



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 245

Elementary School K245

**249 East 17th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11226**

Principal: Erica Williams

**Date of review: December 1, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Anne Alfonso**

The School Context

P.S. 245 is an elementary school with 315 students from grade Pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 3% Asian, 51% Black, 43% Hispanic, and 2% White students. The student body includes 16% 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 95.3%.

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 <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

The school leader consistently communicates high expectations to staff through ongoing feedback and professional learning aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The school provides ongoing information to families regarding student progress towards college and career readiness.

Impact

Ongoing communication and support has increased teacher's understanding and awareness of school leader's expectations around teaching and learning. The school's communication with families provides opportunities for them to understand student progress towards meeting the standards.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leader communicates high expectations to the staff through the Administrative Handbook that is distributed at the beginning of the school year. As evidenced in the stated PS245 Instructional Focus, a detailed outline of the instructional components of lesson plans and the workshop model are provided to all members of the school community. The Danielson Framework for Teaching supports instructional goals with a focus on components 1e, 3b and 3c. The goals were developed using school wide data.
- Through frequent classroom visits, the teachers receive immediate feedback regarding their practice to address gaps in effective practice. A review of feedback to teachers reflects a focus on the school's priorities with specific next steps for support. In addition, teachers in grades K-2 and 3-5 meet with a staff developer throughout the year for 10 days. Teachers across grades attend 25 professional development workshops at Teacher's College and 5 two-day institutes to learn teaching strategies which are research based.
- In an effort to keep families informed of their child's progress, the school provides families with progress reports three times a year detailing progress in meeting the standards for literacy and mathematics being addressed for that marking period. The reports also inform parents of next step strategies to use which support their children's learning. Parents attended a Meet the Teacher Night to learn the expectations of the grade for their children. Families also receive a monthly grade newsletter highlighting what students are learning. Parents are connected as partners through online resources such as MyOn and are engaged in workshops to assist in their children's learning. Parents have expressed their appreciation of the school's open door policy and Tuesday afternoons to meet and communicate with them.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Teacher pedagogy is centered on a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Multiple points of entry and scaffolds are consistently provided to support students' diverse learning needs.

Impact

Consistent teaching practices and strategies provide opportunities for students to be exposed to the instructional shifts through text-based discussions which result in students demonstrating high levels of thinking and engagement.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's instructional focus to engage students in critical thinking through text based discussions supports what the analysis of the data revealed. Teaching practices are aligned to the curricular and support students' specific ensuring that students are able to cite text evidence to support their claims or opinions. Across classrooms visited, teachers were observed during one of the workshop model components of "I do, we do, or you do" either by providing a mini lesson, working with students in guided practice, or having students work on tasks to demonstrate their understanding of the content. Students worked through differentiated tasks utilizing scaffolds to participate in independent, partner, or group work. For example, in a fifth grade class, the students were using Socratic Seminar to argue effectively using text based evidence. The text was read aloud as a support to facilitate full participation. The use of extensions for high achieving students provides access to engagement in challenging tasks to demonstrate higher order thinking in the discussion.
- During classroom visits, students were provided with scaffolds such as guiding questions, charts for nonfiction, text structures, math manipulatives, leveled texts and tiered tasks to engage and allow for the completion of the assigned task. In a third grade ICT class, students were reading biographies, stopping and jotting big ideas and recording them on post-it notes. As the teacher modeled the reading, she posed the question, "What idea might this text be conveying to us?" and followed it with a turn and talk. During this reread, the students were provided with a chart with tips to direct their thinking. Scaffolds provide entry points allowing students the opportunities and time to complete the task and demonstrate their thinking and learning. During independent practice, students continued reading, using text evidence to find the unifying idea in their story.
- With a focus on critical thinking through text based discussion, teachers across classrooms were observed providing time for students to actively engage in partnerships or small groups. For example, during a 5th grade ELA lesson, for the small group activity, students were grouped based on independent reading levels and formative assessments. Students received a copy of text structures to support their chunking and identification of text structures. Students read their articles, and supported their reasons with evidence from the text. Challenging tasks and extensions for high achieving students will engage those students to demonstrate higher order thinking and ownership of their learning.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

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

Impact

Curricular decisions have allowed for coherence across the grades and a focus on college and career readiness skills. The planning and refinement of units and academic tasks based on students' specific needs has provided all learners access to the curriculum.

