



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

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2014-2015**

**Luis Muñoz Marín Biling**

**Elementary School X159**

**2315 Washington Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10458**

**Principal: Luis M. Liz**

**Date of review: January 29, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Renee Peart-Zachary**

## The School Context

Luís Muñoz Marín Biling is an elementary school with 195 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 8% Black, 91% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 28% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 93.0%.

## 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>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>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>Focus</b>	<b>Developing</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>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>Developing</b>

## Area of Celebration

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

School leaders provide training aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and consistently communicate high expectations to staff. Furthermore, school leaders communicate high expectation to parents so they are made aware of their children's academic progress.

### Impact:

School leaders have a system of holding teachers accountable that is resulting in all teachers being fully aware of school-wide expectations. Moreover, families receive Common Core aligned academic resources that connect to a path of college and career readiness and information to help them understand their children's progress.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate high expectations to staff through memoranda and written reports from informal and formal teacher observations. The principal's non-negotiables outline the school-wide instructional expectations that all classrooms must include flow of the day agendas, math fluency charts, and Ready Gen Concept wall that include vocabulary words, standards and unit topics. Additionally, the principal expects that teacher lesson plans should include the instructional shifts, Common Core Learning Standards, and activities that promote student discussions.
- Parents receive information from teachers that keeps them apprised of their children's progress. Class Dojo an online system that documents students behavior, monthly progress reports, emails from teachers, and teachers notes home keep parents well inform on their children's academic struggles and strengths.
- Open school night, the school's website, grade-level parent orientations, Common Core Learning Standards workshops where parents receive examples of rigorous tasks, fifth grade parent meetings on middle-school choice, and Tuesday parent/teacher conferences inform parents about curricula and school-wide expectations.
- Parents reported that the school has an open-door policy that allows them to meet with teachers and school leaders to discuss their questions about Common Core Learning Standards and their children's academic progress. One parent said, "I think this school cares about student progress and teachers will go out of their way to help us understand the curriculum."

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Developing

**Findings:** Across classrooms, teachers use assessments and rubrics and provide limited feedback to students. Moreover, teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect ongoing checks for understanding and students have limited opportunities to self-assess their work products.

**Impact:** The school's assessment practices are not resulting in all learners, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, being fully informed of their next learning steps across subject areas.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders reported that all classes have two teachers or a teacher and a paraprofessional in the classroom and students receive lots of support to address their strengths and areas of improvement. Furthermore, school leaders reported that teachers check for understanding through the use of teacher questioning, observations, recording formative data, exit slips, and checklists. However, across classrooms visited, teachers' use of checks for understanding was not consistent. In several classes, there were missed opportunities for teachers to capture students' common misunderstandings. For example, in a first grade math class, students were asked to solve a problem where they would identify that a two-digit number represents a number from the tens and ones place values. The teacher asked students to write down the number in the tens place. The teacher took notes on who was on task rather than students' struggles.
- In a fifth grade math class, students worked in pairs to solve problems on multiplying mixed numbers. The teacher circulated the classroom and took conference notes on student group discussions. The teacher conducted a midpoint check and discussed her findings with the whole class. Additionally, she took a small group of students to re-teach specific fraction skills. This type of checks for understanding practice with adjustments to the lesson was observed in only two out of seven classes.
- Teachers use rubrics and a variety of assessments such as Fontas and Pinnell, I-Ready, and Go Math Pre and Post Unit Assessments. However, teachers provide learners with limited feedback on assessment results and tasks as evidenced by the teacher comments reviewed on student work products in student portfolios. A review of student portfolios revealed that some students receive detailed teacher feedback while other students receive no comments or a check for completion of the tasks. Some teachers provided students with written feedback such as "next time, add more details to make your ideas clear", "I'm glad that the graphic organizer helped you organize your information", "Next time, try to add more descriptive vocabulary words" as well as "great", "nice job", "excellent", and "well done".

## Additional Findings

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

School leaders and teachers adopt and adapt curricula that are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and incorporate the instructional shifts so that all students have access.

