



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

M.S. 584

Middle School K584

**130 Rochester Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11213**

Principal: Michelle Van Brussel

**Date of review: May 10, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio**

The School Context

M.S. 584 is a middle school with 93 students from grade 6 through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 72% Black, 25% Hispanic, and 0% White students. The student body includes 11% English Language Learners and 32% students with disabilities. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 89.5%.

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	Celebration	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	Developing
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	Developing
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:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty utilize curricula which are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards, integrate the instructional shifts, and emphasize rigorous habits.

Impact

Across grades and subjects, units reflect rigorous tasks and promote college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school faculty uses curricula such as *CodeEx* for English Language Arts (ELA) and *Connected Mathematics Program 3 (CMP3)* which both align to the Common Core Learning Standards. Science and social studies units are aligned to the New York City (NYC) Scope and Sequence. Towards the second half of the year, the new school leader has decided to revise unit plans to reflect formative and summative assessments and provide a pacing calendar. In addition, with the assistance of a math consultant, teachers have been provided a pacing calendar for the following year which incorporates changes made to units from the current year.
- Citing evidence, annotation, and reading information texts are instructional shifts reflected in the curricula. In a grade 6 science unit, one task requires students to use text evidence from articles and to conduct independent research on a biome to produce an informational essay showing how humans impact the environment. In two ELA lesson plans, both tasks asked students to examine how a difficult situation can reveal information about a character. Students are asked to annotate the text and elicit evidence to guide conversations with their peers.
- Teachers use the *Depth of Knowledge (DOK)* tool to align lesson objectives and questioning exposing students to challenging tasks. In a grade 7 math lesson plan on volume, the small group task includes questions aligned to DOK level three including “How would we use this in real life?” or “How could this strategy be used to save money?” In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) social studies lesson plan, the task requires students to analyze a quote from President Truman and prepare for a debate considering the following questions, “Was the atomic bomb just another powerful weapon? Explain.” and “What do you think of his decision to use it?”

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. Discussion and work products reflect uneven levels of student thinking.

Impact

Higher-order thinking and high levels of engagement have yet to be reflected across the majority of classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade 8 ELA class, students were grouped to engage in literature circles. Each student had a role in the circle such as the bridge builder, discussion leader, the reporter, and the dictation finder. Based on the question, “What does a difficult situation reveal about the character?” students shared their noticings aligned to the role they took while participating in the circle. In each group, students shared critical questions about the characters’ actions during a situation in the book including, “Why did the reporter show emotion at the bus stop? Why show affection to a stranger? Why did the group turn to hatred towards the end?” and used text evidence to support their responses. Students shared agreement or disagreement with each other’s responses and began to develop a consensus about the characters’ reactions. However, this level of thinking and discussion was only evident in some classes.
- Some teachers used tools such as background information or a Smartboard to engage students in tasks. In an ICT social studies class, the students were provided an information sheet listing all the reasons they could argue, for or against, whether the United States should have dropped the atomic bomb on Japan at the end of World War II to help them choose a side. However, all students were provided this scaffold as part of the task, even students who were capable of handling the task on their own. In a science class, students were able to answer questions and match key scientific terms such as producer and food chain to answer questions. However, all students were presented the same level of questioning which aligned to DOK levels 1 and 2.
- In an ICT math class, teachers used a parallel teaching model to divide students into groups to explore different ways to find the volume of a rectangular prism. Much of the questioning came from teachers eliciting information on how to solve word problems. Students were called upon to answer questions yet the direction of the questions was teacher to student to teacher. In addition, some students did not engage in the lesson.
- In another math class for students with disabilities, students were grouped for the Do Now activity where they were asked to find the area of a rectangle. One group was able to engage independently on their own yet another group struggled with the concept and was unable to fully engage with the task to obtain the correct answer.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Although, teachers use rubrics, assessments and grading policies which are aligned to the curricula, practices have yet to reflect ongoing checks for understanding and self-assessment.

