



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. K811 Connie Lekas School

Secondary School K811

**2525 Haring Street
Brooklyn
NY 11235**

Principal: Antoinette Rose

**Date of review: January 12-13, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Audrey Madison**

The School Context

P.S. K811 is a secondary school with 325 students from grade 6 through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 8% Asian, 57% Black, 20% Hispanic, and 11% White students. The student body includes 17% English Language Learners and 98% students with disabilities. Boys account for 68% of the students enrolled and girls account for 32%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 92.0%.

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	Focus	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	Celebration	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity and promoted implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. School leaders have embedded shared decision making practices throughout the school.

Impact

Schoolwide instructional coherence promotes increased student achievement for all learners as teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The Transition professional learning community (PLC), comprised of teachers of senior students, was observed using a tuning protocol to support the presenter's focus question: How can I further push rigor for my Level 1 and 2 students to cite positive work behaviors? Teachers examined three levels of student work samples, asked clarifying questions about the lesson and provided warm and cool feedback. One teacher proposed a cross collaboration between classes, as an opportunity for her students to act out positive and negative work behaviors. During the reflection component, the presenting teacher stated, "I didn't know Attainment had a video, and I agree that it would help my students to analyze inappropriate work behaviors. Also using thumbs up and down to represent positive and negative behaviors will give my lower level students a visual definition." Team members also expressed they access each other's ideas, strategies and materials from an online document sharing system.
- Minutes of curriculum team meetings reveal a focus on incorporating Formative Assessment of Standards Tasks (FAST) skills for Operations and Algebra into the current math curriculum and imitating the exact format of the FAST test within their teaching. Team members documented responsibility for looking at the domain standards to determine how to align instruction to their students' cognitive needs. Additionally, documents stated, that their instructional shift of focus applies to real world application. The FAST Level 2 has word problems. So they create pre- and post- tests aligned to Operations and Algebra in the FAST and enter the results from assessments in Engrade to allow them as a team to see the success of the curriculum. The curriculum team developed pacing calendars, including dates for pre- and post- tests and structured math unit plans for middle and high school that currently guide instruction for Common Core units of Expressions and Equations.
- Members of the curriculum team and data team are also PLC leaders, as conveyed in a description of the school's collaborative structures. Team minutes support collective work with their colleagues on tasks such as examining how essential questions are to be incorporated in lessons, adapting materials to scaffold instruction, and revising lesson plans. Minutes further document feedback between the PLCs and the curriculum and data teams, to support impact on key decisions such as determining writing from sources as this year's instructional focus and revision of curriculum units. The Professional Development (PD) Team, consisting of four teachers, two paraprofessionals and an assistant principal developed, distributed and analyzed the needs assessment for professional development across the school, according to action steps outlined in the PD plan.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices informed by the Danielson Framework reflect a school-wide focus on students' abilities using different modalities for learning. Teaching approaches strategically provide multiple entry points, supports and extensions into the curricula, yet teachers strive to offer opportunities to further advance student thinking.

Impact

Across ability levels, the needs of all learners are met so that students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and discussions and produce meaningful work products that push them toward their learning targets and goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Higher- Order Thinking (HOT) question protocols were observed across all classrooms. In one English Language Arts class, a student selected a "Why do you think...?" question stem. In a social studies class, as they studied World War II, another student used a "Would you choose..." stem. In another class, the teacher asked the class, "Which would you say is the most important function of the digestive system?" One student replied, "The mouth because it chews and swallows," while another student answered, "The stomach because it digests the food."
- As one teacher read aloud about German soldiers marching into a country, a student began to physically march, as his classmate made marching motions from his wheelchair. One student in this class pointed to his article and asked the principal, if she saw the soldiers in the newspaper. Communication devices were also used to reiterate main points of texts or key points of the lesson through repetition. Students were assisted to push buttons to restate what the teacher had read aloud or to turn pages as they read along. Yes/ no devices were also used to answer questions about the text.
- An English Language Arts teacher presented text on an interactive white board and required students to manipulate multiple choice responses to complete comprehension sentences about a story. Paraprofessionals required individual students to point to pictures or match pictures. In a math class, the teacher acknowledged understanding as a student motioned her arm in different angles to demonstrate positive and negative slopes represented in pictures such as walking up a hill and skateboarding down a ramp. A science teacher supported his students to distinguish between dominant and recessive traits with pictures that were placed on Velcro strips. An alternate placement paraprofessional was observed translating the task and directions in Haitian- Creole for a student.
- Extensions to the curriculum were displayed through posted pictures and captions of students using computer programs to design, teaching peers how to use their email to sign up for an "Hour of Code" during Computer Science Education Week, and preparing to present an assembly program about coding to the entire school, which was further captured on video. Another board posted pictures and quotes of transition students to convey their engagement in a class project which involved shopping at IKEA.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and content standards, strategically integrating the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

All students, including lowest- and highest- achieving students, have access to rigorous learning across content areas through tasks that promote post- secondary readiness appropriate to their cognitive abilities.

