



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**The Performance School**

**Elementary School X385**

**750 Concourse Village West  
Bronx  
NY 10451**

**IA Principal: Kimberly Shelley**

**Date of review: March 6, 2015**

**Lead Reviewer: Yolanda Torres**

## The School Context

The Performance School is an elementary school with 141 students in grades 4 and 5. The school population comprises 36% Black, 63% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 30% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 91.0%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

In spite of total phase-out next year, the school leader ensures that expectations are clearly communicated to staff, students and families for consistent academic support towards student progress and a path to college and career readiness.

### Impact

Administration provides training and has a system for those expectations. The communication of high expectations has led to the understanding that all stakeholders are responsible for student learning in preparation for their future and beyond.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school leader communicates expected outcomes through daily classroom visits and observations. The weekly professional development sessions provide teachers with big ideas on effective practices for instructional growth, thus, contributing to a culture of learning and accountability with the understanding that ‘it takes a village to educate the whole child’ as consistently emphasized by the school principal. For example, this year, teachers engage in collaborative professional conversations where they share effective instructional practices for coherence and collegial support.
- Parents appreciate the ongoing communication with the school principal and her open-door policy. They are clear on the school-wide vision which is reflected in the frequent newsletters, Parent Academy workshops, and informational letters regarding their children’s progress. On Parent Engagement Tuesdays, teachers share instructional techniques with parents conveying an important message of commitment to the education of their children which is in tandem with the school leader’s statement: “Because we are in phase-out, it does not mean students are.” Parents recognize the challenges this phase-out process poses on the community, however, they are thankful to the majority of teachers for maintaining high expectations high and holding their children accountable for learning.
- The school has partnered with community based organizations (CBOs) such as Counseling in Schools and The Leadership Program to provide students with a variety of activities from mentoring, job-embedded support to the awareness of college and career readiness. In addition, counseling services are in place beyond the required counseling protocol in order to service students on a more specific and individualized basis to ensure that their needs are immediately assessed for overall progress. These groups focus on middle school readiness, Identity development, and goal-setting for future educational advancement. Parents praise the work accomplished thus far with their children. They observe in their children a positive disposition towards learning and understanding how important it is to be responsible for their future. Most importantly, parents stated that students can aspire to achieve as long as they believe in their own abilities and are prepared for the challenges ahead.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

Teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and instructional shifts with strategies that address the multiple entry needs of students. However, there is a lack of consistent and effective practices from classroom to classroom for instructional improvement.

### Impact

Informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, the articulated set of beliefs how students learn best is unevenly evident across classrooms. As a result, not all students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and there is an uneven demonstration of higher-order thinking skills in all student work products showing a lack of performance growth.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers attempt to address students' differentiated needs by scheduling them to online programs and small group work. As students engage in their small group discussions, teachers go around listening in, providing assistance with some evidence of higher order questions to push students' thinking. Students use the available technology as another means of engagement, but with unclear objectives and expected outcomes. Therefore, the blended learning model is at the developing stage due to inconsistent evidence of students' exposure to purposeful learning school-wide. Although the blended learning provides another entry point for students, the lack of clarity of purpose and expectations blurs the results. Additionally however, the teaching practices and instructional outcomes vary from classroom to classroom, thereby, creating uneven levels of learning and work production.
- Students' involvement in hands-on activities in fourth and fifth grades provides them with opportunities to engage in conversations with their peers in lessons on measurement and problem solving. They work with their partners and engage in debates as they share the results of their labor with the rest of the class. Additionally, meaningful peer feedback takes place in some classes where the conditions for learning lead to this type of interaction.
- Some classes where teachers and students collaboratively work on their instructional goals and lesson outcomes remain focused on learning together. Students appreciate the clarity around what is expected to do and with the ability to see the relevancy of their learning and goal achievement across content areas. For example, in a fifth grade class with students with disabilities, students are very well aware of their entry points in need of focus as well as their progression directionality. Some classrooms, approximately 4-5 classes, display interactive charts that provide students with vital formative information that motivates them to continue learning as they hold themselves as well as their peers accountable.
- The literacy block has been redesigned with extended time to meet students' needs in academic language and discourse with a strong emphasis on stamina-building and writing across content areas. Teachers attempt to model teaching practices that serve as conduits to students working in cooperative groups and student-led discussions. While students work with their peers, some teachers ensure that all learners have access to the Common Core and/or content standards. Subsequently, teachers continue to make adjustments whenever necessary.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use common assessments loosely-aligned to the curricula. Teacher assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

