



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

I.S. 339

Middle School X339

**1600 Webster Avenue
Bronx
NY 10457**

Principal: Kim Outerbridge

**Date of review: February 24, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Roxan Marks**

The School Context

I.S. 339 is a middle school with 556 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 31% Black, 67% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 27% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 60% of the students enrolled and girls account for 40%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90.0%.

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	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	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	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	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations and provide training regarding instruction, professionalism, and the elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Ongoing feedback and partnerships with parents help students to develop the skills required to be college and career ready.

Impact

Teachers are supported and held accountable to set expectations. Families understand their children's' progress toward meeting expectations connected to a pathway to college and careers.

Supporting Evidence

- The school handbook outlines policies and practices for school conduct and expectations. Daily announcements in the morning remind students that it is an expectation for all to attend college and be prepared for careers. Teachers receive ongoing updates from the principal through emails outlining assessments strategies and guidance for Expeditionary units, running records, and other instructional areas. Daily communication, using an electronic daybook, provides all staff with instructional and housekeeping information items.
- A review of the yearlong professional development plan shows ongoing activities supporting assessment in instruction such as analysis of students' Fountas & Pinnell running record scores and other assessments. Additionally, focus on the Danielson Framework for Teaching emphasizes essential areas of using questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, and using assessments in instruction. Staff participated in a needs assessment survey in September using Survey Monkey to collect information and feedback on core subject areas, rating their comfort level with core curriculum areas, Socratic seminars, technology, assessments and other key areas required to support student achievement. A mid-year professional learning survey was conducted to inform decisions and direction for future learning sessions as well. Open-ended questions allowed staff to personalize their learning and share how the professional development received thus far has been implemented in their classrooms.
- Parents shared that teachers provide ongoing feedback on their child's performance through progress reports sent home four times a year. They stated that teachers, "treat students like their own children" and "help their children succeed". The school website and monthly parent calendars keeps parents informed about workshops on Common Core Standards, curriculum night activities, and State accountability information.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, instruction and teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and beliefs in the use of the workshop model of instruction. Student work products reflecting high levels of thinking and discussion are developing across classrooms.

Impact

Although there is school-wide use of the workshop model, it is not always fully or effectively implemented so that student work products and discussions demonstrating high-level thinking are uneven across the school

Supporting Evidence

- The school believes that students learn best when teachers use the workshop model with independent practice, modeling, group work, conferencing, and tiered tasks. During classroom visits, teachers implemented the workshop model ensuring to follow the structure of “I do, we do, you do one and you do two,” which provides additional strategy practice for students. In a grade 8 lesson, the teacher maximized the workshop model during the “you do one” by providing opportunities for students to interact and talk with peers. There was focus on the instructional shifts as students were citing evidence, annotating text, and using non-fiction resources. However, in most classrooms the pacing of instruction was slow and student discussions reflected uneven levels of thinking and participation.
- In a grade 7 science classroom, in a unit on the interaction of matter and energy, students engaged in a new practice of using Socratic Seminar. Students discussed how physical and chemical changes occur, responding to each other's comments and making content corrections when needed. The teacher intermittently interjected questions and called on students who did not participate. Accountable talk stems supported the discussion enabling students to build and extend the talk. However, this level of discourse was not seen in most classrooms.
- During a grade 7 math lesson, students explored how to solve equations based on angle relationships. The teacher called upon a few students to help to solve the problem, however, the teacher then proceeded to do the math work on the smart board without student input into the solution. In most rooms visited student choice and autonomy was limited. Student peer-to-peer discussion was curtailed when teachers intervened often inhibiting student's active engagement.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school utilizes Common Core aligned instructional materials ensuring that content reflects the needs of students based on New York State assessment data. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using students work products and assessment data.

Impact

The curriculum is coherent, accessible to English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities and promotes college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses New York State assessment data to identify priority standards within Expeditionary Learning. Teachers create specialized unit scope and sequence inclusive of these standards ensuring that students receive intensive instruction and opportunities to study these units of study in-depth. Recently the school transitioned from CodeX to Expeditionary Learning. To supplement the reading curriculum and ensure more writing, teachers use Teachers College writing units of study. The focus on informational texts, citing evidence, using complex texts and writing argument claims was evident in classrooms visited. EngageNY modules supplement the use of CMP3 program in math.
- Teacher teams plan and adjust curricula and academic tasks using students work products and assessment data as evidenced by six of the seven lesson plans providing access through tiered activities for groups of students. For example, in a grade 7 social studies lesson plan, the teacher created tiered activities and developed targeted groups and activities using the unit assessment data on students' document analysis skills and proficiency in using primary sources. Review of lesson plans reflected planned group activities with differentiated tasks. An example seen in a mathematics lesson plan showed three tiered groups with student names and their percentage scores listed representing students' overall understanding of inverse operations. This level of detail using specific outcomes with percentages based on data, however, was not evident in all plans reviewed.
- Most of the unit plans reviewed contain an aim, standards, essential questions, vocabulary, mini-lesson, and guided and independent practice. Some unit maps reflected additional components that addressed differentiation, conferencing goals, exit tickets, do now activities, as well as more detailed and specific accommodations for ELLs and students with disabilities. For example, a document entitled "Entry Points" for grade 8 provides suggested strategies to maximize access for students based on language development, literary, and informational text strands. This documents highlights the essential and prioritized skill aligned with the standard and gives teachers suggestions ranging from less to more complex entry points.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and teachers use assessments that are aligned with the school's curricula. Teachers consistently use checks for understanding and student self-assessment to guide next learning steps.

