



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 298 Dr. Betty Shabazz

Elementary School K298

**85 Watkins Street
Brooklyn
NY 11212**

Principal: Jonathan Dill

Date of review: May 17, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Gary Knight

The School Context

P.S. 298 Dr. Betty Shabazz is an elementary school with 219 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 67% Black, 27% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 8% English Language Learners and 20% 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 89.1%.

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 <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	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	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	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	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training for those expectations. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

School leaders have a system of accountability for high expectations and school leaders and staff offer ongoing feedback to help families understand progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's vision, values and mission include providing a quality, interactive educational program for all children including English Language Learners, special education and gifted students. The intent is to provide students challenging experiences to meet the high performance standards consisting of strategies such as making teaching and learning relevant or important for the student now or in the future and differentiating their teaching resources to motivate the learner. All teachers are expected to spend at least five lessons on the school's vision, values and mission within the first three weeks of school.
- The school leaders further communicate high expectations through newsletters, and professional development workshops. A weekly newsletter had the following statement from the school leaders, "It will be important that you implement the strategies shared during professional development within your classrooms." "Please be reflective and review Danielson *Framework [for Teaching]* as you create your lessons." Observations are conducted by the school leaders to provide immediate feedback to teachers regarding the implementation of strategies addressed in professional development sessions. Additional review of documents indicated a professional development session on "Building a Stronger Foundation in Our school." The learning focus for the workshop was promoting student engagement in literacy, to build student stamina and a passion for reading and writing. Another session focused on how to apply Common Core standards, applying problem-solving strategies, using manipulatives for instruction, and writing standards-aligned lesson plans.
- The school leaders and staff communicate with families via the school website, social networks, classroom newsletters, which detail the week's instructional content and ways for parents to support learning at home, a parent handbook, meetings, job readiness and curricula night, and parent workshops on Common Core math and English Language Arts. Parents shared that the workshops helped them to better understand the work that their children receive in different subjects. The school participates in the Learning Partners Program. Parents volunteer in classes as readers and are invited to share in the classroom learning.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best. Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple points into the curricula.

Impact

Teaching practices are aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts. However, teaching practices lead to uneven engagement in appropriately challenging tasks and uneven demonstration of higher order thinking skills in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's leadership and staff promote the belief that students learn best by doing, being engaged, and able to self-regulate. Lessons observed included alignment to the curricula and instructional shifts. During a grade 2 math lesson, students were attempting to solve problems involving data by using the *make a graph* strategy. A grade 1 class worked on identifying three-dimensional shapes used to build a composite shape using the strategy, *act it out*, and during a grade 5 reading lesson, students had to ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- During a grade 4 reading lesson on interpretation, students were expected to discuss themes and issues in their book clubs. English Language Learners (ELLs) were grouped for read aloud with the teacher who provided small group instruction on how to think interpretively. A similar activity was conducted with students with disabilities. Students were observed reading aloud in book clubs; however, very little discussion was occurring. Students were not capturing any information as they read to refer back to. In addition, several students were observed struggling as they read to their club members, unable to decode or pronounce multiple words from the book. These students went unrecognized by the teacher, hence, no differentiated support was provided at time of visit. While the needs of some learners were addressed, not all needs were met.
- During a grade 3 fairy tale lesson on weaving narration, ELLs and struggling readers were to work collaboratively within a group of students on a higher level. ELLs were provided an accompanying video to watch to provide support in the completion of the assigned activity. During the lesson; however, students were to practice using narration with partners. Some students were observed disengaged from the task. Multiple partners were exhibiting off-task behavior such as playing with pencils and giggling. One student was seen sitting without a partner, also disengaged.
- In a grade 2 and 3 mixed classroom, higher-order thinking strategies were not applied or evident. The questions posed were low level. For example, the teacher asked, "What is the role of the narrator?" which was answered by the teacher. Students were not provided scaffolds and appeared to be unclear as to what was expected as they attempted to complete the assignment. At time of visit, the teacher spent a majority of time with one student whose work product, along with others, was incomplete. There were missed opportunities to redirect, re-teach, and restate the intended outcome to further engage students in the task.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, integrate the instructional shifts, and make purposeful decisions to build coherence. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits.

