



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 191 Paul Robeson

Elementary School K191

**1600 Park Place
Brooklyn
NY 11233**

Principal: Elsi Capolongo

**Date of review: January 29, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Tracie Benjamin-Van Lierop**

The School Context

P.S. 191 Paul Robeson is an elementary school with 187 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 80% Black, 17% Hispanic and 0% White. The student body includes 4% English Language Learners and 18% 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 89.4%.

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	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	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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

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. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness and successfully partner with families.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability supports students' progress on a path to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school sends student progress reports home to families every six weeks informing them of their child's current independent and guiding reading levels, progress made in English Language Arts (ELA), math, social studies, and science. Families are also made aware of book report, current events project, and homework completion status through updates. Parents reported the school has an open door policy and that they are provided with all information they request regarding their children.
- Families emphasized the importance of workshops and the impact on supporting their children academically at home. For example, the school partnered with families on a book study focused on *Who Moved My Cheese*, which encouraged parents to understand the importance of change and how to embrace it as it relates to the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards, in particular, math. Teachers make themselves available to work with parents as they support their children at home.
- School leaders communicate high expectations to all staff members via professional development opportunities that promote a culture of mutual accountability while also building capacity amongst the faculty. The school hosted an Instructional Rounds workshop for district principals, assistant principals, and teachers. Additionally, the School Implementation Team collaborated with their Borough Field Support Center to provide training to staff members on writing quality Individual Education Programs to ensure alignment of student goals and their present levels of performance.
- The Monthly Lab Report and Paul Robeson Elementary School Physical Education Newsletter highlight the work happening in the school community from pre-kindergarten to grade 5 and they are shared with the entire staff and families. As reported in The Monthly Lab Report, students in kindergarten started their year by analyzing and sorting plants into groups based on their physical characteristics. In grade 5, students, who are also referred to as scientists, embarked upon a new adventure entitled Science Friday, which allows time for students to investigate and test one of their current hypotheses.

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 include multiple entry points into the curriculum.

Impact

Although teachers provide multiple entry points, the use of strategic high quality supports and extensions into the curricula varies across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The school believes students learn best when they are in flexible groups and teachers are conferencing with them. During an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) lesson, the learning objective focused on students describing weather related natural disasters and demonstrating safety procedures related to severe weather. Students were grouped based on Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) data; 0-40%, 40-60%, 60-70%, 70-80%, and 80-100 and included the support of paraprofessionals with individual and groups of students. The different groups were each assigned different severe weather conditions such as blizzard, hurricane, thunderstorm, and tornado and at the end of the lesson shared their findings using the class discussion route protocol.
- During an ELA lesson, students worked in groups, comparing and contrasting multiple accounts of the same event or topics in the anchor text, *Escape to Freedom: The Underground Railroad Adventures of Callie and William*. Routines and expectations were evident as students moved from one group to another using music and a visual timer to aid in their transitions. The lesson included tasks with multiple entry points involving questions of varying degrees of difficulty along with student choice of the selected task. Conversely, during a science lesson on magnetism, students were assigned to different groups and expected to make predictions about which items were magnetic or not. Based on discussions with students, some of them were unclear of the task and did not understand the meaning of prediction.
- Lessons across classrooms included learning modality considerations via PowerPoint presentations, videos, manipulatives, music, and movement, however, the opportunity for students to extend their thinking varied. In an ICT class, students were asked, "What is water pollution?" and proceeded to a whole group activity using the *Walk the Line* protocol where the teachers led the conversation. Students had the choice to agree, disagree, or remain neutral and shared their responses with the entire class with varying levels of explanation to accompany their answers.