Impact

Assessments, rubrics, and the school's grading policy provide actionable feedback for students and teachers regarding student achievement. Ongoing checks for understanding and analysis of benchmark data guides lesson plans and instructional modifications.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses baseline, midterm, and summative assessments to analyze information on student learning to identify areas of focus. These data points also provide teachers with information to create tiered group tasks and opportunities for small group re-teaching activities. The use of an assessment analysis tool in Google Docs by all teachers provides relevant information to inform groups and tasks. Reviewed baseline data contained class standards and questions, and class averages compared to grade-level response averages. Additionally, all internal data collected provides item and standards-based analysis. For example, the grade 6-baseline analysis showed that only 7% of students demonstrated mastery in integration of knowledge and ideas specifically being able to compare and contrast the experience of reading a story or poem. To address low scores, teachers looked into the data and developed an action plan, stating in the plan, that they will expose students to more videos and audio passages and have students practice comparing and contrasting using other ways to convey information.
- The school created a tool to examine assessment results and determine instructional next steps. This document lists the assessment name and overall average class score and breaks performance into three ranges: 76 -100%, 51-75%, and 0-50%. Teachers list the standards for the respective question categories and the percentages correct. The item analysis section contains a distractor analysis function to determine which questions the bulk of the class incorrectly selected. Teachers, then, conduct a deeper analysis to determine why so many students struggled with particular questions and an action plan is created to address the critical areas of need.
- Across classrooms teachers are using checks for understanding such as questioning, students' use of finger signals, and turn and talk to assess students by engaging them in articulating their thinking and understanding of content. The school uses a standard format for teachers' provision of feedback to students that includes citing things done successfully, things that can improve, and next steps for students. Student work in portfolios and on bulletin boards contain teacher feedback outlining one area in which the student was successful and an area for improvement with a next step. In some rooms teachers were beginning to have students self-assess, however this was a practice that was not yet embedded across the school. Teachers shared that conferences with students help them identify areas of need and assist them in creating small groups and activities to target skills in instruction. Students shared that they use different types of rubrics to help them such as rubrics for essay writing, making presentations, and writing a newspaper article.

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

The majority of teachers partake in structured collaborations to ensure standards based implementation of instructional shifts. Distributive leadership affords teachers a voice in decisions that affect learning.

Impact

Through participation in teams, teachers' instructional capacity and leadership development has strengthened and contributes to progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school schedule provides daily time for teachers to meet to analyze data, plan lessons, adjust curricula, and look at student work. Teachers keep minutes for these meetings and agendas and notes are posted in Google Docs. Teachers revealed they discuss issues that impact other subject areas and create plans to close the gaps in learning. They stated that their work is focused on topics, issues that affect all subject areas, and goals for the year. Additionally, they shared that working together enables them to share strategies and best practices and that collaboration provides them with different perspectives as colleagues share insights "to help us partner with students and support social emotional development". A review of posted agendas shows discussions on learning styles, differentiation, lesson planning, assessments, tier group tasks, and conferences. Data analysis is at the forefront of the work of teams and teams examine assessment results to determine instructional next steps. Teachers discuss analysis with grade team members noting similar areas of focus by grade and planning collaborative strategies to address gaps.
- Teachers observed during a team meeting reflected on a collaboratively planned lesson and discussed a chart which they had created to support student learning and understanding of close reading. They evaluated how the lesson went, what posed challenges for the students, and discussed how they could make effective adjustments. Teachers stated that they work together sharing responsibilities and taking ownership of specific tasks. They shared that they plan tiered activities, which were evident in lesson plans collected during classroom observations. These plans provide names of students and modified activities using suggested entry points from the Entry Points document created for each grade level. The instructional focus area this year is tier tasks, and teachers work together in teams to plan and modify lessons based on data and observation of students.
- To develop teacher capacity, school leaders create opportunities for teachers to engage in learning walks to observe their peers and give feedback. The learning walk checklist outlines focus areas aligned with Danielson Framework and includes space to write comments regarding observations made. The overarching areas of focus are environment, lesson plans, and conferencing and student interviews. Teachers take a role in leading professional development in the school focusing on data driven instruction. Teachers develop tier task forms following the administration of assessments planning lessons based on the schools' data analysis of student performance.