



Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 092 Mary McLeod Bethune

Elementary School M092

**222 West 134 Street
Manhattan
NY 10030**

Principal: Rosa Davila

**Date of review: March 29, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Adam Breier**

The School Context

P.S. 092 Mary McLeod Bethune is an elementary school with 299 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 61% Black, 35% Hispanic, and 3% White students. The student body includes 12% English Language Learners and 26% students with disabilities. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 89.9%.

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	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	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

3.4 High
Expectations

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide training to the entire staff. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students, and provide clear, focused, and effective feedback.

Impact

Consistent communication of high expectations has resulted in a culture of mutual accountability allowing all students to own their educational experiences and preparing them the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal provides opportunities for professional development (PD) that communicates high expectations and fosters the school's culture of mutual accountability. Through ongoing professional development opportunities on the school's instructional focus, the entire staff has an opportunity to examine ways to support high expectations across grades and subject areas. Some topics include "Writing in Mathematics" and "Writing – 6 Modifications that can be used to motivate reluctant writers." Across classrooms, the impact of this PD was evidence in posted student work and narrative responses such as "How can you write a pair of fractions as fractions with a common denominator and compare the fractions?"
- School leaders and teachers regularly discuss issues of curricula, instruction, and the identification of model lab classrooms to which teachers are free to visit and learn from colleagues during the weekly Thursday Tips meetings. One teacher noted; "It was at the Thursday Tips meeting that we learned which classrooms we could visit to see specific practices. Because of this, I was able to observe someone teach annotation in a way I'd never considered. It was great."
- The principal uses the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to inform classroom instructional practices and communicates expectations regularly to teachers and staff via email, memorandum, individual and group teacher conferences as well as in the faculty handbook. PD workshops have included focus on Domain 3 of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the Common Core Learning Standards, questioning and discussion, while other sessions emphasized strategies to provide support for student subgroups including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities with strategies to support subgroups evident in a majority of classes. In a grade 5 math lesson, students were grouped based on data. In a combined grade 4 and 5 writing lesson, ELLs received targeted assistance by the push-in ELLs instructor while students with disabilities had instructions reread to them.
- Teacher teams have established a culture for learning by designing and delivering tiered classwork, resulting from the inquiry based analyses conducted by teacher teams as well as in-class checks for understanding. Parents praised the practice of challenging all subgroups of students to prepare them for the next level. Teachers hold all students to the same high standards while individually challenging learners. One parent said, "I know that my son is always in a group he should be in. The teacher always knows what he needs. He is always challenged here."

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are beginning to align to the curricula and reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best. Work products and discussions inconsistently reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Teaching practices are informed by Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts. However, students have limited opportunities to engage in appropriately challenging tasks, take ownership of learning, or demonstrate higher order thinking skills in work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, there was evidence of a school wide focus on writing, initiated at the start of this school year. Three of the seven classes visited engaged in a writing activity. The combined grades 4 and 5 class engaged in a writing activity to utilize the strategy of a turning point. In a grade 1 class, they focused on character writing exercise, and in a combined grade 3 and 4 class engaged in the writing of a persuasive letter.
- There was evidence of the development of small group discussion across classrooms and students participated in turn-and-talk activities with their peers. However, student-to-student conversations were consistently founded on questions found in level one and occasionally level two of Webb's *Depth of Knowledge*. The level of questioning by teachers did not allow students to demonstrate high-order thinking skills or take ownership of their learning. In a grade 3 English Language Arts (ELA) lesson, the teacher, during a whole class session asked students to discuss "What is a character?" One student pair's conversation entailed one student saying, "A character is a person from a story." The second student in this pair responded by nodding. In a mixed grade 4 and 5 class, during the ELA lesson the teacher asked about the anchor text "Where was the turning point?"
- Across classrooms, student discussions, aside from brief turn-and-talk activities, were mostly teacher dominated. In a grade 5 math lesson the teacher directed students to talk with each other in the analysis of a student volunteered answer to a multiplication of two mixed numbers problem. However, in all other classes, the teacher directed questions while all student responses were all directed toward the teacher. Students did not have the opportunity to engage in student-to-student conversations that challenged or represented self-perpetuating conversations. There was little evidence in the work and discussions produced across content areas that students participate in or own their learning.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Curricula and tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills. Curricula and tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Across grades and subjects, rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized for all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities. A diversity of learners have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grades and subjects, curricula emphasize high level questions and requires students to make their thinking visible in their work products. In the grade 5 ELA reading map, “Through discussion, students will tell how the narrator includes the main character’s emotions, thoughts, and the character tells us what he is thinking as he explores the environment in which he lives. Explain how the writer uses vivid description to show his emotion.” In the grade 3 math curriculum map, students are asked to “Explain the associative property of multiplication” as well as “Solve open ended and multi-step word problems related to multiplication.” In the grade 3 science curriculum map, students are expected to answer “Why do some organisms become endangered or extinct and others do not?” and “How can we best inform the community about creating and sustaining wildlife, pollinator, and food habitats in urban and suburban NYC communities?” In the grade 5 social studies curriculum map, asking students to show “How have geography, economics, people and key events shaped the United States?”
- Review of data resulted in overhaul of all curriculum maps to reflect greater focus on developing students’ writing. The updated grade 5 ELA writing curriculum map indicates that students will study “What is a counterpoint? How can addressing the counterpoint in an essay make your argument more persuasive?” A grade 5 math lesson plan indicates that students will “Describe how [they] would rewrite fractions one sixth and one fourth with their least common denominator” in their math journals. A grade 3 lesson plan involves study of an exemplar persuasive letter followed by guided application of that skill.
- The lesson plan for a grade 5 ELA writing lesson includes scaffolding instructions differentiated for specific students. For the two ELL students identified by name on the lesson plan, the teacher guide students by using Turning Points to support their writing. This same lesson plan includes “Strategic Support” for the two students with disabilities identified by name in the lesson plan. This support included guidance to “Reread the first section of *A Day’s Work* and help the students to see how a turning point occurred when Francisco realized the consequences of his actions.” In the grade 1 ELA writing lesson plan, the lesson’s essential question of “How can I write an informational piece of writing?” is differentiated for three groups of named students. The first group were asked to “Write an informational text in which they name the topic, supply facts, and details, and provide some sense of closure.” The second group were instructed to “Write about a topic and give information that supports the topic” and the third group were asked to “Draw a picture related to a topic and label it. With guidance, the students will write details about their topic.”

