



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Mosholu Parkway

Elementary- Middle School X280

**3202 Steuben Avenue
Bronx
NY 10467**

Principal: James Weeks

**Date of review: February 5, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Matthew Angell**

The School Context

Moshulo Parkway is an elementary-middle school with 881 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 9% Black, 75% Hispanic, 5% White, 8% Asian, and 3% Pacific Islander students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 12% 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 92.7%.

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	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher classroom practice, assessment data, and student work. Embedded leadership structures ensure teachers have a clear voice in school decisions regarding curricula and practices for improving student achievement.

Impact

Teacher team work has resulted in improved teacher practice and higher academic achievement for students. Teachers play an integral role in decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams consisting of general and special education teachers as well as coaches use a school adapted student work protocol in which a presenting teacher brings the task, unit plan, assessment data, and student work of at least three diverse subgroups, for the team to examine. Teacher teams create short- and long-term goals for groups of students, which are tracked over time using shared google documents and Mastery Connect. For example, the grade 1 team was observed examining student work and assessment data from a recent math assessment, connected to their team focus on number sense fluency, and was able to create a shared understanding of how their teaching practices regarding number lines, 100 charts, and math vocabulary used during instruction impacted student achievement across different groups of learners. They developed scaffolds for students with disabilities and English language learners that they would use in the upcoming unit and identified an assessment to measure the impact of those scaffolds.
- Teachers also use google documents and Mastery Connect online software to share curricula, track team goals, and refine academic tasks. Teachers used assessment data and student work to create a supplemental writing curriculum based on Writing from Sources during which students use informational texts to create claims and cite evidence. Additionally, they created on-going formative assessments, with on demand writing tasks, which they used to track student progress using Mastery Connect. Data reviewed from a mid-year assessment showed the majority of students made progress from the baseline assessment and students who did not make adequate progress or attain adequate proficiency were assigned interventions and retested on the same rubric.
- The school has created clear lines of communications among administrators and teachers by including instructional coaches or administrators in every team meeting and rotating roles and responsibilities among teachers within each team. Teachers have a role in deciding which curriculum materials to purchase as well as refining those materials to fit their student needs. Teachers collaborate with school leaders to create professional development plans and teachers also lead most professional development sessions.
- The teacher teams' revealed best practices are recognized by school leaders and that teachers share in the responsibility of their own improvement. Teachers have created their own intervisitation, repository of videos of best practices, and professional development workshops. One teacher spoke to conducting her own intervisitation into a colleague's room, using a protocol, to improve in areas identified in a recent observation.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

While across classrooms teaching strategies consistently provide students with multiple entry points into the curricula, and students are able to demonstrate high levels of thinking through their work products, some teachers are still working on making supports more strategic.

Impact

The planned and implemented supports for students engage them as learners in rigorous tasks and discussions, but there were some missed opportunities for students to take ownership of their learning and participate in high level discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms students were provided multiple entry points and scaffolded tasks, such as sight word lists, flexible grouping, task specific graphic organizers, vocabulary supports, and student centers, which allowed all learners multiple ways to complete their task or demonstrate thinking. For instance, in a fourth grade English language arts class, students working in flexible groupings, rotated through reading centers while the teacher worked with guided reading groups on specific strategies. Students who rotated through stations belonged to one of three leveled tasks, circle, square, and/or triangle. The supports and tasks varied at each station according to the student's designation. However, in some classrooms differentiated materials and group work were not strategically aligned to lesson objectives.
- Across classrooms, students were provided opportunities to discuss and make meaning of the problems they were working on or the text they were reading. For instance, in a kindergarten class students talked in pairs and in groups comparing and contrasting items people possessed both in the past and now in the present, using text evidence from a read aloud. Students use accountable talk stems to build on each other's comments to create a deeper understanding of the text. In contrast, a first grade classroom discussion about place value was teacher-led as a whole group with limited opportunity for students to extend or add on to each other's thinking, limiting student's ownership of their learning.
- In a fourth grade integrated co-teaching English language arts classroom pairs of students use a close reading strategy to answer higher-order questions using text-evidence. Some students were provided vocabulary supports and sentence starters. The teacher worked with a strategic group based off her classroom data. Although students collaborated on collecting text evidence, this practice did not include student-to-student discussion relative to the response, thus limiting higher levels of student thinking.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Curricula across subjects and grades are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Teacher teams plan and refine units of study and academic tasks using student work and assessment data.

Impact

The school's strategic curricular decisions result in coherence across grades and subjects, for all students, and promote college and career readiness. Teacher teams' use of varied student data and student work ensures all learners have access to the curricula and that tasks are cognitively engaging.

