



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S.195 Manhattan Beach

Elementary School K195

**131 Irwin Street
Brooklyn
NY 11235**

Principal: Bernadette Toomey

**Date of review: May 19, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Anne Alfonso**

The School Context

P.S. 195 Manhattan Beach is an elementary school with 456 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 3% Asian, 3% Black, 2% Hispanic, and 92% White students. The student body includes 11% English Language Learners and 7% 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 94.2%.

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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Focus	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:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn that is informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Instruction focuses on the quality of student discussion and work products.

Impact

Across the vast majority of classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's instructional focus affirms that teachers develop strong critical thinking and writing skills across all grade levels and subjects through design of rigorous lessons with challenging, open-ended questions that require inquiry, analysis, and assessment. Across content areas and grades, teachers' plans reflect the components of a balanced approach with opportunities for modeled, guided, and independent practice. For example, in a grade 3 math classroom, students listened to two read-aloud stories and responded in pairs to prompts about fractions and elapsed time, and created word problem stories based on fractions. Additionally, within leveled groups, students read and answered questions about the book, *Pizza Party* and brainstormed a planning page to create their own math story, selecting a math operation and generating questions. As student groups worked on their task using a checklist and rubric for self-assessment, the teacher circulated and facilitated discussion within the student groups. In a grade 5 English Language Arts (ELA) fiction lesson, students analyzed what the character learned about herself and wrote from that perspective in a journal entry. During a second read, students close read in small groups, marking parts where they had questions and discussed their questions using text-based references. As the teacher conferred with students, she reminded them to use their imagination to write from the perspective of the main character. The entry points for the assignment included audio resources, vocabulary support, grouping for reading, and checklists for self-assessment.
- In a grade 4 classroom, students participated in a Socratic seminar where they engaged in a dialogue to synthesize information from several sources on the topic of immigration. The teacher posed a quote for discussion, stating that "it was sometimes said that America's streets were paved with gold" to enhance the rigor of conversation. While students in the inner circle followed a Socratic protocol to ask and answer questions with evidenced-based responses, students in the outer circle observed, listened, and took notes, and used a Socratic seminar observation checklist, as the teacher acted as a facilitator.
- In a grade 2 social studies classroom, students used books and did research on laptops to learn information about a symbol of America that they had chosen to study. Students worked in pairs or in groups based on their selection and writing needs. When necessary, the teacher made suggestions based on their progress of capturing and recording information.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide training to teachers. They partner with parents in connection with college and career readiness.

Impact

Parents support their children as they make progress toward meeting expectations of college and career readiness. While there is a strong system of mutual accountability, it is not always reflected in all forms of communication between school leaders and staff, limiting the opportunities for deepening this practice even further.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses regular communication through the school's website and a monthly newsletter entitled, *Manhattan Beach Matters*, to inform parents of expectations, student progress, important events, and new school initiatives such as a lottery-based Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) program for students in grades 2-5. The parent-student handbook provides an overview of the curriculum and Common Core Standards and expectations for programs as the Gifted and Talented program. Additionally, the handbook lists specific ways for parents to connect as partners by becoming a class parent, participating on the School Leadership Team, voicing their opinion, and volunteering. Also, the school communicates on the skill attributes of the student Ambassadorship Program, which include leadership, communication, and team building. Teachers across grades conduct workshops on how parents can support their children at home towards mastery of the Common Core Learning Standards. Parents use online resources such as myON and Think Central to support their child's skill development. During a Meet the Teacher Night in September families received the expectations for each grade. Progress reports are sent through Class Messenger and parents receive an interim progress report in January to advise them of their child's progress and next steps in reading, writing, and math. Parent Engagement Tuesdays consist of phone and in-person meetings to discuss student progress. A parent who has been part of the school for 16 years exclaimed, "It has only gotten better!"
- The school counselor organizes visits to a middle school for grade 5 students and hosts an onsite middle school fair as part of the articulation process from elementary to middle school. In addition, students in grades K-5 actively participate in a student-led portfolio conference with parents and teachers explaining their progress and next learning steps. Student Council members spearhead many school events such as Career Day and learn leadership, service, teamwork, and communication skills. An English as a New Language (ENL) afterschool enrichment program utilizes an engineering curriculum in which students design a car made from recycled materials. This opportunity allows for English Language Learners to address their language skills while applying knowledge of math and science to solve a real-world problem that supports them in becoming college and career ready.
- Planned professional development is ongoing and conducted within learning cycles that focus on specific topics such as critical thinking and the use of thinking maps. Teachers were consistently able to articulate expectations for professionalism and instruction as communicated by school leaders. However, some written communications to teachers, such as the teacher handbook, are not as rigorous and detailed in outlining expectations as other forms of communication.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school faculty effectively aligns curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and ensures the strategic incorporation of the instructional shifts. Teachers utilize student work and data to plan and refine curricula and academic tasks.

