



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 094 David D. Porter

Elementary School Q094

**41-77 Little Neck Parkway
Queens
NY 11363**

Principal: Laura Avakians

**Date of review: February 23, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince**

The School Context

P.S. 094 David D. Porter is an elementary school with 366 students from kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 45% Asian, 5% Black, 22% Hispanic, and 25% White students. The student body includes 7% English Language Learners and 13% 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 96.9%.

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	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	Proficient
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 faculty engage in a rigorous process of curriculum development, aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the integration of instructional shifts, supporting rigor in the classroom for all students, including student with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs).

Impact

Students are consistently engaged in a coherent and rigorous curriculum. Engaging curricula and purposeful questioning techniques promote rigorous habits and ensure that students demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Purposeful lesson planning incorporates the instructional shifts and key standards to build coherence and promote career and college readiness for all students. All unit plans in all subject areas are aligned to the Common Core and include tasks focused on skills aligned to the school focus points of citing evidence, student-to-student discussion, and collaborative learning. Instructional shifts aligned with rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in curricula and tasks. Both *ReadyGen* and *GO Math!* are used. In addition, adjustments have been made with the use of math *Exemplars* and choice boards to infuse student ownership. For science, there is a special hands-on collaboration with Queens College for the fifth grade. Lower grades have the use of *Ally Pond* to further extend learning on ecosystems. Teachers across grades work with Teachers College resources to infuse writing into the curriculum. Grade curriculum units in science and social studies have been blended with the *ReadyGen* program. *Great Leaps* and *Foundations* are being used in kindergarten and *Words Their Way* is being used in first grade to ensure that the students are using higher-order thinking skills and problem solving techniques.
- Teachers are working on organizing curricula based on the needs of the student population to ensure and extend a focus on reading and writing skills. Multiple entry points are embedded into all unit plans addressing the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs. In addition to *GO Math!*, there is a questioning and discourse protocol in math in order to study student process. Modifications are made to all units of study to address gaps in student understanding. The school is using the Teachers College writing curriculum and uses complex texts with a focus on key standards, such as annotating for details and evidence. Lesson plans in English Language Arts include scaffolding and enrichment components for all learners, including higher-order thinking skills through the use of word problems and questioning techniques.
- Students are learning how to use time efficiently and discuss their work with their peers. There is a consistent use of academic vocabulary and coherence across all subject areas. Lesson plans highlight flexible grouping across subject areas and individualized instruction tasks. All students are asked to create arguments using text-based evidence, formulate their own questions, and initialize discussions with their peers. *Scholastic News* as supplemental non-fiction reading source and academic language is infused across lessons.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and provide scaffolds and multiple entry points into the curricula. In some cases, there are missed opportunities to extend student thinking and ownership.

Impact

Across most classrooms, students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and student discussions reflect high levels of thinking and active learning.

Supporting Evidence

- In many classes students were engaged in text-based discussions or solving multi-step math problems. The school leaders and faculty review student work products to inform instruction and develop supports and extensions for all learners, including students with disabilities and ELLs. Effective feedback to teachers has encouraged student discussions and every class is asked to use a discussion protocol. In many classrooms visited, students were engaged in-group discussions and these conversations were helping to deepen the understanding of the content area being taught. In a fourth grade class the teacher was using literature circles as a way to engage students in collaborative discussions based on their texts. There were five different groups and each had a student leader facilitating while the teacher was circulating and taking notes. However, in a second grade class the students used the turn and talk technique and were unable to deepen the discussion without direct teacher guidance, thus limiting their ownership of the discussion.
- Students were seen engaged in text-based discussions or solving multi-step math problems sharing their explanations using reasoning and evidence. The Academic Intervention Services teacher specifically works with students in the first and second grades who are not on grade level. In most classrooms visited teachers provided differentiated supports for all learners and were varying approaches for students' different learning styles. There was evidence of multiple entry points that actively engaged all learners, including students with disabilities and ELLs. Schoolwide professional development is working on gradual release of the teacher as facilitator to mediate discussions to extend student thinking.
- Teachers are using various methods of scaffolding such as visuals, graphic organizers, exit slips, and teacher modeling to support learning. In all the classrooms where there were student-led discussions they were animated, engaging all students in important issues and promoting the use of precise language to deepen and extend their learning. In a first grade Integrated Co-Teaching class the students were in two groups and both were asked how one identifies the narrator. Students engaged in discussions about point of view using key words. Differentiated questions were on boards within each group. Students were referring to the same subject using leveled texts.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, including ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment, rubrics and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula.

