



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Early Childhood Lab School

08X304

**2750 Lafayette Avenue
Bronx
NY 10465**

Principal: JOSEPH NOBILE

**Date of review: November 18, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Socorro Diaz**

The School Context

The Early Childhood School is an elementary school with 561 students from grade Pre-k through grade 5. The school population comprises 6% Black, 51% Hispanic, 34% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 20% 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 94%.

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	Additional Findings	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	Focus	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	Celebration	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	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

High expectations are consistently communicated to the entire staff via the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and other modes of communication. Families of the school community are kept apprised of student progress towards a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

A culture of collaboration between staff, students, and families exists that fosters high expectations, supports an effective partnership for all and a clear path towards college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal has created extensive opportunities for collaboration and professional development opportunities fostering a culture of high expectations for all members of the school community. In reviewing the school's professional development plan, it is noted that teachers engage in training of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and are encouraged to further develop their pedagogy. Sessions are led by teachers and co-facilitated by the coach and/or another teacher. Classroom inter-visitations are scheduled by teachers and the coach to share effective teaching practices. This school information is logged on the Professional Development and Parent Engagement Activity Sheet to clearly share with the school community.
- During the parents meeting it was clear that parents consistently receive information regarding their children's academic progress and that the school offers multiple opportunities for families to communicate with their teachers. The school has developed and distributed English language arts (ELA) and Mathematics Road Maps across grades to all its families. These include what students will be learning at each grade and partnerships with teachers to support students with reading and writing inside and outside the classrooms.
- The school calendar shows monthly events for parents and families to engage in learning opportunities. A series of parent workshops are offered to support their understanding of the school's expectations, and students' academic growth. For example, some of the workshops offered to parents so far this year are entitled: "Bedtime Stories", "Ready for Reading", "Are you smarter than a first grader" and "Science Rocks". In addition, the school celebrates students' academic achievement and promotes positive social development to sustain student interest in their learning during their weekly and monthly assemblies. "Cluster Friday" is an exciting event that takes place every Friday and gives students the opportunity to apply their knowledge and academic learning to real world experiences as shared by students during our meeting. For example, two students expressed that they are members of the Grade 5 Squad and others are members of clubs that highlight their academic and artistic abilities.
- Parents shared that teachers offer guidance and support and regularly send updates on their child's progress via monthly reports, report cards, phone messages and email outreach. Parents are also invited to participate in the school's monthly assemblies and celebrations of homework heroes.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Teachers create assessments and use rubrics aligned to the school curricula to provide students and parents with actionable feedback. Data from student work products are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Impact

Students are aware of their next steps using teacher feedback to improve their work, and student data is used to determine student progress. However, rubrics are not yet directly aligned to assigned tasks impeding a clear picture of student progress toward student mastery of goals.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses the Go Math and Ready Gen baselines assessments to monitor students' progress within the curriculum. In addition, common formative and summative assessments administered across grade levels and content areas are created collaboratively in teacher team meetings and a rubric is used to assess evidence of rigor and alignment to standards. In mathematics, teachers conduct unit tests, mid-year and end of year assessments, and daily quick check assessments. In literacy, teachers use the Fountas and Pinnell reading levels, sight word assessments and teacher made checks to assess progress. In science and social studies teachers create tests and unit tests are administered to monitor student progress towards goals. After reviewing the data results from Fountas and Pinnell, literacy teachers made adjustments to the Ready Gen modules and added specific writing and reading objectives for each lesson.
- Teachers use data from pre-assessments to work with students to create individual goals aligned to key skills identified in the instructional units. ELA and math teachers have administered pretests and students have created individual goals. Data is shared with providers of Academic Intervention Services (AIS), to develop and support their targeted students. During classroom visits we observed the AIS providers working with small groups and using a tracking sheet to document progress in some of the classrooms. It was also evident that teachers use conference note taking to monitor student comprehension and meet student needs. In most classrooms visited it is noted that teachers used the same rubric for all classes in grades 2 to 5. The rubric is a progressive rubric with limited clarity regarding the students' strengths and areas of needs as determined on the assigned tasks.
- During a teacher team meeting teachers articulated the importance of using rubrics accompanied by specific actionable feedback in informing instructional strategies needed to improve student outcomes. During the student meeting, two students spoke about how they use a rubric in class and in working with special projects. In addition, they shared how teacher's conference with them providing targeted feedback to improve their writing. Another student spoke about using a checklist in class to better understand their strengths and next steps towards improving their writing. Teachers are extending their efforts in further aligning specific rubrics to academic tasks.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards. Higher-order thinking skills are emphasized for all learners across grades and content areas.

