



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Lucero Elementary School

Elementary School X311

**1425 Walton Avenue
Bronx
NY 10452**

Principal: Kattia Cuba

**Date of review: March 11, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Leticia Rodriguez-Rosario**

The School Context

The Lucero Elementary School is a/an elementary school with 236 students from kindergarten through grade 3. The school population comprises 10% Black, 88% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 54% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 91.7%.

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	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	Celebration	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	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The school's assessments are well aligned to the school's curricula and provide students and teachers with a clear profile of students' mastery of targeted skills. Common assessments are used to chart and track student progress across content areas and grades, as well as inform instructional adjustments for all learners to improve mastery of learning goals.

Impact

Teachers' analysis of assessment data and student work equips teachers and students with feedback on students' performance, resulting in teachers accurately measuring student progress and implementing targeted adjustments to accelerate student mastery of learning goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Common assessments are used to monitor student progress. Developmental Reading Assessments-2 (DRAs) are conducted in English and Spanish four times a year. Pre and post writing performance tasks are implemented at the beginning and end of each writing unit. Baseline and end-line writing assessments are conducted at the beginning and end of each year. Math end of unit assessments are conducted at the end of each unit. Math baseline and end-line assessments are conducted at the beginning and end of year and math and English Language Arts (ELA) Measures of Student Learning assessments are conducted at the end of the year. Science and social studies unit exams are also conducted.
- A review of assessment documents shows that the school regularly uses data to track the performance of all students. For example, school wide tracking of data shows that in September 2014, 16% of students were on levels 3 or 4 in the ELA assessment. By December 2015, 24% of students had moved to proficiency level 3 or 4, moving the school closer to the goal of having 45% of the students attain level 3 or 4 in that assessment by the end of the year. DRA data illustrates that most students including English Language Learners and students with disabilities have progressed at least one level in ELA and in math.
- Teachers create checklists and rubrics that are presented in a grade level appropriate manner so that expectations are clearly articulated to students. They use rubrics to provide actionable feedback to students in the form of "glows" and "grows" that are aligned to the standards covered by the lesson/ unit. This was evidenced on samples of student work on school bulletin boards both in and out of the classrooms, and in student portfolios. During the third grade teacher team meeting teachers adjusted the writing checklist based on the analysis of student work and ensured that the change would be clear to students. Students interviewed were able to discuss their work based on rubrics.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Instructional practices across classrooms do not result in consistent engagement of students in activities that promote high level discussions and higher order thinking. Teachers are beginning to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Impact

Different access points are becoming available for students through discussions and differentiation of learning in a few classrooms. Some students do not receive the support needed for them to develop and demonstrate higher order thinking skills in all content areas.

Supporting Evidence

- In the school self-evaluation document the principal states that teachers are working towards creating materials that allow for multiple entry points. For example, teachers are working towards increasing student engagement by reducing the time they are speaking in order to provide students with more time to engage in the work.
- Teachers use varied strategies to create entry points to lessons in an effort to support student engagement and learning. For example in a second grade writing class the teacher used a song, stating, "Let's practice this song (which listed the steps/features of the essay) to help us remember the informational essay."
- In some classrooms students were encouraged to turn and talk; however the discussions were limited due to questioning that did not push student's thinking and or the limited timeframe for students to respond. For example in a fifth grade ELA class focused on author's purpose the teacher asked, "What does it mean when someone insults you?" Students did not have enough time to discuss this issue. Similarly, in a kindergarten class the teacher asked, "What is the sentence about?" When a student could not answer immediately, she turned to another student quickly without allowing the first student a chance to think.
- Teachers use varied strategies to differentiate instruction as evidenced by lesson plans. For example, the plans show that lessons are differentiated via manipulatives, audio and visual supports, differentiated questioning, grouping and allowing movement for kinetic learners. For example, students take a movement class where emotions are interpreted into movements as an art form. However, the instruction viewed in classrooms visited indicated that differentiation of instruction is not yet an established practice across classrooms and content areas.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school uses Common Core aligned curricula across all subject areas. The curriculum is modified by teacher teams for all learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities to have access to the work.

