



Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 012 James B. Colgate

Elementary School Q012

**42-00 72nd Street
Queens
NY 11377**

Principal: Stephanie Moskos

**Date of review: December 4, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Terrell**

The School Context

P.S. 012 James B. Colgate is an elementary school with 1,279 students from grade kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 56% Asian, 0% Black, 39% Hispanic, and 3% White students. The student body includes 28% English Language Learners and 11% students with disabilities. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 96.6%.

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	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	Additional Findings	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and staff have strategically incorporated the instructional shifts across the curricula, in alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards. Tasks and units of study are refined using student work.

Impact

Coherent curricula across content areas support cognitive engagement for all learners and promote college and career readiness skills.

Supporting Evidence

- The school provides all students' access to the *ReadyGen* and *GO Math!* curricula which are aligned to the Common Core with units of study that are purposely planned to support the instructional shifts. Students engage in informational units of study. For example, grade one students worked on a unit around sharks. School leaders and faculty have intentionally focused on building coherence across the school in the area of opinion writing. This targeted area is supported with the use of thinking maps to enable students to organize their writing to promote college and career readiness skills. In addition, close reading of informational texts is employed across subject areas to support implementation of the instructional shifts. In a science lesson, students construct a circuit from a battery to provide energy to a light source.
- To further strengthen their focus on building coherence around the instructional shifts, school leaders introduced the book of the month aligned to units of study. Each month a new book is introduced across the school. For example, during the month of November, students read, *If You Lived in Colonial Times*. The staff use thinking maps strategically to build students' writing fluency. In a special education classroom, student work displayed on a bulletin board reflected an informational unit of study around eco-systems and flowers. In one lesson, students compare the characters in two books using the information in a double bubble map to write similes.
- Teacher teams have used student data to redesign units of study across every grade. The concept of "team talk" has been inserted into the curricula to support students in developing more detailed writing that is centered on evidence. In grade 5, students engage in team talk in which they provide feedback to each other to defend the level of evidence provided in a piece of writing. In a top third grade class, the curriculum was revised to support the accelerated reading levels for this group of students.
- Units of study are adjusted to support identified areas of student needs. For example, adjustments were made to the grade 2 curriculum with more emphasis on addition and subtraction fluency to build math comprehension. In grade 4, math problems are aligned to a problem of the month, on topics such as earning money, to promote college and career readiness skills. Teachers design tasks that involve productive struggle, in order to allow students to explore, investigate and develop personal strategies to make sense of math content.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best and strategically reflect leveled entry points for student engagement, including questioning and scaffolds, for all learners.

Impact

Discussions at the team and school level have led to student engagement in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in work products and discussions, although opportunities for more extensions could be utilized.

Supporting Evidence

- Students are provided instruction in small groups aligned to their instructional levels and scaffolds are provided to assist in completion of challenging tasks. A grade 3 English as a New Language (ENL) push-in teacher in conjunction with the general education teacher grouped students according to language proficiency levels when they were asked to identify characteristics from a shared reading. In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, students were strategically grouped based upon a pre-assessment and the prior day's check for understanding checklist which permitted the teachers in the room to work independently with each group. English Language Learners are also provided with visual cues to develop vocabulary concepts and fluency. Students were asked to identify the character traits of *Frog and Toad* by citing the shared text. The teacher used a variety of prompts to challenge student thinking. Examples include; character trait charts, bubble maps, and sentence starters.
- Questioning and discussion remains an area of instructional focus for the school. Significant professional development and resources are aimed at increasing student's exposure to rich critical thinking questions prompts. Teachers ask a variety of Webb's *Depth of Knowledge* questions such as, "How do you know they are caring?" and "Can we say they are funny or silly."
- Students answered questions during discussions at a higher-order thinking level prompted by their peers and teacher, although, they occasionally directed their response to the teacher when attempting to engage in a discussion with their peers or expand on their responses. During a grade 5 writing lesson, students discussed their peers level 4 rubric score was appropriate "because he was very specific" and "[he had] lots of transition words, furthermore...it was awesome." However, in an English Language Arts classroom, students were asked, "How did Wilber react to the baby spiders flying away?" and the students responded directly to the teacher with little peer-to-peer discussion, although turn-and-talk was suggested as was observed in other classrooms visited.
- Tools, such as manipulatives, graphic organizers, and technology, are used to support learning and offer extensions into the curriculum. In a technology classroom, the teacher used technology to allow students to select a question for a math problem. In an upper grade class, students used a graphic organizer to compare and contrast two stories. In a science classroom, some students were tasked with a challenge to convert electrical energy into light energy. Kindergarten students were offered ten frame manipulatives "to help us count," when the teacher was modeling a number line on the white board.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Teachers' analysis of multiple forms of assessment data guides their revision of curricula and instructional tasks. Common assessments allow teachers to align instruction to students' identified academic needs.

