



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

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2014-2015**

**The Evergreen School**

**Elementary School X152**

**1007 Evergreen Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10472**

**Principal: Frances Lynch**

**Date of review: March 24, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Socorro Diaz**

## The School Context

The Evergreen School is an elementary school with 977 students from grade Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 22% Black, 75% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 27% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90%.

## 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 consistently emphasize a culture of learning that communicates high expectations to the school community, provide training and have a system of accountability for those expectations leading to students' progress towards mastery of Common Core Learning Standards.

### Impact

The school provides a culture of mutual accountability for high expectations and professionalism, instruction, and other elements of the Danielson framework, and successfully partners with families to support student progress toward those expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school communicates high expectations to staff, inclusive of training and a system of accountability. During the first staff meeting in September, high expectations were clearly outlined. The staff was informed of supervisory assignments; lesson plan expectations, professional development and training opportunities, academic and behavior intervention practices, collaborative team meetings and program schedule changes. During one on one conference, initial planning and end of year conferences with teachers, school leaders discuss expectations and goals for the year, observation options and Measures of Teacher Practice and Measures of Student Learning (MOSL). There are multiple opportunities for teachers to participate in training and professional development offerings as shared by teachers during team meetings.
- Staff communicates and supports high expectations for students. For example, teachers provide students feedback based on what they do well and next steps for areas of need. In addition, rubrics are created for writing, reading, listening, and personal behavior to allow students to peer assess and self-assess. Students receive continuous feedback through conferencing, checklists, rubric analysis, progress reports, self-reflection, and academic conversations. The school also celebrates students' academics and attendance through monthly assemblies and parents are invited and honored for their contributions. In addition there is a "Shout Out" bulletin board on the main floor that highlights upcoming parents events and celebrate students' successes.
- The school provides ongoing, clear lines of verbal and written communication such as online progress reports, parent/teacher conferences, parent informational sessions and workshops, and student handbook, with families to deepen their understanding of college and career readiness expectations for their children and to empower them to help support their children in meeting or exceeding those expectations. For example, every parent has received a grade-specific monthly newsletter in English and Spanish to include an overview of curriculum, key vocabulary for current units of study for all core subjects and monthly assessment information.
- Families and students noted that school leaders and teachers make themselves available to communicate with families and students to discuss their academic progress and ways to support students at home. Different resources are shared with parents and families to include internet programs, web links and extra homework assignments to enhance students' learning.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

While across classrooms teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula and provide student feedback, further development of assessments would offer students a clearer portrait of mastery.

### Impact

The school's use of common assessments, data analysis and feedback allows teachers to make curricular and instructional adjustments to meet the needs of all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use MOSL pre- and post-assessment analysis, STAR Reading and Math benchmarks, curriculum assessments and running records to inform their instruction. These assessments are built into the units of study and lesson plans designed in curriculum maps. The school uses grade-wide monthly spreadsheets to track and analyze student progress. This information is used throughout the year to determine student progress toward meeting their goals across grades and contents. For example, math and science teachers have administered pretests and created individual SMART goals based on student outcomes.
- Ongoing checks for understanding include pre-planned questioning, problem solving rubrics, white boards and think-pair-share: in one class the teacher asked to regroup to reinforce what was expected. In another class, the teacher promoted questioning and discussion at different levels: in an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class the teacher encouraged students to talk to their partners before answering the question; in a self-contained class the teacher asked questions about a posted math problem on area and perimeter and allowed for students to think for two minutes before responding. Teachers used these opportunities to adjust instruction and meet students' needs.
- The use of rubrics accompanied by actionable feedback from teachers and students was evident in the work displayed in hallways. During the leadership interview, the principal shared the professional development opportunities offered to teachers in regards to the use of rubrics and providing feedback to students. The school has a grading policy that detailed a standard based grading rubric for all assignments. Students' portfolios for each core subject were found in each classroom. Each subject is color coded: Green-Science, Yellow-Writing, Black- Social Studies, Red-English-language arts (ELA) and Blue-mathematics. In reviewing student portfolios, it was noted that they contained a series of student work to include weekly and monthly assessments and teachers' comments detailed as glows and grows.
- In reviewing lesson plans, it was noted that most plans showed areas for grouping and differentiated instruction. Small groups were designed based on assessment data and classroom observation.

## Additional Findings

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

Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills and are planned and refined using student work so that all learners including English-language learners and students with disabilities have access to the curricula and tasks.

### Impact

The school ensures that curricula and academic tasks are rigorous, accessible for English language learners and refined by teachers based on student assessment data.

