



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

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2015-2016**

**Charles A. Dorsey**

**Elementary School K067**

**51 Saint Edwards Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11205**

**Principal: Kyesha Jackson**

**Date of review: March 15, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Deborah Burnett-Worthy**

## The School Context

P.S. 067 Charles A. Dorsey is an elementary school with 223 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 8% Asian, 53% Black, 35% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 8% English Language Learners and 22% students with disabilities. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 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 <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	<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>Additional Findings</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
---------------------------	---	----------------	-------------------

### Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry based professional collaborations that promote school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. There are structures in place so that teachers have leadership roles.

### Impact

School goals, the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and decisions that affect student learning across the school are the results of these professional collaborations.

### Supporting Evidence

- Common planning periods at this school are built into each teachers' schedule so that meetings with grade, content and special focus inquiry teams are structured into the school program. The kindergarten and first grade inquiry teams, the second and third grade inquiry teams and the fourth and fifth grade inquiry teams collaborate every Monday. Across grades, the teachers of classes that include students with disabilities collaborate first period every Tuesday while various collaborations across grade and subject areas take place Wednesday through Friday. Observed agendas, minutes and materials show the focus of grade meeting inquiry work to be the promotion of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Topics include looking at student work, analyzing data, and designing assessments aligned to the Common Core State exams.
- Inquiry teams regularly review student work and follow a protocol that calls for them to reflect, check for patterns and trends, and then devise next steps to promote student achievement. The fourth and fifth grade inquiry teams reviewed student work on a compare and contrast writing assignment and came to the conclusion that although students showed some levels of mastery in comparing, they were struggling with contrasting. The review of student work also revealed a lack of details and evidence from the text. A teacher reflected, "So much time was spent on opinion writing...everything is 'In my opinion'." The resulting action plan was two lessons on theme, two lessons on structure, one lesson on introduction, one lesson on conclusions. Another teacher commented that in the assessment they created to measure progress with this skill, a section of questions should be referred to as "constructive responses" and not "short responses." She noted, "This term may be causing a misconception and contributing to the lack of detail and evidence in some students' answers."
- "I agree", "I disagree" and "I would like to add-on" are terms used schoolwide. This decision was made by the English Language Arts teachers supporting students' discussion skills. Number Talks and Mental Math problem of the day are schoolwide contributions of the math teachers. These practices have been credited with putting students at ease with getting a wrong answer allowing them to take more risks and collaborate with their classmates. First, second and third grade teachers conceived and created the action plan for Saturday school which is credited for supporting student progress in struggling students. Teachers regularly utilize their expertise and turnkey to their colleagues effecting change.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
---------------------------	---------------------	----------------	-------------------

### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices and student work products are beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best.

### Impact

Student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of thinking, rigor, and participation.

### Supporting Evidence

- Although assessment practices revealed that most fifth grade students achieved the learning objective of the writing workshop, by accurately using a quote from a text, the majority of the instructional time was directed on the mechanics of using the quote. The teacher missed opportunities to direct her students' attention to the critical thinking element of the standard, being able to draw inferences from the text. As a result of lowering the rigor of the lesson, student thinking was not pushed to the next academic level. This is in direct contrast to the schools belief that teaching practices must support a level of rigor that pushes student thinking to the next level.
- The schoolwide expectations of accountable talk and pushing student thinking through rigorous tasks is not always implemented. A math teacher modeled an example on fractions in a fourth grade class, had a student select the denominator of the next fraction to be written out in units, and attempted to have students turn and talk to one another before completing the task on their own. Students confidently counted from one to five to provide the next numerators to the teacher without accountable talk that indicated that students understood the significance of the denominators. Students focused on  $2/4$  as the next unit after  $1/4$ ,  $3/5$  after  $2/5$  and  $4/8$  after  $3/8$  leaving little time for the planned higher order questions about determining which fraction is greater such as, "If two fractions have the same denominator, what does that tell you about the size of the fraction pieces in each model?"
- During a hands on experiment for fourth graders, the science teacher purposefully grouped students to work either with her or the English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher. Both monitored their assigned group and checked for understanding, based on student needs. Although students were challenged with clarifying questions that pushed their thinking such as, "Is hot water denser or less dense than room temperature water?" and "How do you know?" they were not given enough time to process the information.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

### Findings

School leaders and faculty are in the process of aligning curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and content standards. Curricula and academic tasks are beginning to emphasize rigorous habits.