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use and create assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school's curricula. Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Teachers' use of assessments and rubrics provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement as well as make effective adjustments to support all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Students interviewed came to consensus about how teacher feedback helps them improve their writing and processes. Students reported they receive detailed rubrics that include teacher written feedback detailing next steps. Students reported they improved upon their writing by implementing the next steps detailed in the feedback and were then able to resubmit their assignments to their teachers. One example of feedback reads, "You have done a great job mastering the structure of an essay. Next time, make sure you lead with a strong introduction." Another example reads, "You state an opinion that you would be a good vice president. You write a few reasons. Next time, write more detailed reasons to support your opinion and strengthen your writing."
- Teacher teams have used student work and data to create common rubrics and assessments and through this practice, communicate high expectations via detailed rubrics and feedback to students. Students use rubrics and checklists as tools of self-assessment during the writing process. One example is the student-friendly Opinion Writing rubric that contains statements such as "Yes, I created an organizational structure that lists reasons in a very creative way!" "Yes, I supplied many reasons to support my opinion in a very creative way!" and "Well, I supplied one reason to support my opinion."
- Across most classrooms, there were checks for understanding such as questions, responses, share-outs, and student work products. Teachers make instructional adjustments based on the information to support all learners including student subgroups. For example, in a grade 3 writing lesson after circulating throughout the room and visiting with student groups to check for understanding the teacher drew students' attention toward here and stated, "Remember that writers need to brainstorm. You can use the thought-web graphic organizer if you're having trouble."

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 achievement of school goals and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Teachers' collaborations have strengthened their instructional capacity. Across the school, teachers have built leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Review of agendas and accompanying meeting minutes, along with evidence gathered during classroom observations, evidences that all teacher teams are using protocols in their analysis of student work and data in order to build coherence around promoting the shared instructional goal to improve students' writing. In a grade 5 math lesson, the teacher asked students to "Explain two methods of finding a common denominator of two fractions" in narrative form. In a grade 1 writing lesson, teachers instructed students to write an informational piece in which facts were central to supporting the argument. The teacher guided students by requiring they consider "What is my topic?", "Do I have a topic sentence?", "Did I include information about my topic?", and "What is the purpose of transition words?" Additionally, in classrooms spanning all grades, written work in draft form were displayed. Examples of teacher feedback on works in draft form included: "I see that your group worked as a team when researching the topic. You now have a working draft. Next step: use more transitional words," and "Nice working second draft. You gave a lot of interesting facts on your subject. Next step: write the ending in paragraph form."
- The combined grade 4 and grade 5 teacher team conducted a meeting using a protocol in their analysis of three writing assignments. During the course of this meeting, teachers followed the protocol, ensuring that all present shared analyses of the students' work followed by a guided discussion during which interventions were discussed that would help support these students in improvements to their writing. It was determined that while students were answering the question, they were not citing evidence from the text to support their claims.
- The combined grade 4 and 5 teacher team exhibited voice and evidenced their leadership capacity during a meeting determined that use of the Part of Question (POQ) intervention strategy was not improving student writing in alignment with school goals. The team then researched a new intervention and decided to use RACE (Restate the question, Answer, Cite Evidence) to support writing alignment with the school goals.
- Every Thursday there is an informal meeting called Thursday Tips where teachers often decided upon the topics discussed and drive PD planning as well as program development. For example, teachers use the online assessment tool *Mastery Connect* that allows for creation of assessments that address Common Core Learning Standards, monitor student performance, and disaggregate data for teacher teams. This initiative resulted from a teacher's decision to voice her support to the principal and during a Thursday Tips session. The teacher subsequently delivered a PD session on how to use the system ensuring access for all staff.