### Supporting Evidence

- Curriculum maps and lesson plans are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional tasks include supporting claims and counterclaims with textual evidence and multistep word problems. Teacher teams adapt curricular resources from Write Steps, Scholastic Reading Program, and Accelerated Math 2.0. Skills and lessons noting English as a Second Language (ESL) strategies including the use of visual web based pictures to aid in the understanding of content and vocabulary, the acquisition of academic vocabulary, sight words, phonics and reading comprehension skills were emphasized in maps.
- Teacher teams meet three times a week during lunch and/or after school to review data and discuss curricular adaptations. For example, teachers analyzed student work data and determined that students struggle with writing and vocabulary development. Teacher teams then adapted curricula to include vocabulary, pictures, visual cues sentence starters and graphic organizers to aid student comprehension.
- Rigorous habits and higher order skills are embedded within curricula and academic tasks coherently across grades and subjects. For example, a balance of fiction and nonfiction texts in literacy and activities leading to the practice of math fluency were seen in maps. Maps contain essential questions, lesson procedures, learning targets, visual aids, vocabulary, group tasks, evidence of Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) leveled activities, formative assessments and modifications/adaptations.
- Examples of multiple points of entry were seen in ESL unit plans/maps. These included scaffolds for questions, graphic organizers, paragraph models, turn and talk, activating prior knowledge, and suggestions for flexible grouping.
- In a fourth grade social studies class, specific ELL based learning activities, standards and details including inferencing and citing specific textual evidence in supporting conclusions were evident, as were extensions for advanced students including additional writing prompts.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **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 were actively engaged and there were multiple opportunities to promote higher order thinking skills.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- During the leadership interview, the principal and assistant principals described that the school was focusing on creating an engaging learning environment that supports all learners in cognitively challenging tasks. In addition, it was shared that the school is working with teachers in developing lessons and unit plans that include student choice of activity or projects that are at varied levels of difficulty and entry points resulting in the ability to earn higher grades depending on the quality of the completed task. In most classroom visited, students were engaged and involved in appropriate challenging tasks. In an ICT class, students were grouped by levels and instructional activities were differentiated. A group of students was working on identifying and explaining “how does asking and answering questions help to understand informational text”. Another group was working on identifying good things readers do to help them find information efficiently to skim the text. Another group used the Four Corners graphic organizer to document the answers to the questions.
- In classrooms visited, teachers asked questions to call for students to strategically think or extend their thinking. In a science ICT class, the teacher asked her small group to discuss how threats affect biodiversity of an ecosystem. In an ELA classroom, the teacher asked students to work with their table group and explain, in their own words, how authors use imagery, figurative language, and other poetic devices to introduce, illustrate and elaborate on their ideas about democracy and its flows and limitations. The group had to summarize their findings and shared with the rest of the class. In a grade 9 English class, the teacher asked students to engage in a turn and talk activity to share what they know about the Cupid myth after reading the first few chapters of *Romeo and Juliet*.
- 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 an ELA class, students were asked to determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text and provide an objective summary of the text. Students were also able to explain their reasons and draw conclusions. In another class, students were answering text dependent questions. They were 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**

School leaders and teachers have built a culture of professional collaboration in which they share insights relative to the coherence of teacher pedagogy fostering improvement of outcomes for all learners. Distributed teacher leadership is embedded and their effective work improves learning across all areas of the school.

**Impact**

School-wide instructional coherence is evident 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 Standards and the instructional shifts by working collaboratively during common planning periods and professional development sessions. These practices help ensure that Common Core implementation is consistent across grades and subjects. The staff meets in a variety of settings to evaluate students’ needs and professional learning opportunities. Teacher teams develop and implement grade-wide instructional practices through collaborating on their lesson plans, creating monthly assessments and revising instruction based on data as evident by teacher teams agendas and previous minutes to include teachers’ reflection sheets.
- A strong professional learning community exists at the school. Teachers regularly engage in professional collaborations that support instructional goals, strengthen teacher capacity and support a positive culture of trust. They conduct book clubs to engage in current research and to improve practice. Teachers are currently studying three books engaging on professional conversations and sharing effective teaching practices. During weekly professional learning time and scheduled content area team meetings, teachers engage in analyzing student work, aligning lessons and units with grade level cohorts, sharing instructional practices and ensuring that all instructional tasks align with the Common Core and instructional shifts. These practices enable teachers to be responsive to student needs while planning for instruction. As a result of these meetings, the school has developed the following initiatives: a school-wide math fluency focus, incorporating guided reading in grades 1 and 2, and incorporating a school-wide writing program.
- Teacher leaders, data team, and the professional learning committee, who represent each grade and content, meet weekly with the instructional cabinet to discuss professional development and teacher practice. School administration and staff collaboratively plan and facilitate professional development, school-learning walks, articulation events, parent-teacher workshops and all other school-wide events. During two observed teacher team meetings, teachers articulated that they feel empowered to have input on decisions toward the development of instructional resources across grades and that their leadership is valued. For example, the MOSL committee selected assignments for the 2014-15 evaluations and the professional learning committee uses and analyzes various data sources to identify areas of strengths and needs for teachers to learn from and share.