



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 306 Ethan Allen

K-8 School K306

**970 Vermont Street
Brooklyn
NY 11207**

Principal: Lawrence Burroughs

**Date of review: May 5, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio**

The School Context

P.S. 306 Ethan Allen is a K-8 school with 584 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 75% Black, 23% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 3% English Language Learners and 30% 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 86.3%.

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	Developing
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	Developing

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide training towards them for staff. High expectations are communicated to families and the staff provides ongoing feedback to parents on their child's progress.

Impact

Structures are in place to hold staff accountable for the school's expectations. Parents are aware of their child's performance in school as they relate to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders use emails, text messages, memoranda, and letters to communicate instructional expectations. The assistant principal logs provide clear reminders for teachers in implementing the workshop model across the school. In one log, the assistant principal reminds teachers of structures that should be in place for students such as establishing partnerships, including back-to-back daily reading, monitoring independent time, pulling small groups to provide coaching, and setting goals. Teachers reported that these structures provide them with information on what is expected as it relates to the school's focus.
- The professional development plan, especially during the beginning of the school year, emphasizes using data to drive instruction. In addition, to support teachers regarding the workshop model in reading and writing, training was provided in the implementation of the newly adopted curricula, and other areas such as effective questioning and discussion techniques, and student engagement. In addition, debriefing sessions after observations serve as a means to further explore the school's focus and provide suggestions to ensure that lesson plans include questions that support critical thinking.
- Parents are provided with monthly newsletters and workshops that assist them in understanding what is expected of their children relative to the curricula and standards for the school year. One parent reported how a workshop on *Foundations* helped her understand the strategies her child should be using to aid with writing and sounding out words. Parents also noted that progress reports and meetings with teachers help with understanding their child's progress in school and how they can help at home. One parent shared that after meeting with her child's teacher, the link for a website was provided to use at home which helped increase the student's reading level this year.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula and reflect uneven levels of thinking in student discussions and work products.

Impact

Student work products and discussions demonstrate uneven levels of higher-order thinking and engagement across classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- In an English Language Arts (ELA) class, students were reading fantasy books in order to learn more about their character. While students were reading, some took notes and others were given an option to write at the end of the reading session. A review of student summaries and notes reflected mostly facts and details from their book instead of new learning about the main character which was the main objective for the lesson.
- In a science class of students with disabilities, the teacher formed three student groups and provided each one with a different topic to research. During the lesson, all of the students worked on underlining areas in their text to obtain information about their topic. Although the expectation was to use multiple sources to obtain information, there were no additional supports to assist the students in understanding the content they were reading and the discussions consisted of just repeating facts or details from the text.
- In a kindergarten class, students worked on crafting a section, with reasons for why it is important to follow particular rules, as a chapter in their own persuasive books. Some students were able to share verbally why their rule was important. One student shared that it is important that the students fix the books in the library so that it would be easier for others to find books that they were looking for in that section. However, other students were unable to articulate, label, sketch or write reasons in their books reflective of their ideas.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and teachers use and create rubrics, assessments and grading policies aligned to the school's curricula. Common assessments are used to determine student progress across grades and subject areas.

Impact

Actionable feedback helps teachers understand student performance and progress leading to adjustments in curricula and student awareness of next steps towards improving their work.

Supporting Evidence

- Work products contain rubrics aligned to learning objectives in the curricula. Rubrics contain criteria that align to the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP), *GO Math!* and goals of the Scope and Sequence for social studies and science units. In addition, the rubrics and assessments align with the grading policy which combines a mix of percentages and performance levels. Students were able to articulate the difference between performance levels to improve their grade on tasks.
- Students shared that their teacher provides them with verbal and written feedback that show them in what areas they are performing well and what they need to improve. Areas of improvement include additional work on paraphrasing, volume of writing, writing stronger claims, and adding supporting evidence that aligns to the point of view of the writer. In addition, a review of work products in folders and bulletin boards contains feedback to students with specific comments aligned to areas of need based on the accompanying rubric.
- Teachers use a school-wide assessment analysis sheet to reflect on student gains in skill sets and determine areas for improvement with instructional next steps. In a grade 2 review of two math common assessments, the teacher notes that the students needed more support in adding two- and four-digit numbers, including using number sentences to add, and breaking apart numbers. In addition, the teacher identified target students in need of assistance following these assessments. An instructional plan was created to address whole class and individual or small group support including re-teaching of key standards that students did not meet. A review of these analysis sheets reflects ongoing and consistent practices, in different subject areas and grades, of this type of action planning.