Impact

The school's curricula promote college and career readiness and higher-order skills across grades and subjects for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use Common Core-aligned Teachers College Reading and Writing Program for English Language Arts, *GO Math!*, and supplemented curricula from *Wilson Reading, Foundations* and *EngageNY*. Units of study are developed for each grade and content utilizing the workshop model. Curricular mapping in all grades and subjects are guided by the content standards and tailored to meet the needs of diverse learners. For example, a grade 2 curricular planning document has access strategies for all sections that capture how teachers will ensure that all students including ELLs, students with disabilities, and students at varying reading proficiency levels have access to and are able to cognitively engage in the lesson. It identifies re-teaching for lower-level students with manipulatives in a small group, and for higher level students, enrich for deeper practice.
- A Common Core-aligned lesson plan template is used and reveals the infusion of shifts in all planning across grades such as, using evidence from sources, using complex text, academic vocabulary, deep understanding and fluency. A grade 1 math planning document covers vocabulary including, rectangular prism, cone, cylinder, cube, compose and act it out. A kindergarten grade-planning document with the objective of teaching that writers can write more than one sentence on each page about a topic, incorporates a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts.
- Webb's *Depth of Knowledge* higher-order questions and *Danielson for Kids* student rubric for questioning and discussion are used in the development of curricular plans. Curricula documents reviewed incorporate essential questions. A grade 3 curricular document asks the following questions, "How do you think through conflicting situations/circumstances to resolve it?" and "What is the difference between responding to a situation as opposed to reacting?" The grade 1 math-planning document asks, "How can the strategy, *act it out*, help you take apart combined shapes?"

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 subjects.

Impact

The school's assessment practices provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Common assessment results are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- The teachers administer Teachers College Reading and Writing running records, On Demand writing, pre- and post-math, Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) for English Language Arts (ELA), and mock ELA and math assessments. Feedback is provided using school-wide rubrics that assess skills such as, narrative reading and writing, as well as, informational reading and writing. Students shared that mostly everything they do, has a rubric. Some examples of feedback given to students are: on a grade 5 writing piece, "Great job using transitioning and correct punctuation. Next time, describe the setting and character traits." Other written feedback to a student stated, "You did a good job using paragraphs to organize your writing and to show order in the story. You also did a good job writing a beginning, which helped readers know who the characters were and what the setting was in your story. Next time, work to show what happened to your characters through more dialogue, action, and details."
- Teachers use assessments to monitor student progress towards goals and to make adjustments to curricula and instruction. Based on assessment results, it was revealed that students did not do well with constructed responses in ELA and math, and kindergarten through grade 2 students struggled with solving addition and subtraction problems. In turn, teachers addressed deficits by using close reading for text-based instruction, providing mentor texts and re-teaching in smaller group settings. Students were also provided in-class support to construct viable arguments with the RACE (Restate-Answer-Cite-Explain) method and use problem-solving skills to solve math problems.
- To address addition and subtraction deficits identified through assessment analysis and provide strategies for students in kindergarten to grade 2, teachers worked with the staff developer to identify and create word problems, develop addition and subtraction strategies, and strategy sort. Common addition and subtraction scenarios were added, strategies such as count on, doubles, doubles plus 1, minus 1, and make 10 were included in lessons, with strategies for subtraction also included. A card sorting activity was incorporated where students sorted cards according to the strategy that can be used to solve. Students had to write the facts in the correct box of the strategy mat and explain their reasoning.
- To help students improve in solving math-constructed response questions, teachers worked collaboratively to review the math rubric, design activities for students to practice using the rubric and infused the use of MOLE strategy: Mark-up problems only, Organize, Look for solution, and Evaluate. The strategy was divided into lessons over one week with the use of the rubric. The math-constructed response lessons were planned with a specific Common Core-aligned lesson plan template that details tasks with accompanying rubric. For example, it shows a response that has earned 2 points. The teacher explains why it is 2 points using words from the rubric.

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 Common Core. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused.

Impact

The structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations have strengthened the instructional capacity of teachers. The consistent analysis of student work typically results in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet in grade inquiry meetings once a week for ninety minutes. Content teams meet once a week for 45 minutes. Teachers collaborate professionally to examine student work, conduct common planning and make adjustments to unit and lesson plans. Review of team meeting agendas show teachers creating pacing calendars for English Language Arts (ELA) and math curricula, gathering *EngageNY* resources to address text complexity, collecting Ready New York Common Core Learning Standards ELA data, selecting students to be targeted for progress towards goals, and use of *ReadWorks* to assist students in locating main ideas and central theme from text.
- The grades 3 to 5 team was observed as they engaged in an inquiry meeting. Teachers presented on students’ assessment data representing varying proficiency levels for independent reading and discussed strategies for improvement and next steps. For example, one student was on level U for months and moved to V in March. To continue with her progress, next instructional steps were to give student a copy of text to respond to and use evidence from text to support her claim. The teacher will also look at the guide sheet for teachers to select prompts for skills, strategies and habits at reading level W that can be applied.
- The team structure has allowed teachers to provide direct feedback to each other, share best practices, and individualize instruction for students. A grade 3 teacher used peer feedback and student data to create instructional next steps that included small groups, based on students at varying proficiency levels. In addition, a RACE strategy graphic organizer, student checklist, annotated student rubric and lesson plan were created. Students are becoming more confident in their writing, using strategies to help respond to questions, and expanding their explanations. On a student extended response assignment, student progress was evident. Student work and rubric indicated student scores increasing up to two levels. Average scale score for Writing on Demand pre- and post-test in the skill of elaboration increased from 4.3 to 5.9 and the overall test score increased from 2.3 to 3.0.