Impact

Limited feedback and inconsistent adjustments lead to missed opportunities for increasing student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers have aligned their rubrics to the curricula and Common Core Learning Standards in reading, writing and math. The school provides formative assessments in the form of quizzes and tasks and uses a combination of percentages and performance levels for grades. This year, the grading policy has changed to increase the importance of class work. The former policy accounted assessments as 60% of a student's grade and class work was 20%. Currently, both areas account for 80% of a student's grade, each 40% retrospectively, to ensure the quality of class work receives the same level of attention as assessments.
- Students are aware of how to use a rubric to determine their grade on a task. During a meeting, some students were able to share feedback with next steps and strategies provided by the teacher while others only shared areas of concern based off of teacher comments. A review of student portfolios reflected some work products with clear feedback and next steps yet several tasks and assessments only contained a grade with no comments for students to gauge an understanding of how to improve their work.
- In some classes, checks for understanding with in-the-moment adjustments were evident while others were not as clear. In one math class for students with disabilities, the teacher worked with two students to assist them in understanding the math concept. The teacher used questions and prompts to help students determine the difference between area and volume and apply the proper equation to the problem. Then, the students were asked to discuss the concept together without teacher support. However, the students were still unclear and were unable to complete their work correctly. Similarly in other classrooms, teachers would check in using questioning yet clear adjustments to ensure students understood the concept and completed the task correctly, were only evident in some classes. In addition, student work did not consistently reflect self-reflection to determine areas for improvement and enhance the quality of their work products.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

School leaders and staff are beginning to establish structures to communicate and provide feedback to parents and students regarding high expectations.

Impact

The staff is in the process of increasing awareness of the connections towards a path to college and career readiness for all constituents.

Supporting Evidence

- Parents shared that they receive letter notifications, calendars, as well as phone calls or texts from staff members on school-wide events and information on how their child is performing in school. Online systems and parent teacher conferences are provided to inform parents of their child’s academic progress. One parent noted that the school provides training on how to use the online system to check their child’s grades. High School information meetings are offered in the beginning of the year. However, based on parent responses and a review of school documents, events have minimal attendance rates.
- Parent workshops are offered in a variety of areas. A test readiness workshop and a few other grade-level information meetings provide the curricular expectations for the year. However, a review of the parent calendar and workshop notices reflect many of the workshops provided throughout the year focus on social events which do not provide information on ways parents can assist their child with academic concepts at home.
- In each subject, students are provided a course syllabus for the year which contains information on yearlong themes, grade-level skills and the grading policy. In addition, the guidance counselor provides information through classroom presentations on the articulation process and college and career research workshops. Students are asked to reflect on their grades, complete a form and develop an action plan based on what they have determined about their progress. However, a review of these documents across classes reflects several incomplete action plans. Some of the plans reflect completion of next steps for only one term, unclear goals or further development in the detail of the form.

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in professional collaborations that analyze student work for target students connected to school goals yet the process of inquiry is developing.

Impact

Teacher teams are in the process of improving their practices and monitoring progress toward goals for groups of students in order to strengthen instructional capacity and increase achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet by content area weekly to discuss student work and adaptations to unit planning. In ELA, i-Ready assessment scores were used to determine which students would be targeted for the year. Teachers report that the focus throughout the year has changed from analysis of skills for target students to an emphasis on unit planning and a focus on curriculum. Thus far, teachers are using their time on teams to include formative and summative tasks and revise units for pacing purposes based on students’ responses. However, a review of documents has yet to reflect an emphasis on how teachers are consistently improving the quality of instruction based on their review of student work.
- During an ELA meeting, teachers reviewed work to determine if the student was able to meet the standards reflected in the rubric. The team used a tuning protocol to reflect and provide warm and cool feedback about the student’s strengths and areas of concern after reviewing the work. Teachers shared that the student used quotes and formulated an organized essay yet still needed to improve the quality of writing by including more details to support what they were claiming, provide a clear introduction and conclusion, use transition words effectively, and include more of the student’s voice. However, at the conclusion of the meeting, teachers did not discuss any specific strategies or additional practices to assist the presenting teacher with this student. Furthermore, there was no link from this meeting to the next to follow up and determine the student’s progress moving forward.
- Teachers reported that only small gains have been made throughout the year due to the lack of deeper analysis and sharing of practices on specific skills. The math team reports that students are making some gains in computation yet multi-step problem solving continues to be a challenge for all students. Efforts to extend time for practice and organization of thoughts have been considered as a curriculum adjustment. Moreover, a review of profile student data reflects minor gains in academic performance in ELA and math.