



Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. K231

Elementary - Middle School K231

**5601 16 Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11204**

Principal: Jude Arthur

**Date of review: March 30-31, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Audrey Madison**

The School Context

P.S. K231 is an elementary-middle school with 338 students from grade kindergarten through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 13% Asian, 37% Black, 25% Hispanic, and 24% White students. The student body includes 26% English Language Learners and 100% students with disabilities. Boys account for 82% of the students enrolled and girls account for 18%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 90.5%.

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	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	Celebration	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

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

Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work, including classroom practice, assessment data and student work for students on whom they are focused. Distributed leadership structures are embedded.

Impact

Structured professional collaboration promotes shared improvements in teacher practice and mastery of goals for groups of students. Teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Five teams of teachers of alternate assessment students across sites align their inquiry work to the school goal for alternate assessment students to increase their skills in making requests. During an observed meeting for one team, a teacher presented video clips of sessions depicting her work with a student who was working on requesting “which one” and “who.” Team members shared their observations, reviewed the teacher’s data of this student’s prompted, spontaneous and novel requests. Suggestions were offered to further increase the requesting behaviors and apply them to other situations. Teachers shared that they have used Skype to meet with teams at other sites, sharing practices unique to their population.
- Minutes indicate that one teacher team focused on math skills to meet the school goal for their alternate assessment students to demonstrate an increase in mathematical skills, to receptively identify and label examples of more or less. Teachers consistently employ differentiated strategies to address diverse learning levels, such as: use large alligator symbols eating bigger quantity with picture symbols for early learners; use numbers and smaller alligator symbols for mid learners; and extend to the language of greater than or less than for advanced learners. Teacher reflections reveal that examining baseline data and applying the differentiated strategies were shifts in their teaching that led to improved student achievement. From spring 2015 to January 2016, targeted students have shown average growth of ten percentage points on the math section of the ABLLS-R assessment.
- Teachers have piloted two curricular resources for their specific populations and are consulted in decisions for extending implementation across sites. Two classroom teachers are also instructional coaches, originally providing support to teachers of verbal behavior students across sites. Their guidance has extended to other teachers of alternate assessment students as well.
- The professional development committee conducted surveys of teachers and paraprofessionals to identify staff needs for training. Three topics of focus were determined: technology, behavior intervention and new curricula. During technology sessions, teachers presented how they use the interactive whiteboard with their students, which colleagues stated was valuable. When teachers requested adjustments to lengthen the inquiry cycle and streamline the number of strategies to apply, school leaders made those changes.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula and student work products reflect appropriately challenging tasks. Teachers continue to enhance questioning and discussion techniques to enrich peer-to-peer communication.

Impact

Teachers meet the various cognitive needs of all learners employing supports for student thinking and participation. Nevertheless, there are missed opportunities for multiple entry points and extensions into student-to-student interaction that deepen student understanding.

Supporting Evidence

- During a lesson in a standard assessment English Language Arts (ELA) classroom, students read about the rainforest with a partner or a paraprofessional, or independently. The teacher directed students to also look at the pictures in the text. Students responded to teacher-posed questions to explain the relationship between the ants and the leaves, yet did not engage in discussion with each other. One student replied to the teacher by making a connection to bees working together and getting honey from a hive. Students completed notes on a graphic organizer titled, "Bromeliads - Rainforest Creatures" which was also projected on an interactive whiteboard. Paraprofessionals worked with individual students on targeted intervention reading skills.
- In a math lesson for alternate assessment students, students worked in groups, racing against other groups, to arrange number cards to reflect skip counting by two's, fives, and tens. Students determined if the work of other groups required corrections. Students were called to the chart to fill in missing numbers to complete a skip-counting pattern. One student completed a decreasing pattern using a right to left strategy, for which the teacher cheered. However, the opportunity for the student to explain his strategy to his peers was missed.
- Teachers and paraprofessionals engage students with differing cognitive abilities at stations to target basic language and learning skills using small group instruction and independent work tasks to target Individualized Educational Program (IEP) goals. Individual behavior systems and reinforcement schedules were evident as students followed a series of verbal and prompted instructions, learned initial consonant sounds, categorized objects, or worked independently on tasks at their ability levels. Student routines such as checking into their stations and songs to clean up stations were also in place.
- A paraprofessional in an ELA lesson reminded students to sit eye-to-eye and knee-to-knee in order to engage in a discussion about slavery. Students were provided a turn and talk protocol, with questions for student A to pose to student B. In one exchange, a student asked, "How is being a slave the worst thing a person could be?" His partner, who had three choices presented in text and picture form, answered, "They were given a little bit of food." Student A prompted his partner to explain where the answer could be found in the text and then both students read the text again together. By following these protocols, students improve their communication skills and heighten the level of their thinking.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and staff ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards, and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Student work and data are used to plan and refine curricula and academic tasks.