Impact

All students benefit from Common Core aligned curricula that drive coherent instruction in all disciplines and contribute to students making progress towards college and career readiness goals.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses Common Core aligned curricula, including *Ready Gen* supplemented by school based ELA curricula, *Metamorphosis Math*, and the NYC Scope and Sequence for science and social studies. Teacher teams work together to design additional performance tasks and review student work from the performance tasks to determine which Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts are present in the final student product. Using the Tri-State Rubric, members of the school cabinet also review units of study to ensure that they are aligned to the standards.
- Teams work to align tasks in units that they create to ensure that lessons are targeting standards that must be addressed. For example, 'Math Data Driven Unit Planning' sheets are used to analyze units to ensure alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts in math and to meet the needs of all students. These sheets cover what students need to be able to do, standards addressed, rationale, skills students will have by the end of the unit, long term knowledge, differentiation needed, and assessments.
- As evidenced by teacher team agendas and notes, during team meetings teachers across grades and content areas consistently review data to adjust units/lessons. For example, in a kindergarten unit focused on counting and comparing numbers to ten, teachers pulled supplemental resources to support the student's understanding of the mathematical concept. They used a book called *Mouse Count* by Ellen Stoll Walsh to create math word problems that support the concept.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school leader communicates high expectations to all stakeholders. Parents are welcomed in as partners to support student progress.

Impact

The collaboration of all stakeholders creates an environment of mutual accountability towards preparing students for college and career.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal provides staff members with a Principal’s Weekly Newsletter, setting clear and high expectations for all staff. The newsletter contains a weekly message from the principal, expectations for the week, articulation of instructional moves expected in alignment to the Danielson Framework (specifying key points for teachers to consider in order to be rated as “effective” or “highly effective”), references to resources and expectations for professionalism. All members of staff are expected to read the weekly newsletter and implement what is articulated. Expectations are also communicated through teachers’ participation in national conferences (i.e. Reading Recovery), and professional development cycles with consultants. Teachers fill out a ‘Take Away’ form that asks them to think about how their learning will be implemented in their classrooms within the next week. This becomes part of their accountability for meeting the school’s instructional expectations.
- The school keeps families informed about expectations for their children’s progress towards college and career readiness goals and provides them with curriculum updates and alerts about school-wide events and key dates. Parents receive regular phone calls and communication from the Community Assistant and staff members, when students are not present in school. In addition, parents contact the school to get assistance on how to help them get their child to school, in particular students with social emotional needs. Parents also participate in events such as academic workshops, self-improvement parent classes (i.e. English as a Second language), Coffee with the Principal, and Community Circle Fridays. Further, parents receive a newsletter designed specifically for them and have access to the school’s website which provides them with a plethora of information.
- School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness, through a schoolwide program that promotes emphasis on student development of academic and personal behaviors that illustrate Perseverance, Enthusiasm for Learning, Activism for Social Justice, Collaboration and Empathy (PEACE). Teachers set expectations for students by reading books on these topics, provide students with support and guidance towards mastery of these expectations, and provide regular opportunities for students to share and celebrate accomplishments that reflect the expectations embedded in these concepts. For example, on Fridays, all members of the community (students, teachers, staff, parents, and the principal) participate in a celebration that honors students who have demonstrated excellence or made the most improvement in meeting the school’s high expectations that week.

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

Teachers work effectively in collaborative teams within and across grades to share content knowledge and instructional strategies for improving teaching and learning across the school. Distributed leadership practices offer staff members opportunities to take on leadership roles.

Impact

Teacher team structures empower all teachers to assume responsibility for collectively improving instruction and engaging in high level decision-making about school improvement initiatives.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly with both the math facilitator and literacy coach to engage in collaborative planning, review of assessments, and discussion of teaching points, building teacher capacity in instructing students. For example, as the result of a third grade teacher team meeting focused on fractions, the team reviewed the big ideas when learning fractions, such as “equal-partitioning, a fraction is relative to the size of the whole, fractions represent a division, and the composition of non-unit fractions”. The team noticed the *Go Math* program provides one lesson on “fractions as fair shares” and agreed that this is the place to slow down and begin to construct foundational big ideas with students.
- Teachers were surveyed at the beginning and middle of the year to determine areas of strength and areas of need that would help in creating professional development workshops and support mechanisms to build in house capacity. For example, in response to feedback from teachers about the need for guided reading and shared reading training, a consultant was secured. In addition, through the surveying of teachers, the school was able to create a pool of experts that can be tapped into for internal support, opening up opportunities for teacher leadership across disciplines and grades.
- Teachers reported that “Teachers take ownership of the work.” They shared that they continuously meet beyond contractual and assigned times, through emails and texts. They visit each other’s rooms and are able to share practices. Several indicated that team activities have allowed them to develop their expertise further and provide ongoing opportunities for them to constantly refine materials, align instruction and support peers for the benefit of all students.