Additional Findings

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. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

There is coherence across grades and subject areas so that individual and groups of students have access to curricula and tasks that are cognitively engaging and promote college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers integrate the instructional shifts by making purposeful connections between the shifts and the topics in each subject, both within a grade and as students advance through the grades. ReadyGen and GO Math! are used with a supplementary reading series, Wonders, a connected suite of programs to support core ELA instruction, English Language Learners (ELLs), and a full and equitable parallel Spanish program.
- Teachers provide a data-based rationale that identifies areas of growth or achievement gaps for all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities. They explain how curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined accordingly so that all students access curricula and tasks, and are cognitively engaged at a level consistent with the academic expectations across grades and content areas. Teachers reported that they revise curricula and lessons every day based on the data they receive in the classroom, MOSL and Friday assessment data. A grade 1 teacher stated, "I am always looking at what is expected of my students as they move throughout the grades and planning according to those expectations."
- Curricula and academic tasks are designed to engage students, advance them through the content, and assess their understanding as evidenced by their work products. Lesson plans reviewed included flexible grouping, considerations for English as a New Language (ENL) students and students with disabilities. Additionally, extension activities were included for students performing at levels 3 and 4, and student choice was included in the planning of lesson activities. For example, a lesson plan on text structure offered students the choice to respond to one of three questions in their reader's and writer's journal.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

Impact

While teachers and students are usually provided with actionable feedback and results are used to adjust curricula and instruction, some of the feedback on student work is not actionable and meaningful nor does it consistently provide next steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers determine topics to assess with common formative assessments and effectively unpack the standards and analyze the instructional shifts for specific concepts and skills students need to know and be able to do. The MOSL data indicated the majority of students in the lower academy increased in their ELA scores from the first to second MOSL administration. A grade 2 class decreased in their scores, which informed the next steps for teachers including re-teaching specific content. Math data from a grade 4 class was color coded to indicate students with disabilities, ENL learners, students requiring Response to Intervention (RtI) and Academic Intervention Services (AIS). The data collected included baselines, progress, benchmark projected correct, and benchmark actual correct.
- Students receive actionable feedback on their individual goals in ELA, science, social studies, and math via student feedback reflection forms when conferencing with teachers. Included on their documents are the three things they will do to achieve their goals and who will help them reach their goals. Student peer, teacher, AIS/RtI provider, paraprofessional, school staff member, and family member are listed as possible resources for students to achieve their goals. For example, in a grade 5 opinion essay, the teacher's feedback to the student included, "You used transitional phrases well to go from one idea to the next. In the future, develop your conclusion further. This will lead to a level four essay. Additionally, when you are writing an essay, remember you need a clear beginning, middle, and end to skillfully connect your reasons to your opinion." However, a review of student work on bulletin boards and notebooks revealed limited feedback with no clear next steps. For example, a student's ELA journal entries stated, "Incomplete". A student who scored a level 1 on a math assignment received the following feedback, "Where are your answers?"
- Teacher developed classroom assessments are administered every Friday in ELA, math, science, social studies, spelling, and dictation. The data is used to glean the achievements and areas of growth of the week's key core concepts, which informs adjustments of lesson planning and student groupings.
- Students are provided with rubrics and checklists to guide their work. Conferencing is offered with teachers by student or teacher request and suggestions for improving the level of feedback are provided to students using sentence starters such as, "I think you should...", "I do not understand what you mean by...", "Can you explain _____ to me again?", and "My favorite part was ___ because..."

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused.

Impact

Improved teacher practice and strengthened instructional capacity result in progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers have built a culture of professional collaboration in which they share insights to improve their instructional practice and progress for students performing in the lowest third and students with disabilities. As stated by teachers, “We identified these two groups and realized we needed to give them extra support with decoding and comprehension according to our data results. We also noticed that most of these students were boys.” The faculty decided to purchase Starfall, an on-line program which helps students with decoding and comprehension and can also be used at home.
- Teachers have noticed a difference in how they are asking questions in their classrooms, which is informing the level of questioning their students are asking each other as well as how they are writing. Teacher teams are making connections to students’ real lives and their school work applications while also working to increase rigor for their students performing at levels 3 and 4.
- A review of inquiry team meeting minutes with next steps and agendas for the current school year included alignment of GO Math! curricula, upcoming school intervisitations, monthly promotion folder entries, strategies to encourage student voice in the classroom, the provision of effective teacher feedback, and analysis of results from MOSL. Some ideas resonating with teacher teams included incorporating paraprofessionals into lesson planning and learning activities while also building a partnership between teachers and paraprofessionals to enable a structure for the provision of effective feedback that is welcomed.