### Impact

The use of data results to improve teacher practices and to provide students with feedback for academic growth are limited as teachers inconsistently make effective adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers plan in accordance to the findings of the varied assessment tools they use for student achievement. The data results provide important information to form their flexible groups or for re-teaching purposes. Some of these assessments, such as baselines, midterm exams, conferral notes and rubrics help teachers formulate their own theories of what works and what needs adjustment. Nonetheless, this is a practice that is not consistent amongst all teachers. Although the "one-size-fits-all" is no longer an expectation based on the diversity of needs in their students, this practice continues to be in the developing stage due the uneven levels of practice and inconsistent student engagement observed across classrooms.
- Teachers inconsistently use checks for understanding during conferral to decipher if students have grasped the essentials of a specific lesson. Some teachers confer with students to check for comprehension by requiring them to provide evidence of their learning. Some teachers use conference notes and student work to reflect on their delivery of instruction. As they assess the impact of their teaching practices on student learning, these teachers devise next steps to take for their professional growth in order to further impact on student academic progress. Yet this occurs inconsistently, and assessment results do not have structures to maintain an upward trend in student learning nor instructional adjustments needed for successful, differentiated improvement.
- The daily tracking of students' reading progress through the 100-Book Challenge, the use of running records and graphic organizers challenge teachers, alongside their coaches, to identify the gaps so they can plan accordingly. The analyses of these data sources have awakened awareness on the importance of maintaining a granular focus on student learning defined by specific strategies that meet their needs for growth. As teachers self-reflect on their practice, they model to students on how to engage in self-reflection leading to the assessment of their own work so that the students can decide, by themselves, on the steps they need to take to improve.

**Findings**

The school curricula are planned to align to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts focused on tiered performance tasks to cognitively engage all learners.

**Impact**

Instructional resources and performance tasks provide teachers with the necessary tools so that all learners have access to rigorous instruction.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers plan lessons aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. The standards are predominantly displayed with the lesson objective providing students with context on the nature of the performance tasks and the learning around these shifts. Students' exposure to a variety of resources and approaches such as 100-Book Challenge, Achieve 3000, classroom experience charts and Depth of Knowledge (DOK) higher-order questions provide students with opportunities to engage in some rigorous tasks. However, the consistency of rigorous tasks varies from grade and subject, thereby, creating uneven levels of learning opportunities and work production as evidenced by student work analysis and technology-infused lessons.
- The Data Coach and teachers work closely to ensure that all students, inclusive of English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, engage in rigorous and higher-order tasks through scaffolded teaching strategies for academic success. Although students are expected to demonstrate their thinking through conversations with their peers, one-to-one conferrals with teachers and their daily work, they present having difficulty with the tasks at hand as they receive sporadic granular one-to-one or small group instruction for support. Subsequently, in spite of planning lessons for all students' access to the curriculum, the variability of support to all learners results in inconsistent instructional achievement.
- As teachers plan the curricula set forth by standards and the instructional shifts in English language arts and math, they infuse a variety of instructional supports such as graphic organizers, higher order questions and formative assessments. The modification of curriculum and refinement of academic tasks lead to additional instructional support for all students. However, this does not consistently translate into rigorous instructional practices that move student progress to the next level.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

Teacher teams consistently analyze data and student work for pedagogical improvement and leadership development in order to build instructional coherence across the school for student achievement.

### **Impact**

Teacher teams make instructional decisions based on their analysis of student work and lesson outcomes and show progress towards goals for groups of students. As a result, teachers engage in much reflection on their practices that lead to differentiated lessons and research-based practices for further impact on student learning.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- During their weekly meetings, teachers rotate their roles and responsibilities to ensure that student work is gradient-assessed across the present two grades: fourth and fifth with an interdisciplinary approach. The deep analyses of student work provide teachers with evidence that pushes their thinking on how to approach specific students' struggles with writing. Once teachers identify the gaps, they agree on one or two strategies they will implement with the understanding that the outcomes of the implementation will be shared at future meetings. For example, teachers have found that collaborative inquiry has helped them with the differentiation of lessons with higher-order questions in support of all students, especially ELLs and students with disabilities. The implementation of focus questions has motivated students to engage in academic discourse as they reflect on their learning with their peers.
- Teachers see these weekly opportunities as professional learning that challenges them to collaboratively problem-solve and decide on how to address the instructional gaps. They are empowered to look for solutions that will benefit student learning as they continue to grow instructionally. The use of rubrics helps provide more context and meaning to their collaborative work so that when they assess student progress and agree on possible instructional adjustments they need to make, there is evidence of increased number of students moving to the next level. For example, as teachers engage in deep analysis of student work, they see how students' voice and writing volume have evidently improved from one published writing piece to another.
- The collaborative inquiry process provides teachers and coaches with a granular lens towards professional development and focused classroom walkthroughs for instructional improvement. Teachers engage in purposeful conversations that promote teacher effectiveness, as discussed at the teacher team meetings. As they inter-visit and continue their conversations, they observe much progress in their strategic planning and delivery of instruction to individual students. This process has helped teachers enhance their practice by becoming more focused on the individual needs of students for differentiated progress.