



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Bilingual School

Elementary-Middle School X211

**1919 Prospect Avenue
Bronx NY
10453**

Principal: Tanya Drummond

Date of review: January 21, 2015

Lead Reviewer: Maria Giacone

The School Context

P.S./I.S. 211 The Bilingual School is an elementary and middle school with 637 students from grade Kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 12% Black, 87% Hispanic, 0% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 29% English language learners and 24% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 89.0%.

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	Additional Findings	Developing
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	Developing
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	Focus	Developing
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	Proficient
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	Developing

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

High expectations are consistently communicated to the staff via the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching during professional development and through other forms of communication. Leadership and staff successfully communicate expectations connected to college and career readiness with families to support student progress.

Impact

Collaboration between all community stakeholders fosters ongoing communication of high expectations to staff and families resulting in a clear path to increased student achievement and college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The Danielson Framework for Teaching (DFT) is the major focus for professional development sessions. For example, the professional development calendar includes sessions which have been devoted to the instructional focus of engagement through questioning and discussion as well as establishing clear teaching points that are aligned to the instructional focus. A review of lesson plans reveals that teaching points are aligned to the instructional focus and include opportunities for discussion and engagement by all learners.
- Observation feedback is linked to the ongoing training that is provided as a way to hold teachers accountable. A review of lesson observations reveals that feedback focuses prominently on domain 3 of the DFT, specifically 3c – engagement, and refers to work done during professional development sessions to hone in on mini-lessons and how this transfers to student outcomes and engagement. For example, one comment reads, “To increase students’ intellectual engagement with the material, embed the practice problems in real-word examples and give students opportunities to discuss them.”
- During a parent session, teachers spoke about how they receive regular reports on their children’s progress along with tips on how to help their children at home. One parent said, “The teachers let us know how our children are doing. When my son was a little behind, they told me how to help.” Another parent said, “There’s good communication. It’s a family school. We know who to talk to and it gets resolved.”

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Developing

Findings

The school is in the process of developing rubrics and grading policies to align with the school's curricula. The use of common assessments to measure student progress towards goals is at its initial stages.

Impact

Rubrics and grading policies are not yet fully aligned with the school's curricula providing limited targeted feedback to students. Results of common assessments are inconsistently used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- There is a variety of checklists and rubrics in use. However, they are not consistent on a grade. Teachers are at the initial stages of looking at student work across grades measured against a standards-based rubric as a way to norm scoring criteria and employ a tool to measure progress. During a grade seven and eight teacher team meeting, teachers had as their focus to examine student work using two different rubrics to determine which common rubric language could be used to devise a common tool.
- Although teachers provide suggestions to students for improvement, feedback inconsistently delivers next steps based on specific, leveled rubric criteria in order to indicate how students can move to the next level. An example of teacher feedback reads, "Try planning your time better. Your letter was well written until the end. Always end strong since it is the last thing your reader will remember."
- Teachers have begun to set up systems to look at student work to inform adjustments to instruction. For example, after analyzing a piece of argumentative writing, the grades seven and eight team discussed ways to modify instruction which included unpacking the task to make the requirements of the task clear, spending more time on the use of transition words and citing evidence connected to the main idea. They have also devised a sheet to capture and monitor student progress. One teacher commented, "We look at student work then we change instruction." However, a formal, systematic way to track student progress and the impact of teacher work is still evolving.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Curricula and academic tasks do not yet offer a coherent continuum of rigorous habits and higher order skills for all learners including English language learners and students with disabilities, and they are not systematically planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Although some curricula have been modified to align to student needs, supports are not consistently tailored to meet specific needs of student subgroups so that all students can be consistently challenged with high level tasks to push student thinking and promote college and career readiness for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Although curriculum documents are structured to reflect the Common Core Standards, academic tasks do not always lead to higher order thinking. For example, in upper grades literacy curricula there are many instances of compare and contrast with few opportunities to analyze and synthesize.
- While some planning reflects grouping students by categories designated as “intensive”, the lowest performing group; “strategic”, to receive support at least three times a week; and “benchmark”, to receive extension activities, a review of lesson plans revealed that targeted supports for students who struggle are not always specific nor are they consistently seen across subject areas. For example, lesson plans contained few or no indications for how English language learners or students with disabilities are supported according to specific needs to engage in rigorous, challenging academic tasks.
- The school employs ReadyGen and CodeX for literacy. Teachers have made adjustments of these curricula to best meet the needs of their students. For example, a grade 5 ReadyGen unit was amplified to include cause/effect relationships and added key questions to allow students to look deeper into the text and relate the text to another they had read. However, the practice of informing curricular decisions for all learners through the in-depth analysis of data and student work is not a systematic practice.

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies and scaffolds inconsistently provide multiple entry points to cognitively engage all students. Work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of thinking and participation.

Impact

Across classrooms, there are missed opportunities to engage all learners in consistent challenging tasks and higher order thinking, thus hindering students from exhibiting their work at high levels.

Supporting Evidence

- While in most classes, students were seated in groups; grouping arrangements however do not consistently provide leveled support. For example, in a third grade class, students were seated in groups and worked on different graphic organizers, yet, the organizers required the students to exhibit the same skill of comparing and contrasting.
- In classrooms visited, questioning strategies to promote higher levels of student thinking and discussion were inconsistent. Some teachers asked low level recall questions that did not ask for students to strategically think or extend their thinking. For example, in an eighth grade bilingual science class, the teacher asked students to tell the two types of metamorphosis and what the differences are. In an eighth grade English language arts class students were asked to turn and talk about what the word 'infer' meant.
- Although classes visited had teaching points that conveyed standards-aligned instructional goals for the lesson, student discussion was limited and consisted largely of individual students raising their hands to give short responses rather than lengthier group discussion around a challenging task or question, and teacher conferencing with students supplied general support. For example, in a first grade class when a student offered an answer the response was, "Good. Write that."

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry based professional collaborations. However, the practice of analyzing assessment data and student work with the goal to improve teacher practice and progress towards goals for groups of students is not yet systematized. Leadership structures that allow teachers a voice in key decisions are developing.

Impact

Teacher team collaborations are beginning to result in improved teacher practice and progress towards goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Although teacher teams incorporate the practice of examining student work, common assessment criteria to norm and guide the work of teachers in adjusting tasks and determining progress towards goals is in the initial stages. For example, during an observed teacher team meeting, the grades seven and eight team was in the process of deciding which common rubric language to adopt to norm grading practices.
- Teacher teams meet regularly to examine their own work as well as examine student work to adjust teaching practices. For example, when the 3rd to 5th grade common planning team examined a teaching point for a planned 5th grade lesson, they realized that there were two teaching points embedded in one. The one lesson then became two separate lessons. The 7th and 8th grade team spoke about examining previous student work that led them to unpack a task on “Twelve Angry Men” regarding the third juror’s perspective on guilt. They unpacked the task to allow students to make inferences based on textual evidence. In this way, teachers have begun to embed team structures to use student work data to devise grade-wide ways of addressing student needs.
- There are some opportunities for teachers to assume leadership roles to affect student learning. For example, in reviewing the Code X curriculum, teachers made decisions to spotlight certain skills within a chapter to support students’ understanding and development of skills. To that end, in a unit that dealt with connotation and denotation regarding author’s purpose, they focused on connotation. Other leadership capacity-building structures are developing to involve more teachers in key decisions regarding student achievement across the school.