



Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 101 The Verrazano

Elementary School K101

**2360 Benson Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11214**

Principal: Gregg Korrol

**Date of review: January 6, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Claudette Essor**

The School Context

P.S. 101 The Verrazano is an elementary school with 891 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 53% Asian, 1% Black, 19% Hispanic, and 27% White students. The student body includes 18% English Language Learners and 18% students with disabilities. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 96.2%.

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	Celebration	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	Additional Findings	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

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms teachers use multiple assessment tools and practices, aligned to curricula, to create portraits of student mastery of targeted skills and engage students in self-and peer-assessment.

Impact

Across the vast majority of classrooms, assessment practices promote the sharing of meaningful and actionable feedback that fosters student awareness of next steps for improving their work and builds teacher and student capacity to make adjustments that meet student learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers adopt and create Common Core-aligned rubrics, checklists and a school-wide grading policy, aligned to the curricula, to provide feedback on students' performance on tasks. There are several task specific rubrics attached to units of instruction and bulletin boards with student work show rubric-based "Grow" and "Glow" comments, including next steps for students to improve their work. A newly revised grading policy guides teachers and students towards increased accuracy of portraits of student mastery by creating two mastery levels, Mastery-Meets (MT) for scores of 75-84% and Mastery Above (MA) for scores of 85-94%, representing a high to low continuum, instead of the wide score range used to indicate proficiency at Performance Level 3 on New York State exams. This allows teachers to distinguish between and more effectively target the needs of students in each of these two new scoring ranges within the same New York State proficiency level.
- Teacher teams reported that all teachers use benchmark and culminating assessments, aligned to Common Core Standards and shifts, to evaluate student performance. The principal's assessment binder indicates that teachers administered *Schoolnet* Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) and math and implement *i-Ready* assessments in reading and math to all students, at designated periods throughout the year. Embedded on-demand and beginning-and end-of-unit assessments in reading and writing, linked to *ReadyGen* and *GO Math!* curricula, along with technology-based assessments in reading and math, provide additional data that teachers use to make curricula and instructional adjustments. Adjustments include flexible grouping and re-grouping of students and use of online resources to provide additional skills building activities based on student learning needs.
- During the meeting with students, all students said teachers show them how to use rubrics and checklists to determine what to include in responses to tasks "to get the best score." In reflecting on performance on an essay, one student noted, "I had a good hook in my introduction but I needed to add more details and examples in my work". When questioned about the new grading policy and its use as part of feedback noted on the work that they displayed, all students were able to specify what they needed to do to improve the work, based on the rating and feedback seen. Teachers implement ongoing assessments via exit tickets and turn-and-talks and use whole class questioning as well as individual and small group conferencing to check for understanding. In the classrooms visited, the vast majority of teachers followed up on their findings immediately. In a kindergarten Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, after listening to incorrect responses from just a few students, the teacher paused the lesson to review the difference between "rural" and "urban".

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies provide multiple entry points to learning tasks for all learners and student work products and discussions reflect high levels of thinking and participation. However, extensions of tasks for further engagement of learners at varied levels of proficiency were not evident in some classrooms.

Impact

Although all students participate in discussions and produce high quality work products across grades and content areas, there are missed opportunities to provide all students with pathways that allow them to take ownership of their work and perform beyond the task assigned to the class.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade 5 ICT class in ELA, the teacher engaged students in analyzing how writers use dialogue and details to create “Aha Moments” in describing characters and their experiences. The teacher used an interactive whiteboard to display the definition of an “Aha Moment” and shared an “Aha Moment” from her own life. Then she asked students to watch for an example of an “Aha Moment” in a video clip from *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*, and consider how it changes the character’s actions and thoughts. Students followed up with a turn and talk with peers and then used iPads to write comments that were posted on a whiteboard for the class to view and reflect on. Similar practices were observed in a grade 2 class where the teacher provided support as needed, while individual students led peers in letter-sound correspondence activities that involved identifying, sounding out, chanting and spelling words, based on combinations of vowels, consonants and blends.
- In a grade 4 ELA class, groups of students engaged in differentiated tasks to identify examples of cause and effect relationships in texts. One group used websites to explore cause and effect linked to a natural disaster, another read an article given to them to identify and write a paragraph about cause and effect relationships and a third underlined and used a graphic organizer to illustrate examples of cause and effect in a selection given to them. Similarly, in a grade 3 math class the teacher gave groups of English Language Learners (ELLs) a \$100 bill to “shop” for school supplies from a bin, as they learned to solve multi-step word problems. Using flash cards, pricing tags and charts with math vocabulary and problem solving steps, the students completed a worksheet that listed the items purchased, quantities, unit costs, total spent, and remainder, if any, from their \$100 bill. While these and other lessons facilitated student choice and higher-order thinking, they did not illustrate engagement of advanced learners in tasks that extended beyond the given group task.
- In some classrooms visited, teachers assigned tasks that evoked discussions, as students quoted evidence from texts to support claims or validate responses to questions. In a grade 5 Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, individual students led groups of peers in discussions of story elements such as plot, setting, and conflict faced by characters. Students could be heard using accountable talk stems to engage in peer-to-peer questioning and discussion across the room. The high level of student participation in higher-order thinking in discussions guided by student-generated questioning in this class, was not evident in other classrooms visited. For example, in a grade 3 classroom where groups of students investigated variations in pitch and vibrations based on the type of instrument used to create sounds, discussions at stations were primarily in response to teacher-directed questions.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

All curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and illustrate strategic integration of instructional shifts. Using student work and data, teachers constantly collaborate to refine curricula and tasks for all learners across grades and content areas.

Impact

A school-wide commitment to continuously deepening alignment of curricula to relevant standards results in all students having access to Common Core-aligned units of study with tasks designed to deepen thinking and accelerate learning by all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's curriculum binders highlight grade level teacher-created curriculum maps and pacing calendars that chart cross-discipline outcomes for writing, reading, listening, and speaking across classrooms. The binder shows Common Core-aligned units with tasks derived from revisions of past units, adjustments of lessons from *EngageNY*, and use of curriculum resources such as *ReadyGen* and *GO Math!* There are also pacing calendars aligned to the New York City scope and sequence resources that guide instruction in social studies and science. The maps include pre-and post-unit assessments, embedded tasks, culminating activities, scaffolds, skills and strategies for differentiated instruction. Using the Tri-State/EQUIP Rubric, teacher teams constantly review curricula and tasks across all grades and content areas, further aligning units of study to relevant standards and shifts. Based on their analysis of student work and data from 2015 standardized assessments in ELA, teacher teams are currently expanding curricula, to supplement literacy instruction by incorporating tasks from the Hochman writing program now being piloted in the school.
- Pacing calendars and monthly unit overviews show target standards by grade and sample tasks for each standard. There are tasks requiring students to engage in activities such as citing evidence from texts, solving complex math problems, preparing summaries of reading selections, and writing on topics across genres. Curricula also include topics and skills related to the phonics-based *Orton-Gillingham* reading program, the Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) program, enrichment and intervention reading and math programs, and a character education program. Curricula for visual and performing arts activities and a School Enrichment Model initiative allow students to explore learning in areas such as digital photography, Lego construction, coding, business operations, bookmaking, health and wellness, and sports.
- The school's curricula incorporate specific instructional materials to allow access for ELLs and students with disabilities. Lesson plans show use of graphic organizers, writing frames, and tiered tasks that support access by diverse students to tasks grounded in relevant content standards. Further, with technology as an instructional support tool in every classroom, unit tasks reflect applications of visual or auditory technology that offer multiple opportunities for students to access learning via small group work, manipulatives, interactive whiteboards, touchscreen TVs, laptops, iPads, iPods, and video clips. Web-based programs such as *Imagine Learning*, *BrainPOP*, *BrainPOP Jr.*, *BrainPOP ESL*, *i-Ready*, *Think-Central* and *Foundations* serve as additional sources of differentiated enrichment and intervention activities for students in all subgroups.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Administrators systematically convey high expectations about teaching and learning by all staff and students and engage families in partnerships that empower them to help their children succeed in meeting the school's expectations.