Impact

The school's curricular decisions build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all learners, and academic tasks push student thinking improving student learning across grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers explained how higher-order thinking skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks in building coherence across grades. Teachers have made adjustments and enhanced Ready Gen and Go Math to meet the needs of all students by incorporating TC units of study in reading and writing. The literacy team added book talks, centers and book clubs to each module of the Ready Gen curriculum. In terms of mathematics, the team added "Unlock the problem" and "higher Order Thinking" (HOT) instructional activities to their Go Math lesson. Additionally, many of the tasks reviewed in student folders and hallways displays are aligned to Common Core and content standards. Bulletin board displays show standard based instructional tasks.
- Curriculum maps reviewed across content areas provide evidence of alignment to the common core and emphasize rigorous tasks. For example, in a grade 3 mathematics curriculum map, students are required to use known facts to add, subtract and solve problems including teaching points and a list of math strategies to support for all learners. In a grade 2 reading curriculum map students are expected to become independent problem-solvers who can recognize difficulty and draw on strategies to tackle new and tricky words, phrases, and information.
- Lesson plans are cognitively engaging and require students to cite evidence, analyze information, develop claims and counter claims, and apply concepts to solve real-world problems. For example, in a second grade math lesson, students are asked to break apart numbers to help them add and subtract in order to deconstruct numbers to simplify facts. In a grade 4 writing lesson students are asked to organize information to write a research report on Native Americans. Students are also expected to research the Westward Expansion and share at their tables subsequently, requiring them to answer this question: "If you had to leave your home and could only pack one small bag, what would you do?"

Findings

Teacher pedagogy provides consistent instructional supports, including questioning and discussion techniques. The use of strategic entry points and extensions that foster deep reasoning in student work products varies across the school.

Impact

Across classrooms students are motivated and actively engaged in classroom activities and discussions. However, the school does not yet afford tactical extensions to support all students in producing meaningful work products, hindering a diversity of learners from taking ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms there is a focus on the instructional shifts such as, modeling, student engagement, students working in groups, and the use of questioning and discussion techniques. In a science class, the teacher asked students, “How do photos and illustrations help you understand what the author is trying to teach you?” “Do you think human skeletons would be better with some of the skeletal features of other mammals? Why or why not? In a grade 4 class the teacher used a tracking sheet to monitor student progress and made adjustments to her the lesson.
- Across the majority of classrooms students were given the opportunity to work in peer groups and engage in peer-to-peer discussions. In these peer-groups high levels of participation were noted, but there were uneven opportunities for student to self-assess. In a grade 4 reading lesson students were grouped by reading levels and participated in a Team Talk discussion using these questions, “Do you think skeletons would be better with some of the characteristics of other mammals that you read about in this section?” “Which skeleton, an endoskeleton or exoskeleton, do you think is the best protection for a body?
- In all classrooms visited, students participated in class discussions by responding to teacher-generated questions. Students generated their own questions in four out of the seven classrooms visited.
- Teachers scaffold questions in their lesson plans to include group productive struggles and fluency practice. In reviewing lesson plans it was noted that teachers used a variety of strategies to develop questions that generate student discussions. In a guided reading lesson plan, there was a set of text dependent and guiding questions to facilitate comprehension.

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

Teachers consistently examine data and student work within inquiry-based teams. Leadership structures provide a means for teachers to have input on key decisions about curricula and teaching practices.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has strengthened teacher collaboration resulting in improvements to pedagogical practices and student progress on assessments. Shared leadership structures build teacher capacity, thus improving student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- During a team meeting teachers reviewed student writing samples from a fifth grade class. At the beginning of the teacher team meeting observed teachers engaged in examining student work using a five point rubric. This work was informed by the results from their last assessment data. Teachers discussed the writing samples eliciting strengths and struggles noticed on the samples. As next steps, teachers discussed the skills and processes needed to scaffold their practice for the next instructional task and the development of a writing checklist to attach to the student's notebooks.
- The principal ensures that teachers engage in ongoing professional collaborations in the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts aligned to the school's instructional goals, promoting improved teacher practice and progress towards student goals. Grade teacher leaders meet weekly with the instructional cabinet to discuss professional development and teacher practice. Professional Learning Mondays are teacher led and are aligned to the school's instructional focus.
- Teachers are engaged in professional reflection supporting each other's growth by completing a professional development survey that determines teachers' needs. Teachers complete a professional development plan that includes their professional goals and these are aligned to the school's instructional focus and the Danielson Framework for Teaching.