



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 008 Robert Fulton

Elementary School K008

**37 Hicks Street
Brooklyn
NY 11201**

Principal: Seth Phillips

**Date of review: January 14, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Gary Knight**

The School Context

P.S. 008 Robert Fulton is an elementary school with 925 students from grade kindergarten through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 6% Asian, 14% Black, 11% Hispanic, and 61% White students. The student body includes 2% English Language Learners and 14% students with disabilities. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 95.5%.

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 <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , 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 | 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 | Well Developed |

Area of Celebration

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|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Well Developed |
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training for those expectations. All staff effectively communicates expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

The school has developed a culture of mutual accountability and has successfully partnered with families to support student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal distributes staff handbook to all staff which communicates expectations including academic interventions, classroom celebrations, classroom environment, communicating to staff, grade level meetings, home-school communications, homework, Individualized Education Plans, inter-visitation, observations, common planning time, and professional development. Observations are conducted by school leaders as a follow-up to assess the implementation of topics covered.
- School leaders communicate expectations to staff by providing staff with professional development trainings on topics such as; The Architecture of a Mini-Lesson, Looking at on Demands in Narrative Writing, The Special Importance of Non-fiction Reading, Conferring with Readers: Intense, Intimate, Responsive Teaching, Writing Protocol/Looking at Student Work, Creating Teacher Mentor Text and Reflection on Narrative Craft Writing Unit.
- The school leaders have “Bottom Lines” which are non-negotiables. The Bottom Lines are grade- specific and provide checklists for teachers that refer to expectations specific to having a classroom schedule, room set-up with a meeting area (for grades 3-5), partners time for students to talk, leveled library, reading bins with appropriate reading levels, writing workshop tools for students, time for students to write about reading, math tools for students, anchor charts, student work displayed, record keeping and assessments.
- The school leaders and staff partner and communicate with families on an ongoing basis. There is a webpage that provides all current information that parents can access. Newsletters are also sent home covering topics such as: curriculum night, PupilPath (online grade book), high school admissions process, upcoming tests, school tours, academic intervention services, parent-teacher-student conferences, dates for parent meetings with the principal, scholastic writing awards, and middle school exploration study. The principal, teachers and parents collaborate to coordinate Reading Month and Family Fun Book Fair activities. Parents also work with the school to promote in-school volunteering with activities such as class parents, and parents working in the school as volunteers for lunch and recess duty.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points into the curricula. However, the opportunity to provide high quality extensions was not observed as a common teacher practice.

Impact

Teaching practices are informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and instructional shifts. Students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- Lessons include guided practice, small group practice, independent practice with reading and writing, the use of technology, graphic organizers and teacher modeling to scaffold the learning experience and provide multiple entry points for all students. Students were engaged in appropriately challenging tasks as observed in a grade 7 class. Students were analyzing and developing their own Public Service Announcements (PSA). To help scaffold the learning experience, they were provided notetaking sheets as they viewed several PSAs in preparation for a whole group discussion. The video preparation note-taking sheet included: interesting facts I learned, connections made, opinions and questions that I have. Students were provided the opportunity to demonstrate critical thinking skills via higher-order thinking questions were embedded throughout the academic task.
- Lessons observed in both the upper and lower schools included the instructional shifts. During a grade 8 lesson, students were creating claims that support their argument as they worked to build their thesis statement. Similarly, in a grade 5 class, students were using a writer's checklist to analyze mentor texts in preparation for argumentative-based, independent writing activity.
- Lessons provided opportunities for differentiated support. For example, in a grade 8 English Language Arts class, the teacher led small group support with low level writers and in a grade 4 English Language Arts class, reading clubs were grouped by reading level and teacher-developed questions were based on difficulty level. Although students were provided multiple entry points and scaffolds, high quality extensions were not observed.
- Questioning across classrooms engaged all learners in higher order thinking. Some questions posed were: "What did you notice about the strength of the claim and will this make your writing better or worse and why?"; "What is our global responsibility to help humans who are suffering?"; "How can you prove the relationship between these two numbers?"; "How is this information different from your beliefs? And how are the facts different from what you expected?"

Additional Findings

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| Quality Indicator: | 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: | Well Developed |
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks.

