of the principal's high expectations is exhibited in professional development, parental support, and student engagement, ensuring a system of accountability for all in meeting those expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- A structure that expresses the school's beliefs known as, the "Environment Brand"(EB) determines consistent key elements and practices expected to be illustrated in all classrooms. The principal's high expectations are clearly represented throughout the school building and teachers support the EB as observed in each classroom visited. The principal and staff also perceive the EB as demonstrative of its school Identity. Data centers, support charts, product and content boards, experiential charts and word walls across the content areas, a meeting area, interactive centers, classroom libraries and a variety of resources portray the principal's expectations for optimal learning environments. Teachers gather at the school's *Data Café* where data conversations take place and teacher team initiatives, and weekly data articles support professional conversations.
- Staff members are supported with professional growth via a range of professional learning opportunities informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teacher's reflections and observations inform professional development and are intended to incorporate assessments, and a "Buffet of Topics," curriculum, and data sessions. Currently, teachers are receiving professional development on questioning and discussion.
- The Staff Handbook, which is available at the Data Café, sets clear expectations for instruction, attendance, and school policies, including a school-wide grading policy, notices and minutes from monthly school leadership team meetings, samples of lesson plans, and curricular expectations. Frequent communication between leadership and staff takes place via emails and Drop box. *The Eagle Weekly*, newsletter keeps everyone abreast of school current events, professional development, student activities, staff activities, parental involvement and "Woody's World," which is mostly about student events, such as, cheerleading practice, and intramural basketball tournaments. Weekly Cabinet meetings, which include coaches and a data specialist, teacher teams, and grade leaders, represent expectations throughout the school environment.
- College and career readiness is communicated to parents via monthly progress reports to inform families of their children's academic progress, and personal behaviors. Grade and class newsletters provide parents with highlights; an example is an English language arts performance-based assessment: "We are doing research on animals in their habitat." Announcements include, classroom citizen of the month, and reminders include: "Uniforms should be worn every day." Weekly parent outreach is conducted on Tuesdays and monthly parent association meetings inform parents of the weekly wellness program for families. The school also hosts an Etiquette Training Program to prepare students on positive academic and personal behaviors, such as self-regulation, and resilience.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

Key decisions made by teacher teams to analyze student data leverage instructional improvements in practice and at the classroom level

**Impact**

Teacher Teams use student work and data analysis to inform instructional changes, making key decisions that affect the learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams meet regularly to examine student work and instructional practices. Using Drop box, collections of strategies and lesson plan adjustments are memorialized to share with peers in a transparent manner. For example, a third grade teacher team was observed engaged in the protocol for looking at student work. Teachers discussed their noticing of student writing based on the text evidence from the story they read titled, “*Thunder Cake*” The team’s findings indicate that one student was copying directly from the text. A second student used text-based evidence, but did not know how to respond in the student’s own words. During a team discussion on possible strategies to address the needs of the students, the team agreed on the following instructional adjustments and next steps:: “teach students how to interpret quotes in order to making meaning of their own words, how to use the skill of paraphrasing, and for students with special needs, teach them a strategy so they find the page and then find the word.
- Teacher teams begin meetings with a “check-in” of lessons in reading and math. For example, during a team meeting a teacher used the SMART board to log into Drop box and show the mini-lesson adjustments made in support of the math program that the team has decided does not afford students enough of and engage in a professional conversation regarding a math mini-lesson. One teacher designed a problem-solving story requiring students to read the problem and based on the language used decide the operation needed to solve the problem. Extra information was included in the problem. The team agreed on making the problem a two-step problem.
- Numerous teachers have taken on leadership roles to support school initiatives. For example, subsequent to analysis of on demand writing samples, the team found that student needs revealed learning gaps in story elements and punctuation including capitals and periods. Teacher teams then leveraged instructional adjustments across the school via support writing materials and thinking maps. Teachers also support peers through mentoring and sharing of expert knowledge, such as special education and Universal Design Learning and engage in coaching cycles with ongoing reflection of the inquiry process. The staff development committee meets on a weekly basis to analyze learning surveys and create professional learning cycles for the Monday professional learning sessions.