Impact

Teachers' use of ongoing assessments support alignment to the curricula and the grading policy and provides meaningful feedback to track students' progress, so that they demonstrate mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the school, all teachers use summative, formative, and performance-based assessments to provide feedback to students. Teachers have designed and normed rubrics to support the expectations of each teacher on the grade in order to provide meaningful feedback to students. Rubrics are aligned to the grading policy to support coherence of expectations across all grades. A review of student work reflected a rubric on the back of the work sample with feedback around what the students do well and what they need to try next as they work toward mastery. For example, feedback to a student on an opinion essay on "How should a good classroom citizen act?" noted the strength as, "I like how you stated your opinion. You gave reasons and wrapped it up."
- At the end of each school year, every teacher receives an end-of-year student progress report for their incoming students that provides feedback on their strengths and areas of concern. This feedback allows each teacher to group students for the upcoming school year so that meaningful instruction can commence on the first day of school.
- In order to support coherence around the targeted areas of opinion writing, school leaders and teachers redesigned three end-of-unit performance assessments to focus on opinion writing. Teachers are providing feedback to students before, during, and after a writing assessment. Teacher teams analyze results to monitor and track students' progress from the beginning of the school year to the end to support mastery of goals.
- Starting in kindergarten, all students are assessed with a running record inventory. This inventory is used to track the progress of all students throughout their enrollment at the school. Adjustments to the curricula and instruction are made based on an analysis of benchmark assessments, common unit tests and running records inventory data. The focus on opinion writing this year was generated as a result of an analysis of student work products for all students.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently articulate to the staff high expectations aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Families are provided with ongoing communications to support their partnership with the school toward improved student achievement.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability has resulted in improved professional growth for all staff. The school’s partnership with families, results in activities at home to support expectations toward college and career readiness skills.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have conducted classroom observations and provided feedback to all teachers aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teachers were provided with feedback aligned to the school goal of increasing their proficiency around asking more rigorous questions and how to engage students in discussions. Videos on questioning and discussion were presented to the staff to support professional growth in this area.
- Teachers are participating in weekly teacher-led workshops that they select from a menu of topics addressing best teaching practices and other areas that support high standards around instruction and professionalism. Teachers participate in inter-visitation with colleagues who have demonstrated high levels of proficiency in specific instructional strategies, including writing and questioning, to support their professional growth in this area.
- Families are provided with a monthly calendar that provides them with information on Units of Study across all content areas. Individual teachers and teacher teams facilitate workshops and send out newsletters families can use at home with their children to support their learning.
- Teachers provide a grade wide newsletter that highlights units of study and projects students will be engaged in during the unit on their particular grade. Parents state that they look forward to the information in the newsletters because it helps them to support their child at home.
- Parents communicated the school offers supports for their children. One parent stated she “feels very comfortable that her child is being prepared to excel in all areas” and that she “trusts the school will provide her child with all he needs to be prepared and ready for middle school.” Another parent stated “the school worked with [him] to make sure his child would not miss any work when he suffered a broken arm.” The school provided the student with a computer in a space on the first floor to complete his work.

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

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations to support student achievement that has strengthened their instructional capacity. Across the school, teams of teachers are engaged in shared decision making.

Impact

The inquiry process has resulted in strengthened coherence of instructional practices across grades to support student achievement. Embedded leadership structures support increased student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers collaborate on teams that focus on strengthening the instructional practices across and within grades. For example, vertical teams worked on developing criteria to norm rubrics across the school so that the expectations that teachers use to assess student achievement is the same for all teachers on the grade. Additionally, teams of teachers use item analysis to inform adjustments to the curricula, which leads to the schoolwide focus on improving writing skills. Teams of teachers meet monthly to discuss and implement instructional strategies aimed at improving schoolwide instructional focus.
- The grade 5 inquiry team collaborated on best practices to use to increase student performance in opinion writing and discussion. One teacher shared the strategy of using index cards with sentence prompts to push student discussion around a topic and proving the point with details from the text. Another teacher shared the success of using a process of deconstructing the question, in which students restate, answer the question, cite evidence from the text and explain their answers (RACE). Students' written work has shown improvement in the details provided to support their opinions. Another teacher shared that students benefited from the use of a graphic organizer that focused them on how to organize the format of their writing with a clearly defined introduction, text-based details in the body, the use of transition words, and a conclusion.
- The principal provides embedded leadership opportunities for all teachers. Across the school, all teachers collaborate with the principal to develop monthly teacher team agendas, including focus on instructional practices they have demonstrated knowledge with implementing. Teacher generated workshops are offered monthly based on the teacher team meetings.
- The principal also allowed teachers to make decisions around redesigning the grading policy as an outcome of an internal teacher survey that led to all students being held to the same standards across their grade in order to support increased learning for all students. Additional teams, such as the Thinking Maps Team, the Special Education Team and the Opinion Writing Team, were created to support teacher practice and student achievement as a result of teacher surveys. Teachers state that they have a voice in selecting the areas for which they want additional professional support. For example, teachers select classrooms they would like to visit and write a self-reflection on how it benefited them professionally and on the strategies they will implement in their own classrooms.