



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

Edward B. Shallow

Middle School K227

**6500 16th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11204**

Principal: Edwin Hernandez

**Date of review: November 5, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio**

The School Context

Edward B. Shallow is a middle school with 1,282 students from grade 6 through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 59% Asian, 0% Black, 24% Hispanic, and 16% White students. The student body includes 26% English language learners and 13% 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 96.1%.

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	Additional Findings	Proficient
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 Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	Additional Findings	Developing
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	Developing
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	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:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Structures are in place to consistently communicate high school-wide expectations to staff and provide feedback to families with regard to the ongoing support of students towards college and career readiness.

Impact

Ongoing systems hold staff accountable for high expectations and ensure that families understand their child's progress towards those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal provides the staff with a handbook and weekly Monday memoranda to communicate information on the school-wide instructional focus and their responsibilities with regard to those expectations. In the school handbook, the school mission is provided as well as the expectations for professional development time to include, "collaborative planning, lesson study, inquiry and review of student work, and mentoring." Pamphlets with the school vision are posted outside the office. In addition, the professional development plan shows that teachers receive training on the domains of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Sample Monday professional development includes creating student-centered goals and English Language Learner (ELL) strategies.
- Ongoing verbal and written communications via observations and memoranda provide school staff with direction regarding expectations for rigorous instruction, exit passes and opportunities for student-to-student collaboration. School leaders use these communications to articulate school-wide expectations and hold staff members accountable. Teachers report that they have received commentaries from school leaders on "turn and talk" sessions, which is an instructional expectation the principal is emphasizing this year. Teachers state that the quality of these communications is helpful towards meeting the high bar set for instruction.
- The school offers multiple workshops for parents. Examples include: "Supporting a Special Needs Child" and "The Common Core Standards." One parent reports that the "Homework Tips and Test Taking Strategy" workshop was resourceful and learned strategies such as using online tools and a hotline for homework assistance. In addition, online grading tools and progress reports provide parents with information on their child's grade, the school's events calendar and other important information. The parent coordinator provides monthly training on the use of the online grading tools for families.

Area of Focus

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

School teams are in the process of using assessment data and student work to consistently inform instructional decisions and monitor progress for target students toward the Common Core Learning Standards and school goals in their professional collaborations.

Impact

The use of an inquiry approach is developing across teacher teams and does not yet typically result in improved teacher practice or progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly to discuss specific students. Teams are grouped by grade and cohort. Teachers use a Looking at Student Work protocol to discuss student work and list implications and reflections from the meeting in response to: “Does effective communication result in a higher achievement on exit passes for students?”; “Does increase in collaboration among students result in higher achievement during exit pass?” A review of reflections, based on what they have learned from their colleagues and what strategies they would use in their classroom as a result of their discussion, show general notations about behavior with some thought on strategies for individual students. In addition, teacher reflection notes do not demonstrate a connection to the inquiry focus. In one set of notes for a grade-level teacher team, reflections state, “use ESL methodology, improve grades with improved on-task behavior, focusing, decrease distractions – behavior modification techniques.” On another grade-level team, reflections include, “with improved focus and behavior, his grades will improve.”
- During one teacher team meeting, teachers were discussing five students as part of their inquiry work. Teachers report that these students were chosen from a list of struggling Level 1 students based on last year’s New York State assessments. The team discussed each student, describing details about their behavior in school, attendance rates, referred to the New York State assessment data and quality of work products. For one student, teachers stated that they would continue to use repetition, visuals and graphic organizers as form of support. With another student, one teacher stated she would continue to use sentence starters. However, for other students, instructional implications included only a parent-teacher conference, and positive reinforcement tickets.
- Although teacher teams follow a Looking at Student Work protocol which provides an opportunity for teachers to discuss implications for individual students, across different teacher team notes, frequently, the next steps are not instructional. A review of some teacher team notes in one grade reflects several implications in providing students with new seats for engagement and contacting parents. In other teams, notes did not include specific implications or teaching strategies. Notes from these meetings include implications such as “English mechanics, more practice on decimals” for one student and another, “additional practice, and more partner work to be successful.”

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school's curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards while integrating the instructional shifts. Curricula and tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher order thinking for targeted students.