### Impact:

The school's curricular choices provide all learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, with access to curricula that promote college and career readiness and all learners have opportunities to cognitively engaging tasks.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers selected the Common Core aligned curricula of Pearson Ready Gen, Harcourt Go Math!, Science New York City Scope and Sequence and the New York K-12 Social Studies Framework. Across the subjects, curricula integrate all the instructional shifts and school staff has a specific focus on text-based answers for English Language Arts (ELA) and fluency for math. A review of teacher lesson plans revealed teachers plan lessons using the Common Core aligned curricula and focus on the instructional shifts of text based answers and fluency. Furthermore, students reported that their teachers are always giving them tasks in different subjects where they must give text-based answers to support their claims.
- Using the Analyzing Student Work Protocol, teacher teams meet monthly to review student work products and assessments, and adjust curricula to support all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities. For example, the fifth grade teachers reviewed Go Math student work products and noticed that students were struggling with equivalent fractions, common denominators, and unlike denominators. The teachers reviewed the Go Math unit six and adjusted the unit by modifying its pacing, adding more lessons on simplest form, and re-teaching fraction word problems.
- Across classrooms visited, teacher lesson plans provided evidence of adjustments to support individual, groups of students, and subgroups. For example, a fifth grade ELA teacher made alterations to the Ready Gen unit two by including more vocabulary words and by adding a close read lesson on the poem *The Great Migration* by Walter Dean Myers, where students focused on key ideas that support the author's viewpoint. The teacher's lesson plan included differentiating the task for tier one, tier two, and tier three reading groups.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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**Findings:**

Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to a shared belief system that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Moreover, across classrooms, student discussions inconsistently reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

**Impact:**

All learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, are not fully producing meaningful work products and their academic progress and performance are hindered.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders reported that Danielson Framework Component 3b: questioning and discussions is a focus for the school and that teachers use Norman Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) to determine the rigor of the tasks and implement higher-order questions and activities to promote high-level student discussions. However, across classrooms visited, some teachers asked low-level questions and lessons were teacher directed. For example, in a math class, a first grade teacher asked students low-level DOK one questions to assess students understanding of the number twelve. The teacher said, “What digit is in the ten’s column?”, “Great!”, “What digit is in the one’s column?”, “Excellent!”, “Let’s move on.”
- School leaders reported that teachers and administrators believe students learn best when they are engaged in higher-order discussions with their peers. This shared belief about student discussions was not consistently observed across classrooms. It was observed in two out of seven classes. In a fifth grade math class, students worked in pairs to assist each other with solving math problems on multiplying mixed numbers. Students discussed multiple-step math problems and provided their peers with feedback. In a fourth grade ELA class, students worked in groups on differentiated tasks. Some students collaborated with each other to discuss the leveled-reading text. In the other five classes visited, high levels of student discussions were not observed.
- Across classrooms visited, student thinking and participation was inconsistent. In five out of seven classes observed, lessons were teacher dominated with minimal evidence of student discussions and learners’ deepening their critical thinking skills. For example, in a second grade Spanish class, the teacher-directed lesson allowed no opportunities for high levels of student thinking and student-to-student discussions. For fifteen minutes, the teacher asked recall questions on how birthday parties are different in Spanish-speaking countries. Although the teacher’s lesson plan included opportunities for students to talk about birthday parties in Spanish with the teacher and their classmates and to speak, read and write in Spanish, the execution of this plan was not observed in the lesson as taught.

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

Teacher teams analyze student work and assessments and are beginning to deepen their analysis of assessment results. Moreover, teacher leadership structures are beginning to form school-wide.

**Impact:**

The work of teacher teams is not yet consistently resulting in improved pedagogical practice and student progress across subject areas. Furthermore, consistent input by teacher leaders into instructional key decisions is not yet an embedded practice across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders reported there are instructional coaches and some grade leaders across the school. Teacher leaders meet informally during their lunch periods. However, there are no consistent formal structures in place for teacher leaders to discuss key decisions that affect student learning. Furthermore, grade leaders, instructional coaches, and school leaders are beginning to have formal meetings to review student work or school-wide data. School leaders are developing a formal structure to include teachers in key instructional decisions.
- Teacher teams meet twice a month on Mondays to review student work products and discuss curricula adjustments. Each teacher has their own system for collecting and reviewing assessment results. Teachers reported that their team meetings have allowed them to share instructional ideas with each other. However, when teachers and school leaders were asked about how the work of teacher teams improved teacher practice, there was no evidence provided that supports how team meetings lead to improved teacher practice aligned to the Danielson Framework.
- School leaders and teachers reported that teacher teams analyze Fountas and Pinell data and use the results to form reading groups. Although, school staff provided these results that indicated improvement with some students, there was no evidence that teacher teams consistently conduct a deep analysis of assessments or review item analyses across content areas. Additionally, the teachers were not able to provide evidence of improved student progress for individuals and groups of students in math, science and social studies. A review of teacher team agendas, minutes, and sign in sheets indicated that teacher teams meet twice a month on Mondays but meetings are not always devoted to analyzing student work and assessments. On some Mondays, teacher teams attend professional development.