



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 021 Crispus Attucks

Elementary K021

**180 Chauncey Street
Brooklyn
NY 11233**

Principal: Leslie Frazier

**Date of review: March 10, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Rod Bowen**

The School Context

P.S. 021 Crispus Attucks is an elementary school with 615 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 89% Black, 8% Hispanic, and 2% White students. The student body includes 1% English Language Learners and 16% students with disabilities. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 92.1%.

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	Celebration	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	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	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	Additional Findings	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	Focus	Developing

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, strategically integrate appropriately complex informational text as well as emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills in a coherent way across grades and subject areas.

Impact

Curricular coherence across grades and subject areas promotes college and career readiness for all students; requiring that all of them demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- The essential question, “What role do living things play in their environment?”, guided the learning designed in a science lesson plan that had students recording observations from decomposing bananas, identifying types of consumers and examples from each, discussing the role of decomposers and writing a short response to the prompt, “What will happen if all producers disappear from earth?” Relevant informational text and vocabulary were noted in the plan.
- The reading objectives in a curricular document were “Students will be able to explain concepts from scientific texts” and “Compare and contrast key ideas and details from text.” The close reading activity asked students to “Use text evidence to explain how the bones and joints in bats’ feet help them”, “How do bats’ and birds’ skeletons help them fly?” and “What do all bird skeletons have in common and why might they be different?” The lesson culminates with students writing a paragraph summarizing the text they had read. The rigor of this task is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standard that requires students to describe something in depth based on details read in a text.
- An English Language Arts (ELA) plan outlined how students would compare and contrast a garden of flowers to a garden of vegetables. The task included close reading, discussion and journaling informed by evidence from the text.
- The learning objective of a math lesson plan was to solve word problems using a C.U.B.E.S. strategy, which would allow them to add and subtract fractions with unlike denominators. C.U.B.E.S. is a close reading strategy that asks students to circle the key number, underline the question, box the key words, eliminate unnecessary words, evaluate a plan, and solve. Groups of students would collaborate in their use of C.U.B.E.S. and estimation to solve word problems and then take turns presenting their word before the whole class.

Area of Focus

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in professional collaborations on teams that are ineffectively connected to the inquiry approach as they inconsistently analyze assessment data and student work.

Impact

The impact across teacher teams does not typically result in improved teacher practice or progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Minutes from a grade team that had analyzed a mid-term writing assessment noted that students were still not demonstrating usage of indentation, formation of topic sentences, and use of details and transition words with at least two details. As a result, the agreed upon strategies to move student learning included bubble map brainstorming, graphic organizers, and use of visual cues and modeling. However, there was no evidence provided regarding the implementation of these strategies or their impact on the performance of the students identified in their analysis.
- The portion of a grade team meeting agenda aligned to inquiry work stated that they would analyze a math assessment, discuss alignment with Common Core Learning Standards, assess trends and then address implications for teaching and learning. However, during the meeting, there was no analysis of the assessment. The presenting teacher merely did an overview of the task. The Common Core Learning Standards were identified, but no trends in student performance were assessed even though four student samples had been distributed among the team members. The presenting teacher diagnosed the challenge that one student had and the conversation turned to suggestions and the sharing of practices related to the math topic. One teacher recommended using the physical environment of the classroom to make fractions come alive, while another suggested the use of Hershey's chocolate bars that can be easily broken up into smaller parts. Though potentially engaging, none of the instructional next steps was tied to a thoughtful analysis of student work.
- Similarly, minutes from another teacher team meeting noted that the team had discussed a student who was unable to solve three-step word problems. Collegial suggestions included the use of a problem solving strategy that promotes different types of thinking: strategy, organizing, logic, visual and exploration (SOLVE), as well as a graphic organizer. The minutes did not include any analysis of the student's work, indicate an understanding of why the student was challenged by the task, or the implications for other students.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers consistently implement strategies that reflect the belief that students learn best when they collaborate and discuss with each other to develop quality work products.