Supporting Evidence

- For the past two years, the school has adjusted the curricula to meet the requirements for becoming a Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project School. GoMath! as well as online resources such as MyOn and Snap Math are employed for grades K-5 in reading and math, respectively. In addition, the school has created unit plans for social studies and science aligned to the New York State scope and sequence. Based on the analysis of last year's English Language Arts (ELA) assessment and other formative assessments, the school determined the need to focus on improving the students' ability to cite text evidence and details to support their responses in writing. Teachers craft questions using Webb's Depth of Knowledge for the book of the month during LEAD (Let Everyone Ask and Discuss) and to create higher order (HOT) questions in lesson plans. Across all content areas, teachers are embedding critical thinking through text-based discussions.
- Unit plans and teachers' lesson plans are aligned to specific Common Core Standards and include essential questions, assessments and differentiated tasks which include scaffolds based on students' needs. Across all content areas and grades, teachers' plans reflect the components of the workshop model where the mini lesson, guided practice and independent or group tasks outline the "I-do, we-do, you do" model. All plans reflect exposure to the instructional shifts such as text-based answers and a deep understanding in math. For example, a fifth grade class used the Socratic Seminar protocol to engage and argue effectively in a text-based discussion.
- Within grade and vertical teams, teachers are using the results from their analysis of unit assessments, mid-point checks and performance tasks to make modifications and revisions to the curricula, performance tasks, and unit assessments. For example, a third grade teacher team including the ESL teacher, analyzed and organized student work for multi-step problems into three categories. The lesson and the unit were readjusted to include real world connections, identification of operations, scaffolds and grouping for language development.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers are using and creating assessments, rubrics, and grading policies aligned to the school’s curricula. Common assessments are used to track student progress towards goals across grades and subjects.

Impact

The tracking of student data allows for actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement and instructional adjustments to meet the needs of all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses various assessments, such as running records in grades K-5 four times per year, pre and post unit assessments, and end of unit writing performance tasks to assess student progress in ELA. . Additionally, the school utilizes MyOn and Snap Math to track reading lexile levels and math fluency, as well as JiJi, which consists of visual and language-independent computer games. Across content areas, teachers are using rubrics aligned to the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards as well as performance tasks to assess student growth. Teachers utilize the data collected to determine a students’ progress toward achieving the school’s goals.
- Teachers provide feedback to students through conversations, and conferences. In writing, rubrics are employed. Feedback is evident within student portfolios and on classroom and hallway bulletin boards. Rubrics provide students with next steps and push the students to the next level. The TCRWP rubric highlights the goal toward the next grade level. Students create their own goals and next steps.
- The school administers common assessments such as the TC running records four times a year to determine student progress. In addition, in reading, writing, and math, students are administered a pre-test at the beginning of each unit to allow teachers to plan strategically based on the data. Students are then administered a post assessment to determine growth and to determine which standards have been met. Teachers maintain data charts, track student progress and submit the analysis to the school leader. Last year, the school used the GoMath! Form A end of unit assessment as the baseline assessment for each unit. This year, GoMath! no longer provides two end of the unit assessments, thus teachers have adjusted this by creating their own baseline assessment for the students across the grades.

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

Teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations to analyze student work and data and to share best practices.

Impact

Teacher collaboration has resulted in the strengthening of teachers' instructional capacity and improvement in targeting students' learning outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the grades, teacher teams implement protocols to analyze and use student work and data to inform instruction, meet the needs of all children and plan next steps. Teachers analyzed assessment data from the state assessments and identified students who did not meet the standards in writing. These targeted students have been provided with various supports throughout the year such as, flexible group instruction, explicit instruction in utilizing text evidence to support informational writing, as well as an invitation to attend an after school program. At the close of all meetings, teachers provide the school leader with the outcome of the meeting.
- During an observation of a third grade team meeting, teachers were looking at a GoMath! mid chapter review for multi-step problem solving. Teachers categorized the data into none, some and complete, and provided warm and cool feedback with regards to what the students did well, and the areas where the students still struggled. The teachers noted that some students only completed subtraction, or one operation of the problem, while others had difficulty with vocabulary. Teachers then shared strategies and possible tools they could create to support their students, such as modeling multi-step problems and having them create their own. Attention to vocabulary and expressions with flash cards, creating diagrams and visuals were additional supports the teachers would use to further support their students.
- Across grades and subjects teachers meet to share best practices for all students. Teachers discussed how the quick checks and mid chapter checks guide instruction including creating the scaffolds needed for those struggling as the next step, as well as opportunities for enrichment and extensions. Strategies for English Language Learners (ELLs) include the use of visuals, development of academic vocabulary, and attention to student growth and movement within the NYSESLAT data.