



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Captain Manuel Rivera, Jr. School

Elementary - Middle School X279

**2100 Walton Avenue
Bronx
NY 10453**

Principal: Jean Dalton

**Date of review: February 5, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Jo Ann Benoit**

The School Context

The Captain Manuel Rivera, Jr. School is an elementary and middle school with 1,082 students from grade kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 16% Black, 80% Hispanic, 3% Asian students and 1% other. The student body includes 30% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92.0%.

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	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	Proficient
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	Proficient
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 are engaged in structured-inquiry professional collaborations that promote the implementation of the Common Core and analyze data and student work for students they share.

Impact

Teacher collaborations strengthen teacher practice and the instructional capacity of teachers, as well as student progress towards school goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers participate in various professional development opportunities which help foster effective instructional practices. Teachers meet in grade teams, content teams, school implementation teams, English language Learner (ELL) study group, with their coaches, and consultants (e.g., Teachers College and Reading Apprenticeship Program). They participate in lab sites, intervisitations, data meetings and data dialogues with administrators. Some teachers shared that their practice has improved because of these collaborations. For example, one teacher mentioned that she has now incorporated explorations to the start of her lessons as a way to meaningfully engage her students. Another spoke about becoming more critical about how she analyzes the information found on the school data tracker to better plan and group.
- Teachers have opportunities to lead professional development for their colleagues. When they attend professional development outside of the building, they are expected to turnkey the information to their colleagues and implement the learned skills into their practice. An example of that was with the seventh grade science teacher who has been attending professional development sessions with the Reading Apprenticeship Program to help infuse literacy in the content areas. She incorporated thinking maps (definition, word, picture) in her science lesson around the phase changes of liquid, solids, and gas. When a teacher's practice is highlighted by the administration, they have the opportunity to invite colleagues into their classrooms. This has led to an increase in rigor and alignment with the common Core especially in math. It has also improved the level of research on and the implementation of best practices to support ELLs.
- Teachers have spoken about the staff's emphasis on and commitment to the school goals: one of the school's goals is to increase the math scores at levels 3 and 4 by 8%. One teacher spoke about the school's use of the data tracker to identify and plan for trends in math at the classroom and grade levels. The information gathered from the tracker has helped teachers identify students' progress towards that goal and teachers' next steps for groups of students.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula and access to high levels of thinking and participation.

Impact

Students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and are able to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills and create rigorous work products. However, not all students are provided with high quality supports and extensions into the curricula, impeding their full participation and ownership of the work.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, students are engaged in grade appropriate work and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation. In a seventh grade science class, students participated in a clarifying session entitled “unresolved issues” facilitated by the teacher. During that time, they asked clarifying and probing questions of one another on the topic of phase changes. In a second grade class, the students were engaged in the evaluation of their poems using a rubric. When done, they had to either find a poem in which they made a comparison or write one with a comparison.
- Teachers provided multiple entry points that afforded students access to the curricula. Across classrooms, teachers used scaffolded graphic organizers, small group instruction, pair and group work, native language supports, resources such as calculators and book marks to support student learning during the lessons.
- Although the administration and the staff spoke about the importance of differentiation, especially because of the school’s diverse population, across classrooms, there were pockets of students for whom the work was not differentiated. In some classrooms, some students could have benefited from additional scaffolds. For example, in a third grade strategic reading class, one third of the students did not participate in the whole group discussion as the teacher was calling on students who were volunteering to answer questions. Many of the students who did not participate in the whole group discussion were ELLs. Allowing students the opportunity to write down their thoughts before speaking would have helped all of them. Conversely, in two other classes visited, there was too much scaffolding for some of the students. For example, in a fourth grade math class, the teacher went over several problems that the whole class had to solve. Some of the students were ready for the day’s problems. They would finish quickly and wait on their classmates to answer themselves. In an eighth grade English class, the teacher went through the analysis on an exemplar text with the students before they could write their own outlines. Not all students participated in this whole class conversation. In order to promote high levels of thinking, participation and ownership, the teacher could have allowed the students to identify these characteristics on their own, in pairs or in small groups.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and staff have made purposeful decisions to ensure alignment of the curricula and tasks to the Common Core, the instructional shifts and content standards. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