Impact

All students, including lowest and highest achieving students, have access to rigorous learning across content areas through tasks that promote college and career readiness appropriate to their cognitive abilities.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders made strategic decisions to pilot the use of ELA materials from *EngageNY*, with three alternate assessment teachers at two different sites, to expose students to more age appropriate materials and performance tasks that promote higher-order thinking. Teachers expressed positive student response, stating to school leaders that there was high interest in the informational texts, increased listening and comprehension, and more in depth discussions including asking and answering higher-level questions. Five middle school teachers and 10 elementary level teachers now use either *Core Knowledge* or *Expeditionary Learning* curricula materials from *EngageNY* for alternate assessment students of higher cognitive functioning. Teachers of standard assessment classes continue the use of these curricula resources. Additionally, alternate assessment teachers at three sites piloted the use of *Attainment*, a Common Core-aligned curriculum recommended by District 75 specifically for students with disabilities. Because this curriculum incorporates the instructional shifts, and provides levels of differentiation and modifications, the use of *Attainment* was expanded across sites.
- A common lesson plan template is used across the school and all plans identify specific students in each group, staff members expected to facilitate each group, and IEP goals to be addressed. For example, a math lesson plan states that students in group one will add and subtract single-digit numbers, one of those students will use objects, and a student in group four will work on word problems.
- Lesson plans reflect differentiated tasks and work products planned in alignment to student abilities and individualized goals. In one instance, the teaching point for two different classes indicates that students would be able to identify details that support the main idea of texts about Teddy Roosevelt. For one class, the teacher planned that two groups of students with varying skill levels would choose details from an array of pictures and one of the groups would write their response, while the other group would glue pictures and trace highlighted words. For the second class, students would use a word bank to identify details, while another group would use the text to cite evidence.
- Lesson plans for alternate assessment students include target areas of focus during intensive teaching sessions for individual students. Examples of targets include, "Follow directions to perform simple motor actions." and "Match object to picture." Small group instruction is also specified in lesson plans. Objectives for one group stated, "Sort identical and non- identical objects." Another group was expected to, "identify shapes and sort non-identical objects."

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school uses common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress toward goals across populations, track progress and adjust curricular and instructional decisions. Assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

All students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, demonstrate increased mastery. Teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs and students are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- School documents reveal ongoing monitoring of student progress toward the school goal for students in grades K-8 who participate in alternate assessment to demonstrate a 5% increase in requesting skills as evidenced by the Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI) and Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills- Revised (ABLLS-R) scores. Graphs reflect that elementary and middle school teachers record the frequency of mands (requests) per minute, both prompted and spontaneous. A summary of mand data is also compiled, reflecting frequent instructional time and documentation. School leaders state that according to the ABLLS-R data students have shown over 7% growth in requesting thus far.
- Student growth in reading is assessed and monitored as revealed in school documents which indicate quarterly tracking. Teachers use *Fountas and Pinnell* independent reading assessments to identify reading levels. For standard assessment students who are reading below grade level, intervention programs are determined through the *Scientific Research Associates (SRA) Direct Instruction* placement tests. Assessment results are used to group students for either *SRA Corrective Reading*, for students two or more years below grade level, or *SRA Reading Mastery*, for students within two grade levels.
- Differentiated exit slips were used in one alternate assessment class. One student pasted ordinal numbers to show the correct order of people standing in line. Teacher notes indicate prompts were used and was scored two out of four. Another student had to answer questions to tell the position of pictured items using ordinal words. Teacher notes identify the task was 100% accurate and done independently. In another class, one student circled three key details about slavery from multiple choice options, then wrote his details in a graphic organizer.
- In two alternate assessment classes, students assess their participation, content, speaking and listening. Students circle criteria such as, "I was able to recall details that support the main ideas with visual prompts" or "My teacher reminded me to ask for help and/or make comments to my friends independently." In collaboration with teachers, students assess, "I did well on counting my pennies and nickels and added to get total amounts." Another student documented his progress through a unit on angles, shapes and solving geometry questions by grading himself for each objective. Student checklists were used with standard assessment students with criteria such as, "I read my writing out loud to the class with a strong, professional voice."

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations, ensure training is provided for all staff, and effectively partner with families to support their children’s progress.

Impact

School leaders and staff are mutually responsible for attaining high expectations for themselves and students. Parents successfully partner with the school and actively support their children as they make continual progress and, as appropriate, transition to least restrictive environments.

Supporting Evidence

- To implement the instructional focus on peer- to-peer communication, school leaders worked with three model teachers, one from each classroom setting, to create written descriptions of what communication should look like within each population. Actions to be taken by teachers, students, school leaders and families to promote communication are provided and discussed with staff. Model teachers provide professional development and support to colleagues through inter-visitations and conferencing. Schoolwide expectations to use questioning and discussion techniques, engage students in learning and use assessment in instruction, guided by the Danielson *Framework*, are communicated in the staff handbook and supported through formal and informal observations. As a result of a professional development series, feedback statements from participants indicated that they would deepen their practice in questioning and discussion by using prompt cards for verbal cues or ask appropriately challenging questions.
- Two verbal behavior teachers collaborate with the Carbone Clinic for professional development to acquire methodology specifically geared to meeting the needs of their students. These teachers have turnkeyed training to their colleagues who teach similar populations. Two coaches provide additional training and support across sites.
- Interviewed parents feel they are part of an effective team and shared they have never experienced so much communication and stated staff members “truly have an open door policy.” Parents communicate through daily notebooks and daily progress reports, as well as emails and texts. One parent expressed that her son’s teacher worked with her to develop a behavior modification plan after viewing a videotape of the child at home. Another parent stated that because she and the school staff have targeted specific behaviors together, her son has better interactions with his family. Another parent expressed gratitude for the guidance and support he received for his child who is graduating to an inclusion program in a community school. Some parents who have attended Family Fun Fridays have seen their children engage in peer-to-peer reading or worked through a math unit on money and have learned strategies they use at home to further support their child’s learning.
- School leaders and staff have crafted modified report cards to better inform families of actual student progress. Report cards are aligned to the type of assessments used for the student, thus providing information regarding mastered skills, the current instructional focus in ELA, math, writing, classroom behavior and social skills and suggestions for how families can help at home. Related service providers also complete a page of the report card. Eighty- four percent of related services program changes indicate decrease in frequency or group size. Eleven students have graduated from related service needs, some with transitional supports.