Impact

Curricular coherence across the grades promotes college and career readiness skills. All learners access the curricula and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- ELA and social studies curricula are designed as interdisciplinary units based on the Common Core Learning Standards for ELA and the social studies Scope and Sequence. These interdisciplinary units, supplemented by *Expeditionary Learning* and *Holt Science*, address the instructional shifts and include essential questions, assessments, scaffolds, and differentiated learning tasks based on student needs in different content areas. Based on teacher input and the tracking of math student data for all students including ELLs and students with disabilities, the school adopted *GO Math!* for its close alignment to the Common Core instructional shifts to build stronger foundational skills. Across all grades, curricula reflect that students write from sources, provide text-based evidence in writing and discussion, and engage in close reading of complex texts with a focus on academic vocabulary. All units culminate in a performance task requiring one form of writing identified by grade-level Common Core Learning Standards. A culminating grade 3 task involves the exploration of China through study of articles, a textbook, and multimedia such as video and blogs. Students explore how the different aspects of culture, history, geography, and government affect communities in Asia, and write blogs and comment on each other's blogs. The schools' former fifth graders had a 100% pass rate in sixth grade as compared to 94%, 97%, and 98% pass rates for the City, district and similar students respectively, as reported in the School Quality Snapshot.
- Based on assessment data and grouping, strategic instructional adjustments were made for a first grade math lesson requiring students to identify two-dimensional shapes seen on flat surfaces of three-dimensional shapes. Divided into three groups based on assessment, all students address the same task but with different scaffolds and entries that include aids such as a chart with questions, question cards with two figures for discussion, and 3D shape and word sorting. English Language Learners received support from the English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher to access and complete the assignment.
- Teachers use Google Docs as a way to record refinements to existing units of study based on reflection regarding unit implementation and needs identified by looking at student work. For example, when thinking maps such as the "I see, I think, I wonder" map and the double bubble maps were infused into a first grade unit on writing to provide support for higher as well as struggling students, teachers noted that some students had difficulty with the double bubble map. Therefore, a change was made to include writing templates as well. Also, additional leveled and picture books were added, as well as short video supports to provide access to the curricula and a deeper understanding of topics for ELLs.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use assessments, rubrics, and student self-assessment aligned to the school's curricula and offer a clear picture of student mastery. Common assessments are used to track student progress towards goals across grades and inform curricular and instructional adjustments.

