



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 312 Bergen Beach

Elementary School K312

**7103 Avenue T
Brooklyn
NY 11234**

Principal: Sungmin Yoo

**Date of review: February 11, 2016
Lead Reviewer: AJ Hepworth**

The School Context

P.S. 312 Bergen Beach is an elementary school with 863 students from grade kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 4% Asian, 39% Black, 11% Hispanic, and 44% White students. The student body includes 4% English Language Learners and 17% students with disabilities. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 94.8%.

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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Focus	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices and student work products are aligned to the curricula and reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts.

Impact

Discussions at the team and school level regarding instruction foster student work products and discussions which reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- Students are engaged in various activities, critical thinking discussions and often have choice in their answers or work product delivery as was shared as a school belief in how students learn best from both school leadership and teachers during meetings. During a visit to a grade 5 classroom, students were discussing one of three assigned task questions based on the story of America and African Americans. One group had to use images and narrator information to convey a deeper meaning of the text from an event in chapter 9 to create a scene. The group of five students discussed strategies to convey the importance of the task. Additionally, they communicated how they can be successful in making connections between their drawing and the evidence in the text using the rubric provided. Other groups engaged in similar discussions. In a grade 3 class, student partners discussed who may have committed a crime based on evidence provided from a reading passage. Students challenged one another on their evidence and asked, "Why was the robber trying to do that?" and how one student could collect details to support her answer before they share their findings with one another. Challenging discussions among student groups were observed in all classes visited where they critically analyzed one another's statements and provided argumentative and supportive claims.
- Students were able to convey their opportunity to have choice in their work products and take ownership of how they wanted to present their findings in the vast majority of the classes. Across a grade 2 math class, students worked to complete a chalk talk activity to solve a series of rigorous math word problems in small groups. They were permitted to solve the problem using their own strategies and then share their problem-solving strategies with their partners. One boy who had an incorrect response was told by a girl in his group, "it is okay, you just made a little mistake." He corrected his error and the group continued to share other strategies that each student used. During a kindergarten classroom visit, students were given the task to create a map of their classroom by using different shapes. In small groups located all around the room, groups of students discussed how they would use the materials to lay them out on the large paper and represent the furniture and areas around the classroom. Previously, a map key was generated with students to help guide their discussions and shape selection.
- In all classes visited, students were engaged in their tasks, including those identified as students with disabilities. In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classroom, two teachers and two paraprofessionals worked intimately with small groups of students to engage them in appropriate challenging tasks and further their conversation with their peers. Students were identifying cause and effect in a carousel activity by moving around the room to different tables and writing specific information to share and discuss on sticky notes.

Area of Focus

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards through the consistent analysis of assessment data and student work.

Impact

Inquiry approaches may strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers although not resulting in school-wide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners. Additionally, although teacher practices may show individual growth and progress for selected students, it is not evident that inquiry practices yield mastery for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- During an observation of the vertical grade inquiry team, completed student work products of a math standards-based problem were shared. Student samples were selected based on various backgrounds and levels of performance on the task. Each of the six members was given one student sample to review and collect evidence of strengths and identify “next steps for moving forward to 5th grade.” As each member shared their findings, it was not clear how this information would translate to producing shared common practices for groups of students, although it was “helpful” for the special education teacher to hear and implement these suggestions with the individual students. Additionally, since all group members were only provided with the one student work product, they were unable to confirm or challenge their colleagues’ identified strength and identified next step.
- A document review of prior inquiry team agendas and minutes highlights a continued focus on using research articles, videos, and pedagogical literature to support the team’s efforts in identifying steps to support student achievement. Additionally, a video was viewed during an observation of the inquiry team regarding motivating students that will yield increased skill and as a result increased content knowledge. However, the follow-up discussion was primarily conducted by the team facilitator and did not appear to yield the significant desired teacher improvement to practice suggested.
- School leaders and teachers explained how inquiry approaches occur vertically across grades using a recently adopted tuning protocol. Systems in place are structured for team members to select a core group of students (for example, seven grade 5 students) to “look at certain standards and identify why” State assessment performance levels for those students are at the level they are. However, these efforts do not yield the systematic identification of next steps and/or the transfer of findings into classroom practices across all grades and content areas resulting in increased student achievement for all learners.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure curricula is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts emphasizing rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills in curricula and academic tasks through planning and refining using student work and data.

