



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Poe Center

10X246

**2641 Grand Concourse
Bronx
NY, 10468**

Principal: Beverly Pascal-Miller

**Date of review: November 24, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Jo Ann Benoit**

The School Context

The Poe Center is a/an elementary school with 747 students from grade Kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 12% Black, 83% Hispanic, 1% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 25% English language learners and 21% 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 91%.

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	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	Focus	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	Additional Findings	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	Additional Findings	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	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings: The majority of teachers at the Poe Center participate in inquiry-based professional collaborations and analyze student work to identify standards-based next steps for the classroom. Teachers have the opportunity to build leadership capacity at the school and are given a voice in the decision making process around student achievement.

Impact: Inquiry-based professional collaborations and analysis of student work to identify next steps have supported student achievement by promoting the implementation of common core aligned lessons and activities, strengthening teacher practice and building teacher leadership opportunities.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet at least two times a week in professional learning communities, to look at student data and identify next steps for students. In these meetings, teachers use protocols that guide them in answering questions such as: “How are students doing?” “What are the gaps between what students know and are able to do and the expectations of the CCLS...?” “What teaching strategies did we try so far?” and “What are some possible actions that can be taken to address the data implications?”
- At one of the teacher team interviews, teachers explained how they were able to adjust a unit based on the conversations they had while planning the unit. When the teachers realized the students had a difficult time with organization as they were planning a unit on informational writing, they changed the texts to help make the content more accessible to the students and combined some of the lessons. These strategies gave them more time to focus on organization than what the unit allotted for.
- In addition to working with outside consultants and having one literacy coach and two math specialists at the school, teachers receive support from one another. Teachers talked about being able to go to any colleague for help. There is an in-house mentorship program at 10X246 where teachers mentor one another. The math coach for example, mentors two new teachers at the school.
- There are teacher leaders, called grade liaisons, on all grades, who meet with the administration monthly and facilitate the teacher teams. “With [teacher leaders] the message is repeated. They are clear with intent and leadership” said the principal. Two of the teacher leaders are currently in administrative programs.
- Teachers have a voice in how professional development is offered to them and thus how they are supported with instruction All teachers filled out a survey at the beginning of the school year to inform the administration of their interests and needs for professional development. Many requested to participate in inter-visitations as well.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings: Across classrooms, there is inconsistency in providing multiple entry points into the curricula. Student work products and discussions reveal uneven demonstration of higher order thinking skills and uneven levels of participation.

Impact: There are missed opportunities to create tools and implement strategies that help students engage in high levels of discussions and produce high levels of work products.

Supporting Evidence

- In 5 of the classrooms visited, students were working in groups. When questioned about the work they were doing (what it was, why they were doing it), their answers varied. Here are a couple of examples: in one class, the students were working in science centers, when one group was asked how they would get information about the two animals they were comparing, one student said she had seen a documentary on TV the week before, another student in the group said he just knew about them. The third one said he didn't know anything about them. When I probed him about how he would get the information, he said, he would look at his classmates' work. In another class, two girls were reading a book. When I asked them why they chose that book, one replied that they had read it in a previous grade and liked it.
- In another class, one pair of students was working on the "it" and "in" families. They were asked to form words with these endings. One of the students did not write anything down during the time they were observed. When asked why they chose those endings, the girl told me that she knew them already. As she finished that response, one of the teachers came to her group and said, "guys, you already know the "it" and the "in" families, you should have worked on something more challenging". She said this with one minute remaining in centers.
- In two classrooms, all of the students were engaged in the work. They had to read information from a text (in one room from a book, in the other from an article) and find information that they would then plot into a graphic organizer or use to answer questions. Although all students were working, they were all using the same text and the same graphic organizer. The students who completed sat in their seats to wait for additional direction or approval from their teachers.
- During the student meeting, most of the students said the work was easy for them. When asked how they know how well they are doing in class, they say they get good grades and checks.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings: At The Poe Center, teachers implement curricula aligned to the common core learning standards and adjust those curricula when appropriate to build coherence between students' data and the expectations of the standards.

Impact: The revisions of the curricula assist teachers with lesson planning by supporting the decisions they make around ways to differentiate activities and the types of independent and small group work they develop to engage their students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers go through six-week cycles of units from Teachers' College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) and math units from Engage NY (Story of Units) to refine the units and develop lessons that are engaging and offer access to a diversity of learners. In 5 of the 8 classrooms visited students were working in centers and were engaged in differentiated work.
- Teacher leaders attend TCRWP calendar days (professional development days) and Network PD then turnkey the information to their colleagues to deepen their understanding of the curricula and align them to the school goals and the students' data. Strategies such as types of groups and types of scaffolds like visuals and entry level assessments are shared in professional learning communities as teachers plan.
- Teachers are currently working on aligning and integrating the Social Studies with the literacy program that exists at the school under the guidance of the literacy coach.

Findings: Across classrooms, teachers use common assessments aligned to the curricula but provide limited feedback to students. The use of checks-for-understanding and student self-assessments are inconsistently used across classrooms.

Impact: The inconsistent use of checks-for-understanding and student self-assessments set the stage for students to receive irregular and in some cases, no actionable feedback resulting in the lack of specific data that teachers can use to develop meaningful and rigorous tasks that meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- During the student meeting, only 1 of 6 students was able to show work which received actionable feedback or specific next steps. In looking at students' folders, and during the document review phase, only two teachers gave specific next steps to students in ways that would support their learning needs in the content area. One example of feedback given to a student on a math activity was "next time, remember punctuation".
- All students mentioned the use of rubrics in ELA, only 3 in math and 1 in Social studies. Checklists were inconsistently used throughout the classrooms as well. During the student meeting, only one student mentioned that he remembered using a checklist once in class for social studies.
- The use of daily exit slips is implemented only in math class. Most teachers and the instructional team spoke about regularly analyzing mid and end of unit assessments and explained that some units only have an end of unit assessment.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings: School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and to families and provide support for the staff to meet those expectations and ways for parents to understand their children’s progress.

Impact: Due to the clear communication of high expectations for all, staff and families are able to support each other towards student achievement and college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Every parent at the parent meeting gave examples of how they communicate with or receive information from the school (school newsletter, calls, flyers, making an appointment with the teachers). They all spoke about how open the teachers were to supporting their children at home. One parent said through a translator “my child needed help with math and the teacher gave her some websites she could use at home”.
- All of the parents said they knew their children’s reading levels. One mentioned that she has 3 children who graduated from the Poe Center but the current one is the only one who doesn’t like to read.
- The administration uses the Danielson Framework for Teaching to set goals with teachers as well as provide specific feedback to teachers after observations. One feedback given to a teacher on component 1A is “your plans and practice reflect a limited range of pedagogical approaches to the discipline and to the students. You are working in an ICT classroom with students who would benefit from explicit instruction which includes visual anchors, pre-defined vocabulary and examples, and authentic application of skills”.
- In addition to receiving support from the administration, coaches and teacher leaders, the teachers receive support with their next steps from two coaches from TCRWP who visits the school regularly and works with groups of teachers.
- Everyone is involved in supporting students to achieve at grade level. Paraprofessionals receive training to support small group instruction in the classroom by working with students on reading skills. They assess these students and determine with the classroom teachers strategies that will help move the struggling readers along the reading continuum.