Impact

The Common Core-aligned curricula result in coherence across grades and subjects and rigorous, academic tasks enable all learners to demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses the *Teachers College* curricula for reading and writing units with an emphasis on more non-fiction reading, informational text and opinion writing. Additional curricula include, the *Bridges* curriculum, which is used for lower school mathematics, *CMP3* for upper school mathematics, exploration interdisciplinary units in grades six through eight and an inquiry approach for science and mathematics.
- Unit plans infuse the instructional shifts and rigorous habits. For example, a grade 3 unit on immigration incorporated debating skills and basing arguments on textual evidence and included essential questions, enduring understanding, understanding and knowledge (background), skills, assessments and Common Core and State standards addressed. Similarly, a grade 7 social studies unit on the age of European exploration and colonization focused on reading, writing and listening/speaking skills and incorporated big ideas, assessments, focused on higher-order thinking questions, Common Core and unifying themes, rationale, resources, project and student reflection.
- School-wide curriculum map templates include: topic, essential questions and enduring understanding, reading tasks, assessments, standards, and text and field experiences. For example, the questions embedded in a grade 8 English Language Arts curriculum map include: How does a relationship between the author and the reader impact one's writing?; Why consider the context of a situation?; How do we vary our language to communicate with different people and how do we vary our language to influence different people?

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| Quality Indicator: | 2.2 Assessment | Rating: | Well Developed |
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school's curricula, offer a clear portrait of student mastery, track progress, and used to adjust curricular and instructional decisions.

Impact

Teachers provide actionable and meaningful feedback regarding student achievement and all students demonstrate increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- The use of the common assessments include *Word Study* unit assessments in grades k and 1, *Fountas and Pinnell* for lower school readers, *Teachers College Learning Progressions* in narrative and informational reading for upper school students, unit quizzes and tests in the *CMP3* math curriculum for upper school, and *Bridges* curriculum assessments for the lower school.
- In kindergarten, a *Bridges* unit assessment tracking sheet listed the name of each student and the skills that were assessed. In each box was a recording made by the teacher to capture student performance on that skill. Then, the teacher-made notes next to each student's name based on what the data revealed such as, small group, address during morning meeting, verbal directions not followed, and has math skills but cannot work independently.
- School-wide rubrics are used to assess student work and feedback is provided to students to inform them of next steps needed to improve their work. For example, in a lower school student writing activity, the feedback read as follows: Next steps - use more transition words such as also, then; to make your writing easier to read organize evidence so that your details are clear and are in the right order; work on your conclusion so that you close out your writing with retelling some of your main points.
- Teachers also conduct writing-on-demand assessments. An assessment was conducted on various student argumentative essays. The following teacher's notes were written for the various students and their respective essay: not using text evidence; evidence that is text-based doesn't match reason; need to restate claim in sentence; needs more data for evidence; conclusion doesn't restate reason given in essay (different reason).
- A grade 5 mid-unit checkpoint and end-of-unit assessment data from the *Bridges* curriculum was analyzed and student groups were developed based on teacher findings. Groupings were based on skill deficits identified. Similarly, grade 1 *Foundation* data was used to determine skills to be targeted and/or reviewed such as sounds, words and sentences depending on each student's performance.

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

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity and promoted the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Teachers systematically analyze key elements of teacher work and assessment data, and student work for students they share.

Impact

The structured professional collaborations have resulted in school-wide instructional coherence, increased student achievement for all learners, mastery of goals for groups of students, and shared improvements in teacher practice.

Supporting Evidence

- There are several structured professional collaborations such as: vertical teams for curriculum alignment, grade teams headed by staff developers to support curriculum implementation, department meetings, and exploration and inquiry team meetings in the upper grades. For those meetings not attended by school leaders, meeting reports are forwarded to them so that they are informed of meeting outcomes and next steps. This information, when and where applicable, is then used as a part of their observation and feedback to teachers based on classroom visits. As a result of grade level meetings, the grade 8 team was able to create consistency with routines and expectations for students.
- A grade 5 teacher team meeting was observed. This team meets weekly and follows the “Looking at Student Work Protocol” to guide the flow of the meeting. The protocol included selecting student work and teacher context provided for the work that was taught. Each team member states one noticing from student work; as they go around to each teacher a second time, they state one thing that will help improve student piece, followed by a third round of suggestions for instruction. A consensus is then decided upon regarding one goal for the teacher to improve student outcomes. Teachers also discuss how they may use what was discussed in meeting for their own class. This particular meeting focused on opinion writing, accompanied by an opinion writing checklist, grade 5 opinion writing rubric and a list of “Ways to Push Our Thinking” prompts for teachers to use throughout the session.
- Teachers share that their involvement in team work has positively impacted teacher practice and student achievement. They articulate that hearing strategies others are using helps to inform their instructional decisions and they see the strategies taught being reflected in student work. They state that the protocols help them to provide feedback to students and forming of student groups as a means of differentiating instruction. The protocol also helps them to think about teacher moves. One teacher expressed that, as a result, she thinks about debates in a different way and approaches it differently with her students. It was also noted that students are showing progress in mathematics through increased participation and a deeper understanding of concepts being taught as evidenced through student discussions held during math forums. In addition, as indicated on the School Quality Snapshot, the school was rated excellent in how well the school helps all students at the school to improve on their State English exams.