Impact

Curricular coherence across grades and subjects areas promote college and career readiness for all students, including English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and lowest- and highest achieving students, and enable them to demonstrate their thinking by having access to the curricula and tasks while being cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of curriculum planning documents highlights a purposeful focus on planning for strategic grouping during classroom instruction. An English language arts lesson plan states students will identify cause and effect relationships by using signal words. The teacher has planned for her high-level students to start with the teacher and then move to independent work, while the low-level students will remain with the teacher and be provided a copy of a graphic organizer. Several math handouts included with a self-contained lesson plan, provide students with opportunities to answer lower level questions prior to completing the more challenging word problem, suggesting students will use the answered information to help guide them through the more rigorous task. A grade 5 assignment includes three separate tasks for varied learners to complete based on previously determined criteria and student learning styles. Tasks include creation of a skit, article, or rendering, all based on the same learning objective, to describe how the narrator's point of view influences how events are described.
- Curriculum planning documents, including lesson plans and unit plans, indicate Common Core Learning Standards and a focus on the instructional shifts. Lessons are structured in terms of what students will be able to do including purposeful learning targets and enrichment opportunities. A technology planning document states grade 1 students will improve their fluency and accuracy of math algorithms using an online assessment tool supporting sequential understanding. A grade 4 reading lesson plan lists cause and effect relationships students will identify using signal words and new vocabulary with text-based evidence. A grade 3 writing plan references English Language Arts standards in literacy such that students will pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information.
- Anticipated student misconceptions are identified on most planning documents based on previously taught lessons and prior data results. Misconceptions identified include clarification of directionality, scale, and shape of objects for a kindergarten mapping activity; the inclusion of a vocabulary helper with difficult words in a reading lesson; reminders for all students to "cross off the tens or hundreds when they regroup" in a planned math lesson; and anticipated confusion with factors and multiples when getting to larger numbers on the times table for students with disabilities. Additionally, extension activities are planned for students who may complete their work or show higher cognition, including, playing a game on the class computers, being provided dice with higher numbers, requiring step-by-step explanations, and/or creation of a coding program using an online tool.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. Additionally, assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Actionable and meaningful feedback is provided to students and teachers regarding student achievement and teachers make affective adjustments to meet all students learning needs and students are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers create varied opportunities for students to receive feedback in their classrooms and on assignments. Several students shared that they often peer- and self-assess each other's work in their classes. One student stated, "We also swap with each other and peer edit giving a glow and grow...we also give next steps so we can be the best writers we can be." All students who spoke agreed that swapping papers and giving feedback was a normal routine in their classes.
- Rubrics with written feedback exist across all grades and content areas as evidenced by student samples of their work, hall bulletin boards, and classroom exemplars. Additionally, students confirmed "we use rubrics before we do our assignment so we know how to do it correctly and right and it helps us know what we need to do well on." Also, students were able to communicate clearly what their next steps would be on assignments they could improve upon. One student stated her math booklet "could add more info on the topic and add more detail," another boy in kindergarten said he could "write neater and label the animals." A third student stated she could "improve on my writing a closing sentence...to tell the reader what it was all about." A student with disabilities was able to communicate his need to improve his amount of details in his writing and shared his class goals from index cards they self-write and post in class on a board following a discussion with their teacher. Boards posted in several classes highlight students self-assessing as either "Yes! I can!", "Getting it," or "Needing more help."
- Trackers are used to identify "questions in which less than [a specific percent] of students answered correctly" in both English Language Arts and math class assessments. Teachers reported they use this information "because ultimately we want to see our students do better." Teachers more specifically shared their data binders and showed how they use the information to group within their instructional periods. They also noted they will redirect instruction by "pulling those children [aside] and carefully monitoring and have more checks for understanding with hands-on work." The school leaders also stated the teachers "use that information for their planning of the day, to revise units and even rearrange them" to meet the needs of all learners in their class.
- Reading, writing, and math goals are created for all students using data from both formative and summative assessments. Goals are written by each student in the form of an "I can..." statement and revisited several times during the year following benchmark or summative assessments. They are written with feedback provided by the teacher so students are fully aware of their next steps and are able to articulate them.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training. Additionally, all staff establish a culture of learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students and provide feedback to support them.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability for high expectations exists among the staff and includes supports to ensure students own their educational experience and are aware of their next steps.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of several Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) documents highlight direct communication of research-based articles to help inform teachers of high expectations including a focus on involving students in creating rubrics, a selection of five highly effective teaching practices, and actionable feedback strategies for the classroom. Additionally, emails and weekly memos shared with staff remind them to remain fully engaged with instruction from “bell-to-bell” each period. Staff communicated they feel equally supported by their colleagues and building leaders through a sense of cohesive collaboration in their pursuit of improvement for students to succeed by going into each other’s classrooms and to the leadership offices with “an open door policy.”
- Students throughout the building are engaged in Project-Based Learning (PBL) assignments and research tasks regularly. Students in grades 4 and 5 are provided opportunities to work with the Brooklyn Historical Society to learn more about their community. Samples of work products include large format posters and books detailing historically relevant facts. Additionally, kindergarten students studied people who work in the school community and were taught success skills including critical thinking, collaboration, self-management, and communication through oral presentation. Additional PBL assignments and research tasks in other grades include: learning about other cultures (ie. Chinese and Iroquois’) and presenting it in a choice approach, researching animals, and writing opinion essays on a variety of personally chosen topics. All assignments included skills related to expectations for college and career.
- Students are expected to identify their learning targets with “I can” statements and be able to articulate it. Additionally, students are sometimes given different learning targets based on their individual needs within the same classroom. Some students were able to explain they needed to “ask and answer questions about the text while reading” so they could be better prepared to engage in the classroom discussion, while others were expected to “sequence the events” so they can be aware of what may happen next in a story. Students shared they were aware of their next steps and “appreciate how the school is helping get [them] ready for the middle school” by giving them “challenging work” and providing them with middle school experiences and supportive information.