### Impact

Rigorous academic tasks and higher order thinking skills appear inconsistently in curricula across grades and subjects.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty are in the process of aligning the curricula to the CCLS as documented by reviewed curriculum maps. Adjustments and additions to the curricula are being made for future instruction to include learning objectives, learning topics, and vocabulary. For example, the kindergarten science curriculum map addresses the standard which requires students to understand that plants require air, water, nutrients, and light in order to live and thrive. In alignment with this standard the teacher has now incorporated five key ideas including, “Living things are both similar to and different from each other and from nonliving things.” Twenty-four content focuses include, “Trees are growing living organisms.” and “Trees have basic needs, including water, light and nutrients from soil.” Two of eighteen skills and procedures that will be taught to support this standard are, comparing the similarities and differences of the trees and leaves observed on mini-fieldtrips and helping plant and care for a tree temporarily in the classroom and then permanently in the schoolyard. The alignment to the standard is completed with seventy-four vocabulary words including; bark, branch, leaf, living, root, leaves, growth-ring and circumference.
- The third grade standard that requires students to be able to analyze narratives and support their opinion, contains rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills. Because of adjustments to the curricula students will now be required to write a summary of *Peter Pan*, as well as an opinion paragraph that answers the question “Who is your favorite character from *Peter Pan*? Why? Choose one character to focus on. Use specific evidence from the classic starts edition of *Peter Pan* to support your claim. Be sure to include the specific character vocabulary you have been gathering.”
- Curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous skills inconsistently across content areas. For example, fourth grade math and science units show alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards by listing guiding inquiry that pushes student thinking with questions that challenge students to reflect and explain. A social studies unit, however, lists six guiding questions, four of which are recall questions that do not require students to reflect, think or explain but simply remember facts they will be given to memorize. For example, “What kinds of communities are near where you live?”, and “What kinds of landforms and bodies of water does the United States have?”

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

### Findings

Across classrooms teachers apply created assessments, with inconsistent depth. Ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment are also inconsistent.

### Impact

As a result of inconsistent feedback, students are provided with limited opportunities for actionable feedback to move their academic performance.

### Supporting Evidence

- Although a third grade student received glows and grows on his descriptive paragraph entitled “My Classroom,” the comments, such as “You wrote the names of students in the classroom” did not provide detailed actionable feedback. The grow he received, “Write more information about the classroom.” stops short of providing the student with well-defined expectations to take his work to the next level on subsequent assignments.
- Across classrooms there were several examples of student work on display with teacher provided glows and grows attached. A fifth grade math teacher provided actionable feedback to students on a display of their presentations of solved, multi-step word problems. She stated, “Multi-stepped problems challenge people to use a series of strategies and procedures. Your work shows you gave careful consideration to solving the problem. By analyzing your work you will find other ways to get this problem solved. Next time I would like to see you provide an explanation with your work.” She provided the following to another student, “...I appreciate your good effort doing all the calculations. I see that you thought out the problem carefully. I think that you should make sure you have done one step before moving on to another section. You do best when you master one step at a time.” These examples of actionable feedback that clearly provide students with next steps to produce an improved work product are not yet the standard practice across the school.
- Comments on a second grade science display offered the following feedback, “Good effort! You made some mistakes but you tried to follow directions! Keep going!” and “Good job! You did your work and followed most of the directions. Listen closely next time.” While praising the student’s work, this feedback does not provide the student with actionable next steps that will support the student producing work products that are closer to mastery of the targeted skills.
- Co-teachers in the fifth grade writing workshop, clearly demonstrated consistent checks for understanding throughout the entire observation period. During one of their in-class assessments they asked their students, “Why are you asked to annotate text in your classes?” After a group discussion one student shared, “We are annotating text to understand the details so we can write an informational paragraph and present. The next step is to share details with my class.” Student self-assessment was also not demonstrated as a prevalent practice outside of this fifth grade class.

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

**Findings**

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training to support those expectations. Families are provided with information that explains what is needed for students to progress towards college and career readiness.

**Impact**

Staff members demonstrate their understanding of communicated high expectations through the execution of professionalism and accountability. Families demonstrate their understanding of how their student is progressing towards college and career readiness.

**Supporting Evidence**

- High expectations for instructional practice are communicated to teachers through individual goal setting conferences at the beginning of the school year and regular feedback sessions on observed instructional practice. There is an instructional focus of the week, currently accountable talk. Staff member also receive daily confirmation of the high expectations of school leaders from the morning meeting which reinforces the focus of the week with these guiding questions: “What are you doing?”, “Why are you doing it?”, and “What are your next steps?”
- School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for professionalism and collaboration among staff members. These concepts were originally introduced in the staff handbook and supported throughout the school year in administrative memos and staff meetings. Teachers were informed, “Our grade meetings are foundational to our professional development, as teachers learn so much with and from each other. It is also a part of our school culture that teachers establish collegial relationships with each other and support one another during other times of the day, such as during common preps, visits to each other’s classrooms during instructional time and before and after school.” Traditional professional development sessions also support faculty members in meeting set expectations. Topics have included planning for informational writing, small group instruction, and independent reading.
- Families are kept informed of academic events and progress through monthly newsletters that are specific to each class. Interviewed parents expressed appreciation for workshops they could attend while their children attended Saturday school. The open door policy that welcomes parents into the classroom to observe instruction and inform them about the Common Core Learning Standards are also factors in helping families understand where exactly their students are on the path to college and career readiness. Parents were informed, “Academic standards are important because they help ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in the workforce. They help set clear and consistent goals for students, parents, and teachers; building your child’s knowledge and skills; and helping set high goals for all students.”