Impact

Communication of and targeted supports for attainment of high expectations promote collective responsibility for learning and result in ongoing improvement in staff and student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders disseminate tools such as lesson plan templates, a staff handbook, curriculum binders, instructional memoranda, and data collection and analysis sheets to all staff, specifying the school's high expectations for teaching and learning. There are instructional memoranda that explicitly state expectations linked to targeted components of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, the instructional focus across the school, and supports and materials to be visible in all classrooms. During teacher team meetings, teachers cited shared expectations for increased student engagement, rigorous instruction, differentiation, scaffolding, effective use of the co-teaching model, high level questioning and discussion practices, daily assessment of learning, integration of technology and teacher modeling as part of explicit instruction for all students. Several added that they turnkey learning to help all peers master these expectations for teaching and learning.
- The school's professional development plan indicates that all teachers receive ongoing training in topics such as effective questioning, using assessment in instruction, analysis and triangulation of assessment data, and the delivery of "moveable feedback" to all students. School staff members also reported being trained to implement the *i-Ready* online assessment program and the PBIS and character education programs that promote college and career readiness for all students. School leaders hold all staff accountable for the school's high expectations, through reviews of unit and lesson plans, analyses of student work, and classroom visits which allow the school leaders to note changes in pedagogy based on expectations articulated during one-to-one feedback conferences with teachers. The sharing of best practices via inter-visitations, Google Docs, visits to showcase schools and other offsite professional learning activities, extend teacher training to meet all expectations. The principal noted that these activities have improved staff effectiveness, as seen in teacher observation data, and student achievement, as per data from assessments.
- Families stated that they are aware of high expectations for their children and are kept abreast of their children's progress toward those expectations, via progress reports, report cards, phone calls, Remind101 texts, the school's website and *Class Dojo*, a website with class specific information posted by teachers. Several added that at events such as weekly conferences on Tuesdays, open house, family nights and special events such as "Coffee with Korrol", "Cookies with Kane" and "Pancakes with Percaccio," families partner with school staff in learning activities that reiterate school expectations, empower families to help their children meet the expectations and celebrate children who succeed in meeting the expectations. The parent coordinator also partners with teachers in hosting monthly workshops that further provide families with content-and grade-specific strategies for helping their children. Families spoke about workshops on transition to middle school, use of *i-Ready* and *PebbleGo!* online resources, and Common Core Learning Standards, all of which informed them about expectations for their children and how to help them at home.

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

Teams of teachers meet regularly to systematically analyze instructional practices and identify strategies to improve staff and student achievement. Distributive leadership roles foster teacher collaboration with school leaders to make critical decisions about teaching and learning.

Impact

Through embedded systems and structures for teamwork, all teachers reflect on and improve their pedagogy. Distributed leadership practices result in deepening of teacher input in major school decisions that positively impact teaching and learning by all members of the school community.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher team activities reflect shared practices as teachers discuss observations about students and identify strategies for adjusting instruction as needed to accelerate student mastery of targeted skills and standards. During this Quality Review, members of a grade 3 teacher team used a writing checklist to examine samples of student writing to norm expectations for student work at that grade level. The participants described noticings and asked clarifying questions, before moving on to a discussion of strategies for improving students' use of context clues in navigating tasks. Peers offered suggestions such as use of online resources to re-teach context clues, infusion of target vocabulary in both the task and instructions for the task, and addition of a visual to the checklist to support student learning.
- All staff members collaborate regularly with peers on teams to refine tasks across all grades and content areas, with specific attention to rigorous tasks for all students as per the school's instructional focus. A review of *i-Ready* data analysis logs presented by the principal indicates that teams identify focus standards in ELA and math for each grade and revise content and tasks in units, to reinforce the standards and address gaps noted via analysis of assessment data. A finding of schoolwide student weakness in navigating vocabulary and informational text led to teacher teams adjusting unit content and strategies to deepen vocabulary instruction. Teachers also examine student work regularly to identify areas where students need intervention or enrichment for skills building and to make adjustments accordingly. Tracking logs for targeted at-risk students in each grade illustrate detailed findings about individual student needs, interventions used to address the needs and growth in student mastery of the targeted skills, based on the interventions.
- During one team meeting teachers stated that they contribute significantly to high-level decisions about teaching and learning. Members of teams such as the technology, assessment, Response to Intervention, instructional, PBIS, professional Learning, special education, ESL, new teacher support, Orton-Gillingham, and writing teams, all work directly with school leaders in implementing school wide protocols, developing curricula, and spearheading professional development and instructional initiatives. The principal noted that these teacher leaders are integral to school wide decision-making, as they provide ongoing critical feedback and data that inform goal setting and resource allocation throughout the school year. The principal noted that teamwork has improved teacher pedagogy, as per overall data from the Measures of Teacher Practice (MOTP) score. In addition, teamwork has contributed to improvement in student achievement schoolwide, as per data from *i-Ready* and informal assessments.