Impact

Teachers effectively use Danielson *Framework for Teaching* informed practices that support and promote student discussions that reflect high levels of thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- During a class where students were doing a close reading of informational text, the teacher encouraged students to come up with their own questions. Students asked, “Why is the spine so important?” and “Why do bats have bones in their wings?” The teacher consistently deferred the questions to other students with responses such as, “Who wants to answer that question?” In answering the questions of a peer, a student found the appropriate section of the text and read it aloud.
- The teacher of a math lesson consistently pushed student thinking with prompts such as, “Who agrees with him?” and “Who can explain it?” Students were overheard sharing their problem solving processes based on familiar math facts with comments such as “I know that five is close to six, so I can add...” and “It’s multiples because you’re looking at groups of...” When a student had a difficult time verbally explaining her process, the teacher invited her up to the interactive white board where she wrote out the steps she followed to solve the problem.
- In a science lesson discussion, students used content specific language to answer questions, make observations and build on each other’s thinking. The teacher moved the discussion along by asking students to make hypotheses, explain how, and give examples.
- Peer editing and feedback were the foci of an ELA lesson. After reminding students of the proper use of the provided checklist and the distinction between a glow and a grow, students assessed each other’s work and provided verbal and written feedback that addressed spelling, grammar and content. One student noted, “I asked my partner what she was trying to say because there were words that didn’t make sense.” Another said, “He had a clear introductory paragraph. I clearly understand what his ideas are, so that is a glow.”

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, assessment practices are aligned to the school's curricula and are used to determine student progress.

Impact

Students and teachers receive actionable feedback from ongoing assessment practices. Data from common assessments inform curricular and instructional adjustments.

Supporting Evidence

- In looking at feedback on student work, a glow was, "You used C.U.B.E.S. proficiently to demonstrate your understanding. The grow stated, "Part of C.U.B.E.S. is explain, so let's work on further explaining in your work." Another student's writing task had the next step, "Provide more supporting evidence. Additionally, I would love to hear your concluding paragraph." Though this feedback is actionable, it was not clear that it was meaningful to the student whose response was, "I will write an introduction next time."
- While discussing their work, most students were able to articulate clear next steps for improvement based on feedback they had received. One student commented, "I showed improvement because when I used to write essays, I didn't give enough details. Now I make stronger arguments, because I back them up better." Another said, "In this essay, I need to add more information about the supermarket that I go to, so my writing is deeper and better."
- Reading assessment data were used to analyze trends in student performance, identify lower performing students and develop next steps for instruction. According to the analysis, students were unable to decode what they were reading, and they were still struggling with identifying letters and sounds. As a result, the teacher strategically used lower grade work with the alphabet, increased computer time on websites that stressed decoding, phonics and sound recognition, and implemented a motivational strategy, "Read to the Doll."
- Across grades, teachers use an online system to track reading levels of students. Beginning, middle, and end of year data inform small instructional groupings, differentiated resource development, and intervention assignments with specialists.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations regarding questioning, discussion and assessment to the entire staff. School staff regularly communicates with families regarding student progress and high expectations.

Impact

Staff receives training and is held accountable for expectations communicated by the principal and assistant principal. Parents have an understanding of their children's progress on a path to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Weekly memos from the principal show an ongoing commitment to the school's instructional foci. One contains, "Plan your questions and assess the number of times you ask questions related to content." Another memo references Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* and states, "Questions of high quality cause students to think and reflect, to deepen their understanding, and to test their ideas against those of classmates. So students have opportunities to discuss what they are learning." It also asks, "How do you know students are learning what is being taught?" and "What type of assessments are you using during whole and small group instruction?"
- Coaching notes submitted to the principal by a consultant who supports teachers shares comments that are aligned to the school's focus on assessment and the adjustments informed by them. It noted, "Teachers were concerned with student's lack of basic facts. We discussed the progression of multiplication from concrete to the pictorial representation." The notes also referenced questioning and discussion, "Suggested that students consistently explain what the problem is asking them to find." and "Suggested allowing more time for students to practice talking about how to solve the problem without numbers."
- Sample mid-trimester progress reports revealed very clear feedback of student progress. For example, under writing effort a comment was that the student had moved from writing letters to making words to simple sentences. Math feedback indicated that the student works best with the use of manipulatives and that the teacher would continue to use them to strengthen math skills.
- Evaluation forms from a parent involvement ELA and math testing workshop asked parents to state one thing that they had learned. Responses included. "Different ways to solve math problems", "Tools and steps to write better" and "websites to gain more knowledge." The survey also asked what other workshops they would like. One parent answered, "How can we better help our children? What tools can we use in conjunction with what is being taught in school?"