Supporting Evidence

- Curriculum pacing calendars and unit plans have been developed by the curriculum team for use cohesively across the school, according to school leaders. Common Core- aligned middle and high school documents for the four content areas were evident for early fall months, with the addition of Assisted Daily Living/ Careers content by the winter. Career Development Occupational Studies Standards, specifically “Standard 2: Students will demonstrate how academic knowledge and skills are applied in the workplace and other settings,” has also been added across content areas. Unit plans align to Attainment and Unique curricula materials and have been refined to incorporate the instructional shifts of school wide focus, which are writing from sources in English Language Arts (ELA), and real world application in math, also apparent in social studies and science plans.
- Review of curriculum documents revealed that Universal Design for Learning strategies (UDL), particularly Means of Action/ Response have evolved to include sorting vocabulary words in a chart, creating drawings to represent math problems, using pictures to write from informational text and real objects to solve real world problems that involve function tables and linear functions, as well as, the use of Preferred Means of Communication such as, Augmentative and Alternate communication devices, Picture Exchange Communication System and eye gaze, writing, and adapted materials.
- An essential question from a middle school science lesson plan poses, “How does the human body digest food?” This aligned to the pacing calendar entries: Describe the function of the esophagus, stomach and small and large intestines. The high school pacing calendar offers “Identify/ state/ determine/ analyze reasons why World War II affected the United States,” as differentiated learning objectives that were also presented in the high school lesson plans for the identified dates.
- Lesson plans identify student groups with rationales for grouping such as readers of mixed ability, or means of expression for Level 3 students to circle the answer while Level 1 students write independently or use sentence frames if needed. One Transition program lesson plan states that students are grouped based on leadership abilities, intellectual functioning, as well as, determined by assessment data. The sequence of learning activities listed in unit plans, which are classified by Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI) levels are incorporated into lesson plans as well. For example, a middle school English Language Arts sequence requires Level B students to compare and contrast the main character to other characters in the story, while Level C students do so using a graphic organizer with assistance of a word bank, as Level D students attend to pictures.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

All teachers use assessments, rubrics and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula and track student progress towards individual goals. Teacher assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

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

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use of rubrics aligned to individual learning targets and attached to student work products was obvious. Given the learning target, "I can identify the correct data points on a coordinate plane," teacher feedback for this student stated, "Great job identifying the correct data points. You were able to count over on the x- axis and up and down on the y- axis. Next steps, let's work to plot given data points on a coordinate plane." One student explained, "Getting a 4 means everything is right. If you get a 3 it means you did good but need to work harder. Level 1 means lower functioning." Classroom teachers are responsible for entering rubric information into Engrade, an online grading system, documented by marking period data across cohorts.
- According to monthly student record sheets for "Keeping Track of My Work", during class team meetings, students write their learning targets for each content area. At the end of each week they rate themselves in collaboration with their teachers. One student's record sheet indicated a rating of Level 3 in Financial Literacy, signifying students can create a budget well with little help, and Level 4 in Human Biology, students can master the skill of exercise. Another student's self- assessment score was Level 3 in science, meaning that the student can identify recessive genes using a graphic organizer with little help, and Level 3 in math, which means the student can calculate the slope of real life objects.
- A teacher's lesson plan explains a behavior tracking system evidenced across the school showing that students track their behavior through the use of points via Class Dojo. Students also take ownership of time on track, persistence, working hard and following the school's Positive Behavior Intervention Support matrix throughout the duration of the lesson. Teachers were observed making entries of points as students reflected on their work and behavior. One student declared, "I did excellent because I stayed focused." An audible "ding" confirmed he received his points. A printed monthly report for one student indicated her behaviors including participation, positive attitude and taking responsibility were 97% positive, although being disruptive and being off task still need work.
- Exit slips or passes were evidenced in class visits and lesson plans. In math, students share a sentence about solving equations with an elbow partner while teacher circulates the room looking for peer- to-peer engagement. For science, students will name one part of a heart and its function. Observed students in a 6:1:1 social studies class used communication devices to answer, "Did Germany win the war, yes or no?" Students in an ELA class used two senses to describe an object and in math students solved for one variable in an interactive digital quiz.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and ensure training is provided for all staff. Students are supported toward next levels by an established culture for learning that provides effective and focused guidance toward next levels.

Impact

School leaders and staff are mutually responsible for attaining high expectations for themselves and students. All students, including high needs subgroups, own their education and are prepared for success in post- secondary settings.

Supporting Evidence

- A rationale presented in the professional development (PD) calendar for the year attests that a teacher survey was distributed and analyzed to determine the sort of professional development teachers felt was most important. The results indicated that teachers placed most importance on IEP writing. An accompanying graph further rationalizes why the PD calendar reflects the scheduling of three IEP trainings, multiple assessment workshops that focus on formative, summative, and school specific assessments such as FAST and New York State Alternate Assessment. Planning and preparation workshops based on Danielson's *Framework* components 1a and 1e were also offered. This calendar also outlines the expectations for professional learning communities to organize their collaborations to weekly structured time for examining student work, student achievement and data, and lesson planning. This tri- level focus of work was also articulated by teachers as the work they do weekly and take responsibility for.
- The PD plan is aligned to the Danielson Framework and outlines a needs assessment, which for some teachers included a self- reflection. Listed resources and professional development activities suggest methods and opportunities available for individual teacher growth. Expectations for demonstrating effective teacher practice and student outcomes are clearly defined. Teachers have also attended District 75 professional development as evidenced in the log of faculty enrollments from the district. The school leaders stated they have calibrated as an administrative team and convey that their observations indicate improved instructional practices. Teachers expressed, they have learned so much that they "feel stronger as teachers."
- The parent guide describes the curriculum to include Career Development and Occupational Studies courses such as an introduction to vocational skills for students 11-16 years of age, an increased vocational component and inclusion in community- based activities for 17- 19 year olds, and vocational training and life skills for seniors, 19-21 years of age. The preparation process includes vocational assessments, drafting resumes, and interviews. One student's interview form stated that she was "in charge of scheduling at school and it makes her excited." Duties at home make her "feel accomplished." The Transition Coordinator/ Job Developer has established opportunities for student work in the community at sites such as CVS, Party City and Dunkin' Donuts. Two students introduced themselves and described their work in the Fiction, Russian, and Large Print sections at the public library. School leaders celebrate their 100% job placement rates for graduates over the past three years. The principal professed, "Our students had the skills necessary to apply to real world opportunities." Students work- based learning opportunities has increased 81.5%.