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Curricula, lesson plans, and tasks do not consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher level thinking across grades and subject areas. The refinement of tasks and activities using of student work and data so that a diversity of learners have access to curricula is inconsistent.

Impact

School leaders and faculty are in the process of developing rigorous tasks that result in access to the curricula and cognitive engagement for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Some lesson plans used Webb's *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) levels three and four questions to expose students to rigorous tasks. For instance, in a grade 8 math lesson, the teacher included multiple questions across the lesson, including the Do Now activity, such as, "Is it possible for two algebraic models to contain different numerical values, yet have the same slope and/or y-intercept? Elaborate and provide an example." Other unit or lesson plans and tasks did not reflect a similar level of rigor. A science lesson plan for middle school students with disabilities indicates that they would be preparing for a presentation by conducting research on a teacher-assigned topic on human organs using a text, a video and the internet. The task included questions that would prompt students to obtain facts about the assigned organ for the group. However, the task only required students to draw details from multiple sources without making higher-level connections requiring students to synthesize or draw conclusions.
- In an ELA lesson plan, the teacher grouped students homogenously based on their most recent performance from the unit four argumentative writing pre-assessment. The student groups were to take a position on a debate of whether kids should play competitive sports and to decide on the pros and cons. In addition, students were given an outline with notes and sentence frames to assist in their defense of each side. These tasks were modified to support a flash draft for a position paper using their research. However, the use of student data to formulate modified tasks was not prevalent in unit or lesson plans across all grades.
- In a grade 1 science unit, one lesson is focused on how to match types of baby and adult animals. The task requires partnerships or groups to match pictures of baby and adult animals and have students share and justify their answers. However, there is no indication of the rationale behind forming these partnerships. In addition, the lesson did not indicate how student data was used to modify tasks so that all learners have access.

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

The majority of teachers are in the process of engaging in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations to analyze work products and data for target students.

Impact

Teacher teams are in the process of developing structured approaches resulting in improved teacher practice and increased progress and performance for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Elementary teacher teams meet weekly to discuss student work and teacher practices. The school maintains documents which assist with this process using a binder system that includes student work products and establishing agendas and notes for each meeting. This year, the grade 4 team began using a *Data Wise* protocol to analyze student work. The team chooses assessments to measure progress, examines instructional data and work products and sets instructional next steps to increase student progress. Teachers reported that since its introduction in January, the protocol has been helpful in honing skills and strategies for their grade. In addition, the grade 4 team has begun to share this protocol with the grade 2 team which plans to begin this work toward the end of this year. Although this structured practice has influenced one team, consistency in utilizing this protocol across the school has just launched.
- During a teacher team meeting, grade 4 teachers reviewed sets of student work and data from reading tasks on inference to determine how their target students met instructional goals. Collectively, teachers agreed that the students had progressed in certain skills including the ability to be descriptive with the character’s actions and maintaining a clear structure using the task prompts as a guide for writing their extended responses. They reviewed the data and noted that three students went from a score of zero to either a level three or four. Afterward, the team discussed their wonderings about the work and data and shared questions such as, “Would we have had better results if we focused on the data prior to March?”; “How do we bring our students to the level that will make them avid readers?”; “If provided a planning page or graphic organizer, would their grade have been impacted?” Although teacher monitoring of students’ understanding of inference has occurred in grade 4 since January, notable gains of increased performance in ELA has not yet occurred.
- The middle school teachers are divided into content teams. The ELA team has been working on reviewing student work and data. Recently, their work has consisted of revising their units to incorporate more practice on reading informational texts and citing textual evidence in the test preparation unit. Similarly, the math team has revised test preparation units to provide more work on fractions and decimals that a teacher reported was an area for improvement. In addition, math teachers have found using annotation strategies for word problems, revising the language of questions on tasks and focusing on academic vocabulary have improved student progress and performance. However, grade-level data to demonstrate performance and progress gains was not evident.