Impact

Assessment practices provide students and teachers with a clear portrait of student mastery. Curricula and lesson planning is consistently adjusted to meet the needs of students and students are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers and administrators articulate coherent reasons for assessment choices and assessments are aligned to the Common Core and content standards in the curriculum. A review of curricula maps provided evidence that the school is embedding the use of assessment and ongoing checks for understanding into lesson planning. All teachers work on data verification, spreadsheets, and baseline assessments, and use trends from item analysis to identify gaps. Teachers identify specific instructional responses to data which might include re-teaching content, changing instructional approaches to meet the needs of students, and developing more challenging tasks. A variety of feedback to students, both from teachers and peers is accurate, specific, and timely, thus advancing learning.
- *I-Ready* is used in each class to determine math levels. Every teacher records quarterly goals in writing based on nine criteria pieces. There are quick checks for student understanding in math concepts and this assists in group creation. *Dashboard* is used in September and February to determine areas of teaching focus such as questioning and discussion techniques. Math problems are created with real-life applications in mind, such as a fraction problem on sharing ice cream. Students get feedback forms that have areas for teacher assessment, self- and peer assessment, as well as parent assessment. As a result, teachers and students have access to meaningful feedback regarding progress and assessment practices inform curricular and instructional decisions positively impacting student learning. Exit slips are used frequently for checking on understanding.
- Embedded in each unit of study are multiple opportunities for informal assessments in addition to exit slips, such as conferencing notes, peer to peer or self-assessments and students are actively involved in collecting information from assessments. Students across grades are aware of their next learning steps, and can articulate assessment criteria and learning objectives. In a fourth grade math class on fractions, students used exemplars to understand that there are different ways to solve problems. Students had to support their ability by discussing concepts and see that math is more than discrete operations.
- Support structures are in place for advancing to the next level and students are aware of their next learning steps. Teachers have identified the need for reinforcing evidence-based strategies in instruction across grades. Gathering this information and using it to monitor each student's progress over time is embedded into the schoolwide system and provides a system of actionable feedback to further student learning outcomes.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and faculty consistently communicate high expectations, including elements of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, to the entire school community. Administrators and teachers communicate expectations of the school connected to college and career readiness and successfully partner with families to support student progress.

Impact

As a result, there is a culture of mutual accountability amongst the staff. Parents play an active role in supporting the school and their children to meet goals on a path towards college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders create elevated levels of expectations for all staff which is evidenced throughout the school through verbal and written structures, such as new teacher orientations, ongoing workshops, and a staff handbook which was developed by teachers as a guide to professional responsibilities. A system of reciprocal feedback, including open visitation of families in the classroom, and common rubrics aligned to setting goals for moving students toward the next level are embedded into the structure of the school. Staff, as well as students, track progress so that each knows when requirements have been met. Students stated that they self-assess to measure their progress and restate next level goals as it relates to high expectations. The school has clearly defined standards for professional development and classroom practices which embed elements of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* in practice and ensure learning for all stakeholders. Parents stated that there is respect for all throughout the school.
- The school creates multiple opportunities to partner with families, such as tea with the principal and small group conversations with parents and families. Parent workshops communicate the high expectations for students and give families tools to help them meet goals. Parent phone calls report on glow and grow of students using constructive feedback to help lift the level of rigor. Community activities promote civic responsibility and inform students of possible career and college goals. These have included a food drive, toy drive, *Mathathon*, musical theater programs and a program promoting physical health and well-being. The school expectations are for every student to graduate with skills and knowledge leading to college or career. As stated at the parent meeting, “Students and parents take on an active role in cultural activities building a relationship of trust and respect.” Each class has their own website with learning goals and parent activities.
- There are clear and continuous lines of verbal and written communication, such as online progress reports and reminders about events that foster parent participation in a culture of high expectations. For example, *What’s the Scoop* newsletter and monthly news updates include information on testing, workshops, progress made in specific subject areas, and reminders of important dates to keep the parents and families involved. In addition, the school follows a *Respect For All* program and provides a student handbook.

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

All teacher teams are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that support the goals of the school and strengthen teacher instructional capacity. Embedded distributed leadership structures that influence key decisions are in place.

Impact

All teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning. Teacher capacity in the classroom is improving as a result of these decisions and is positively affecting student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams are fully invested in inquiry teams that meet regularly to analyze student work and instruction with regard to engagement, differentiation and coherence across subject areas and grades to promote higher student achievement and improve teacher practice. Teachers work in grades and in subject areas to ensure curricula alignment and make key decision on teaching practices, as evidenced by the fourth grade teacher team focusing on domain specific vocabulary and test complexity. They examined work choice boards with specific activities, such as choose six words and find a synonym or antonym for each word, as a tool to support learning. Each meeting is facilitated by a different teacher who selects the topic agenda linked to the prior meeting outcomes. Grade-based data is used within the meetings and to design the protocols. Professional learning communities are ongoing and reflect the use of best practices to ensure that learning is reaching every sub-group. Inquiry cycles run six weeks, include standards, skills with content area, sub-skills, learning targets, targeted population, and pre- and post-assessments.
- Professional learning walks are utilized to address problems of practice and areas of specific needs and strengths. As stated by the principal, “As a result of these walks and teacher intervisitations, teachers have implemented multiple entry points into their lesson planning.” In addition, teacher teams are now adept at using technology to promote literacy and math skills at home in addition to at school. As a result of this work teachers have embraced a common understanding of instructional expectations within a shared framework elevating instructional quality throughout the school. Teachers conduct all professional development on mandated Mondays. Teacher teams effectively implement systems to monitor a variety of data and classroom practices to inform instruction, leading to the achievement of goals for individual as well as groups of students.
- Teachers meet to discuss shared students, identify students in need of support both academically and emotionally. Teachers shared they look forward to their time together for feedback and to help advance and improve their lesson planning. They also shared that the administration has given them freedom to explore their students’ needs and to find ways to best address them. Scheduling accommodations by the administration with teacher leaders are made to provide opportunities to visit other sites and share best practices. There is a culture of distributive leadership throughout the school that allows teacher leaders to serve as peer instructional coaches offering support, establishing a schedule of intervisitations, and providing professional development to demonstrate best practices. Teachers stated at the team meeting that they are looking to create foundation skills for their students and for teacher practices to increase rigor, including depth of knowledge questioning techniques.