Impact

Students and teachers have actionable feedback regarding student achievement. All students including English Language Learners and students with disabilities demonstrate increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- The school administers common assessments including *Fountas and Pinnell* assessments, unit assessments, Benchmark Assessments, culminating performance tasks, and *Measures of Student Learning* (MOSL) assessments. These assessments are used as key benchmarks to measure student progress in meeting their goals and providing actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Writing performance levels for all grades indicated growth to level three and above for grades 2 to 5 from beginning-of-year to middle-of-year results. 2014-2015 data indicated that the school had met or exceeded targets in ELA and math for ELLs, students with disabilities, and the lowest third. Based on data, the implementation of the Future Problem Solver and the Socratic Method approach were initiated to promote and deepen critical thinking in discussion forums to support students in rigorous learning. In response to the monitoring of data for writing performance levels, thinking maps and routines have been infused into the units of study and lesson plans to support next steps for using details and facts from text in writing to further meaning.
- Teachers provide feedback to students through conversations, reading and writing conferences, and in written comments based on rubric scoring. Feedback is evident within portfolios and on classroom and hallway bulletin boards. Rubrics and glows and grows provide students with actionable feedback, next steps, and push students to the next level on their writing pieces. For example, a grade 1 student self-assessed through a checklist, noting that he successfully compared and contrasted two community workers and chose one that he would like to be and stated why. In addition, teacher feedback to a grade 1 student cited how the student organized ideas and information into five detailed paragraphs. A grade 5 student shared how rubrics provided him with structure and feedback when composing a letter to King George from the point of view of a patriot. Students shared that rubrics and feedback have prompted them to make changes in their work, such as adding a paragraph from an opposing viewpoint, and have enabled them to evaluate and think about what they need to do for next time. Students also receive feedback from peer assessment. During the spring Open School conferences, students shared their portfolios with parents and led discussions about their progress and their next learning steps evidencing that students are adept at reflecting about their work and the next steps to reach and exceed standards.
- Performance tasks are tailored to consider student choice and to address the needs of all students. The school closely monitors the Common Core Learning Standards associated with the benchmark assessments. For example, the school monitored student performance in meeting math standards for each class, as well as for each student grouping within each class. As a result, grade 5 has increased student pairs or triads in math, use of the mid-chapter checkpoint to group students, and has included low floor, high ceiling tasks in order to provide rich problem solving experiences accessed through a variety of strategies.

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. Distributive leadership structures are embedded.

Impact

There is schoolwide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners. Teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- During an observation of a kindergarten inquiry team meeting, which included the teacher development coach, teachers discussed activities and assignments that promote student learning through deep thinking. They also discussed setting a purpose for student writing and reviewed the elements of effective learning objectives. The teachers shared their completed charts for “I see, I think, I wonder” in preparation for a trip to the zoo. Attention to the rigor of the questions and the standards were discussed and reflected upon as lesson outcomes. Teachers also discussed both the student responses and questions generated, and compared the rigor of the task to Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) chart for writing at a level three. The teachers then continued with looking at student work using the Critical Friends Feedback Form. Each teacher shared two areas of strength and one area for growth for a partner’s plan. Several strategies to increase rigor in the assignment and the level of questioning were suggested including: use of how and why questions, sentence starters, picture cards, circle maps, and self and peer checklists. Also, teachers analyzed and discussed data collected for listening and speaking standards referencing a standard-based checklist for listening and speaking, and discussed prompts to support student communication. Based on student data, the social studies unit had been adjusted to include the unit on the zoo, referencing the standards for listening and speaking, and reading and writing for the early childhood Neighborhood and Community unit. The teachers discussed the goals of the standards as next steps for increased achievement for all learners.
- Each grade represents a horizontal team that works collaboratively to revise curricula, examine student data throughout the year, and assess impact on teaching and learning. Through the professional inquiry cycle, the school’s professional development menu offers opportunities for teachers to enhance their own practice by conferring with and viewing the practice of a colleague through inter-visitation. Professional feedback and self-reflection of their goals guide teacher choice for professional goal setting.
- Distributive leadership has been further enhanced through teachers’ participation in the District 22 content Ambassador Teacher program that provides monthly professional learning opportunities for ELA, math, science, social studies, physical education, dance, and art. Participating teachers share with their teams the best practices learned, serve as team leaders, facilitate scheduled staff professional learning opportunities, and write curriculum. Additionally, teacher input has led to changes that affect student learning across the school such as an increased attention to explanation in problem solving during guided practice in grade 2 math, to the reordering of chapters to stress volume, graphing, and conversions in grade 5, and in moving the non-fiction unit of study to the beginning of the year for grade 2.