Impact

Purposeful decisions to incorporate the instructional shifts and rigorous habits build curricular coherence across grades and subjects and promote college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses Expeditionary Learning for English Language Arts (ELA) and Connected Mathematics 3 (CMP3) for math which is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. In grade 8, two ELA unit plans focus on argumentative writing to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. Specifically, in one unit, students are required to explore the text structure of two informational texts. The essential question states, "How do we choose evidence that mostly supports our opinion on whether kids should do extreme sports? A grade 7 curriculum map includes a task which requires that students write a lab report and design an experiment.
- An emphasis on instructional shifts was evident in math, and social studies unit plans and tasks. In two grade 6 math lesson plans, tasks require students to use speed and accuracy to solve complex word problems. Furthermore, two math unit plans focus on fluently dividing multi digit numbers. In a grade 8 social studies curriculum map, tasks include analyzing and comparing primary and secondary documents including political cartoons and newspapers on topics. Social studies maps for other grades reflected the use of domain-specific tasks and resources to support literacy experiences.
- Teachers use the Depth of Knowledge (DoK) matrix to plan unit plans, teaching aims and tasks. In addition, the school leaders provide the Shallow Common Language as a tool to integrate into lesson plans to lift the level of questions to meet DoK levels 3 and 4. In an ELA unit plan for a grade 7 English as a second language class, teaching aims include identifying the point of view in a text and revising small details with internal, sensory words and phrases. In a grade 8 math lesson plan, the summary task requires students to explain the difference between an open and closed circle when graphing an inequality. In a science curriculum map, one essential question states, "How do we as scientists gather and interpret evidence that the Earth is continually changing?" aligned to DoK level 3.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best in student work products and discussions.

Impact

Although the school's set of beliefs is beginning to be informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts, student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's instructional focus and belief about how students learn is the use of student-to-student collaborations leading to better student understanding as reflected on exit passes and increased rigor in student work. Student-to-student collaborations were observed in the form of turn and talks. In a grade 7 ELA class, during group talk activity students came to consensus on how to create their own rubric for writing an extended response. Students stated that they used a teaching chart as a reference and discussed what terms should be included and how each criteria level should differ in language. However, this level of group or partner conversation was only evident in some classes.
- Student discussions in some classes demonstrate a strong claim and supporting evidence aligned with DoK level 3. In a grade 7 social studies class, groups of students discussed the age of exploration and the rationale of being the first to conquer a region. One group of students stated, "It's important because the religion becomes bigger and spreads. It allows more people in the religion that is spread and people will get along better without war." However, in another grade 7 class, group work consisted of completing a Know-What-Learn (KWL) chart where students were listing facts about the earth. One student asked questions such as "Why is the earth round?" which demonstrate low inference skills that align with DoK 2.
- In a grade 6 math class, students engaged in a turn and talk to discuss how they solved a word problem. Student responses focused on explaining how they arrived at their answer such as "First I did 55, then it cost \$2.00" and "I divided \$2.00 by 5". Although students shared how they arrived at their answers, the partner discussions were only centered on their explanations which aligned to a low level on the DoK matrix. In another grade 6 Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math class, students were given two opportunities to turn and talk. The first consisted of homework review and the second on the question, "Would using a decimal quotient make sense since in our Do Now it didn't?" However, the majority of student responses focused on step-by-step explanations with little or no higher-level thinking. In addition, the majority of the lesson was teacher-directed.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers are in the process of developing assessments and rubrics which are aligned to the curricula and which are beginning to reflect ongoing checks for understanding and self-reflection for students.

Impact

Inconsistent in-the-moment instructional adjustments and limited feedback lead to missed opportunities in ensuring all student learning needs are met.

Supporting Evidence

- As part of the instructional focus, teachers are encouraged to use exit slips and online tools to determine students' level of understanding. In some classes, exit slips are posted on bulletin boards. In a grade 8 ELA class, students were prompted by their teacher to complete an exit slip post it and students were observed posting their slips on the bulletin board. Some exit post it comments consisted of "We learned about tone", "We learned about tone in stories.", "Today's lesson was understandable.", and "In English, I learned how to identify the tone of articles." Out of 7 exit slips posted, only one clearly stated how the aim of the lesson was met.
- On bulletin boards and in student folders, a common rubric was used to grade student work. The rubric was evident on student tasks which additionally provide a teacher comment and student next steps. The rubric criteria rates students on their ability to demonstrate a clear understanding of the concept, use of appropriate background knowledge to engage in the task, completing the task correctly, and explain the work accurately and concisely both in written and oral form. However, these rubrics do not specify their connection to the standards or skills in alignment with the curricula. In addition, some teacher comments and next steps are not connected to specific skills to provide students with clear feedback. On one student math task, the teacher comment stated, "Very creative, great job. Check grammar." On an ELA task, the comment states, "Nice work. Collaboration on point. Write an argumentative essay using this information." On a science task, a teacher provides the following, "Very cool! How will this technology change your life?" Comments such as these were reflected on student work across the school.
- During the student interview, most students understood how they were graded and received some form of feedback from their teacher or peers. One student stated that he has received feedback in written and oral form from his math teacher. Another student stated, "I used a peer editing checklist with my partner to help with my grammar." However, some student responses were unclear as to specific strategies or next steps to use in order to improve their work. One student received feedback on his autobiography a month ago and has yet to apply it to his current tasks. Another student received written feedback without a rubric. Another student received feedback to 'stay on topic' yet was not provided a strategy or tool to assist her with this task. Similar responses were observed during this meeting with other students.