Supporting Evidence

- The school shares and collaborates on curriculum maps using Google Docs resulting in consistency and coherence across grades and subjects in their academic tasks. Teacher teams engage in using student work protocols and have a system for collaboration and feedback around developing higher-order thinking skills. For instance, the seventh grade English language arts team collaborated on a unit on narrative writing using google documents. The team was able to adjust scaffolds and supports, using pre-assessment data, to create formative assessments within the unit to monitor students' acquisition of the skills necessary to complete the performance-based task at the end of the unit. Teachers are able to see the design and tasks in content specific maps across grades when making adjustments.
- Across all content areas curricula maps show refined units of study that integrate Common Core Learning Standards with identified college and career readiness standards, and the instructional shifts. Pacing guides, curriculum maps, and unit maps include content specific elements such as spiraling concept practice, academic vocabulary, on demand writing, performance tasks, multi-step problem solving, and fluency practice. For instance, a fourth grade math unit on operations and algebraic thinking was planned backwards from a performance task in which students had to solve multi-step problems and would need to demonstrate their thinking using appropriate academic vocabulary. The unit included aligned formative assessments strategically placed within the unit to give teachers and the team feedback on student progress. Also, included within the unit was an emphasis on fluency practice within in each lesson to build student accuracy and speed.
- The school creates curriculum maps using a variety of resources including Reading Street, Expeditionary Learning, Scholastic CodeX, EngageNY, Envision, Glencoe Math, and New York City Department of Education Scope and Sequence. When evaluating the unit and the unit task, teacher teams use a protocol to examine cognitive demand in math, and Depth of Knowledge questions in English language arts and other content areas.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school uses common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress towards goals across grades and subjects and adjust curricula. Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers' assessment practices consistently reflected varied use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Data driven adjustments at the teacher team and classroom level, as well as student self-assessment tools, result in increased student mastery for all students and student awareness of next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- School administrators and coaches create a trend analysis of the standards for which students either performed below 50%, or performed significantly below City and/or State wide averages. Coaches and teachers review curriculum maps and pacing guides across subjects to identify when those standards are taught, by whom, and for how long. Curriculum adjustments are made for pacing and spiraling of the identified standards as well as the creation of aligned assessments. School leaders and teacher teams track student performance on the assessments using Mastery Connect during teacher team meetings. A review of data trends reveal the majority of students, including students with disabilities and English language learners, making progress on midyear assessments.
- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers used lesson tasks, exit tickets, mid-lesson checks, strategic questioning, conference notes, and lesson specific data collection sheets, during their lessons to check for student understanding. For instance, in an eighth grade math classroom pairs of students worked on problems on angle relationships involving variables. The teacher circulated the room checking in with individual students and stopped the lesson to address a common misunderstanding happening in the classroom with a particular problem. In addition, although students worked in pairs they solved separate problems that resulted in the same answer. They gave feedback and support to one another using rubric language around the work they showed. At the end of the lesson students had to complete an individual exit ticket.
- Using Mastery Connect teachers and teacher teams monitor student progress across content areas, relative to the standards-based baseline, formative, and summative assessments. Furthermore, the school has created custom analysis of subgroup data. For example, after a pre-assessment for a sixth grade unit, a teacher team analyzed class and subgroup data, identified supports and strategies for each group, created formative assessments for specific skills, and analyzed the effectiveness of their interventions using results from the summative assessment. While 100 percent of students made progress throughout the unit a small group of students were identified as non-proficient. Those students were provided supplemental supports and were reassessed with 85 percent showing proficiency after the intervention.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School Leaders consistently communicate to the entire staff high expectations using a variety of practices, and support them with professional development. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations to students connected to a path of college and career readiness and successfully partner with parents.

Impact

Supportive school structures create mutual accountability among the staff to achieve high expectations. Staff and parent partnerships create clear supports for students towards identified expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Professional development workshops occur in 6 week cycles that are aligned to school goals have been provided relative to Common Core Learning Standards, and the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Through the observation cycle school leaders identify staff members with expertise to lead most professional development sessions. Teachers stated that the practice validates their professionalism and motivates them to share best practices with colleagues. For instance, one teacher recently led a session on Danielson component 3d titled "Align your AIM/Objective to the activity students will complete -- to assessment -- to your feedback." Teachers conduct intervisitation observations of their colleagues' best practices they are exposed to during professional development.
- School leaders conduct monthly learning walks connected to the Quality Review rubric and the Danielson Framework for Teaching to norm and calibrate observations to the rubrics. The principal shares findings with the entire staff through a weekly principal memo that highlights best practices and areas for growth.
- The school has created monthly workshops for parents, on Tuesdays, during which teachers review the curriculum for the coming month, the assessments being used, and student progress. Parents stated that the workshops give them a clearer understanding of the Common Core Learning Standards and provided them with tools to support their children at home with the strategies they learn in school. One parent said she told her child he was doing his homework incorrectly when he was marking his paper with stars, underlining words, and circling phrases, but then she came to a workshop and learned that these were the strategies her son was using. Additionally, parents receive monthly standards-based progress reports.
- Teacher and school leaders effectively use technology-based communication tools for parent out-reach, giving real-time data and to keep them informed of school events. In kindergarten through grade 4 teachers use Class Dojo to give feedback on student's academic, social, and emotional performance. Parents stated that they can be more involved in their children's learning because they know what's going on in school. Also, they stated it was easier to communicate with the teacher through the phone application because they can text, email, or call. In the upper grades, teachers use, Engrade, a system that focuses on academic progress and assessment results.