The alignment of curricula and academic tasks to the standards and the shifts and the use of data to make curricular adjustments have helped promote college and career readiness for all students as well as promoted access for students to the curricula and tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has adopted and adapted curricular resources from the Teachers College (TC) Reading and Writing Program, GoMath and CMP3 that promote the Common Core, the instructional shifts and the content standards. These materials have helped to promote coherence throughout the grades and content areas. They have also been revised to meet the needs of the school's population. Units have been moved around to focus on key skills in the beginning of the school year, and power standards have been identified in order to focus the work and realize alignment across the grades. Conversations among teachers throughout the grades have enabled the lower grade teachers to teach percentages differently in order to better prepare students for that topic in the seventh and eighth grades.
- Differentiation was evident across the plans reviewed. Teachers use the information from the trackers to plan for multiple entry points in their lessons and their units. Based on the trends from the tracker, teachers have decided what to re-teach, how to re-teach it and to whom. A plan was submitted which showed what was re-taught in a math class asking students to "compare, round and estimate decimals", as well as which groups of students would be identified for which skills during the re-teaching. For example, one group would work with estimating decimals, another with decimal patterns and another still, with problem solving with decimals.
- In order to strengthen their strategies around differentiation for all students, second grade teachers have begun to work and plan with the consultant from Teacher's College on the 3rd grade curricula. This will enable them to plan enrichment and extensions for the second graders who meet or will meet grade standards before the end of the school year.
- Teachers have shared the different ways they promote college and career readiness in students besides embedding those skills in the academic curricula. One example is the Coca Cola program which allows students to tutor lowerclassmen and develop skills around creating a resume, analyzing transcripts and video conferencing with other Coca Cola participants, among others.

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use and create assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school's curricula and that help to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subjects.

Impact

The assessments analyzed provide the teachers and students actionable feedback, information around progress towards goals and allow teachers to adjust curricula and instruction accordingly.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses a variety of common assessments to determine progress towards goals and ways to adjust instruction. Teachers use IReady, DRP, Dibels, Performance Series, exit slips and Running Records among other assessments to evaluate the impact of their instruction, as well as adjust curricula. The data tracker used by teachers helps to synthesize the data and inform groupings in the classroom. Data tracker information also informs grouping and programming for the daily strategic grouping period that all students are programmed for and for the more specialized supports students receive (in homogeneous groups) such as Wilson, Just Words, Lexia, among others.
- Teachers meet with colleagues in monthly content data talks and in data dialogues with administrators to inform their next pedagogical steps. Changes in pacing, rearranging of units, questioning techniques, groupings, the development of intervention folders, and formative assessments have been made because of these conversations.
- Rubrics and assessment results are used to provide students with feedback. Upperclassmen receive data tracker information (item analyses) as well, and identify their strengths, and areas of improvement. They also use a mastery sheet that helps them track their performance with certain standards and skills. Student data is shared online with the staff in order to make it readily available to teachers and for them to be able to follow students using one tool.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate and provide training to the entire staff to meet high expectations and provide families with information about how the school's expectations for students are connected to a path of college and career readiness.

Impact

In providing training to the staff, school leaders promote a system of accountability within the school that enables teachers and themselves to offer ongoing feedback to help families understand student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders use teacher, student and other data to help explain the expectations to the staff around professionalism and the school goals. Through weekly newsletters, the adoption of curricular resources aligned to the standards and the shifts, professional development opportunities such as working with a consultant, lab sites, intervisitations in and outside of the school, administrators' and peers' observations and feedback, faculty conferences among others, all offer support to teachers to meet those expectations.
- The administration conducted school-wide walkthroughs in November and January around the Danielson Framework for Teaching. They analyzed the data for all four components and provided feedback and support to the staff around pedagogy and content development. They saw a decrease in the percentage of teachers rated developing and an increase in those rated effective and highly effective in Domain 3. For example, the percentage of teachers who was rated developing in Domain 3 in November was 34% and in January, 24%. The percentage of teachers rated effective and highly effective in November totaled 65% whereas in January it went up to 73%.
- Parents mentioned that they receive communication from the school in many different ways: phone calls, monthly newsletters, emails, meetings, workshops, and classes such as English as a second language for parents, and translation services among others. All parents interviewed said they knew their children's reading levels. Reports cards, parent teacher conferences and curriculum evenings help parents understand their children's progress. Moreover, teachers spoke about having meetings with parents on Tuesdays to help set goals and track attendance in order to impart to families the importance of students being in school.