



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2015-2016

**New Choice ES at Q892**

**Elementary School Q360**

**199-10 112 Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11412**

**Principal: Ryan Cooke**

**Date of review: May 10, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Claudette Essor**

## The School Context

New Choice ES at Q892 is an elementary school with 73 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade kindergarten. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 0% Asian, 97% Black, 3% Hispanic, and 0% White students. The student body includes 0% English Language Learners and 5% 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 is not available due to new school status.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

In all classrooms, instructional strategies illustrate strategic use of multiple entry points and extensions into the curricula, to immerse all learners in rigorous tasks and high-level discussions.

### Impact

All students engage deeply in challenging and engaging learning activities that result in high levels of thinking, participation and ownership of learning and high quality work products in all disciplines.

### Supporting Evidence

- During lessons, all students engage in high-level learning activities such as conducting investigations in science, exploring ways of finding solutions to math problems and writing in response to focus questions provided by their teacher. For example, during “Center Time” in a pre-kindergarten class, students self-select tasks involving the use of manipulatives, audio and visual supports, and differentiated questions. Students work with a few peers at the learning station they choose, present their work to other peers and field questions about the work done. Their work products illustrate high levels of student thinking, as evidenced by the work of one group of students who described how parents care for a baby, by showing drawings of a baby and detailing how objects in the center, including dolls “taking a nap” in a crib, feeding bottles, and baby clothes in mini chest of drawers, are parts of what babies need. The students extended the discussion to talk about babies that they know and what they themselves did when they were babies.
- In the school self-evaluation document the principal stated that all teachers create materials that allow for multiple entry points into learning tasks for all students. This was evident in a science class where the teacher engaged kindergarten students in a hands-on exploration of the growth of a plant, after a mini lesson about how plants grow and what they need to survive. The teacher separated several plants from dirt in pots and held them up for students to observe and note differences in the roots, leaves and size of the plants. Similarly in a math class, the teacher invited students to feel and measure objects such as pencils, staples, cotton, and paper weights, in exploring the concept of measurement. Students worked with a partner in comparing the objects to learn about height, weight and/or length. They presented their findings to peers in a whole class share and offered the rationale for their decisions.
- All lessons included tasks for students to participate in text-based discussions and activities that evoked higher-order thinking. For example, in a kindergarten class, the teacher used an interactive white board to create a web of features of a book and engaged students in a read-aloud of a picture book to illustrate the author’s use of text features to help the reader understand the story. The teacher used higher-order thinking questions and a turn and talk to prompt students to notice features such as bold words, exclamation marks, picture clues and speech bubbles. Then students were challenged to work with a partner in reading their own book from a collection by the same author, Mo Willems. The students took turns interpreting features of their book and using puppets they created in a previous lesson, to mimic the speech of the characters in the book. As an extension of the task, the teacher told students that they could create their own speech bubble and act it out with their puppets.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

All teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations across disciplines and grades and meet regularly to systematically analyze major elements of their instructional practice and share teaching strategies.

### Impact

Through daily extensive teamwork all teachers collaborate in sharing strategies that result in school-wide instructional coherence that improves teacher pedagogy and student mastery of learning goals.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school's small group of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers meets weekly during preparation periods in which they focus on the integration of the Common Core Learning Standards with units of study. Meeting records show that the teachers collaborate in reviewing curriculum guides, developing assessments and designing learning tasks as they focus on what students need to know at each grade level. During the teacher team meeting, teachers noted that team activities strengthen their practice by making each of them fully aware of skills and content applicable to the current and next grade for their students. They also indicated that team activities provide ongoing opportunities for them to constantly refine and share instructional practices. The principal is working on additional structures to expand and further refine teamwork as the school grows.
- At weekly team meetings, discussions of individual students as well as patterns and trends in learning enable teachers to determine next steps related to a given topic or assessment. For example, as a result of a meeting focused on data generated by *GO Math!* assessments, teachers revised units by constructing tasks for foundational concepts to be presented in a collaboratively determined sequence of lesson activities designed to promote higher order thinking. Minutes of team meetings reference other revisions of units to add content that extends the focus of the unit. The principal used data from assessments to show gains in student achievement based on instructional strategies and enrichment resources identified through team meetings. For example, data across two periods of assessment for pre-kindergarten students illustrate their growth in domains such as personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, the arts, and physical development, health and safety.
- During the inquiry team meeting observed, the teachers used a "Notice and Wonder" protocol and a "Learning Progression for Informational Writing" rubric to examine student work and identify gaps in learning and strategies to improve the work. The protocol guided their discussion of strengths and needs of specific kindergarten students whose projects about animals were presented by a peer. Participants took turns sharing noticings, asking questions about the work, outlining learning needs evidenced in the work and generating ideas for re-teaching the content and skills involved. They drafted a plan for follow-up work with the students whose work samples were examined and for other students with similar needs. Although they pinpointed specific and diverse needs for individual students, it was not clear how interventions would be differentiated in follow-up work with the students.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

All teachers use Common Core-aligned curricula and strategically integrate the instructional shifts in learning tasks across all subject areas. Using student work and data, teachers incorporate and refine cross-disciplinary tasks in units of instruction for all learners.

### Impact

All students have access to curricula with cognitively engaging tasks designed to accelerate their learning in all content areas and support their readiness for the next grade.

### Supporting Evidence

- Units of study reflect an intentional focus on themes through which teachers connect topics and tasks across grades and subject areas. For example, sample curriculum documents show that a focus on the integration of social studies and science content drives the design of tasks and selection of content for students at varied developmental levels. In addition, collections of texts are included to allow for student engagement in daily reading to build their content knowledge around the theme being studied across content areas. For example, a sample task for a kindergarten unit involved students using reading, writing, speaking, art and math skills to create a project about how to make a pizza. A template with sequence words, (first, next, then, and last) was embedded in the unit to guide students in completing the task.
- The school's curricula illustrate targeted focus on the instructional shifts, with a unit on babies designed to engage pre-kindergarten students in reading about babies and working at learning stations that illustrate aspects of caring for a baby. For kindergarten students, a unit about animals shows tasks for students to create a report about an animal, using a table of contents, labeled drawings and a sentence or two with a fact about the chosen animal. A unit about family that involved students in exploring a family tree and a unit task involving investigations of how plants grow, both show integration of content linked to the New York City scope and sequence guides for science and social studies. Units from *EngageNY* and *GO Math!* support math instruction, with manipulatives included to help all students to access the curricula. *Foundations* curricula provide activities to build phonemic awareness and teach foundational skills such as letter and sound recognition and decoding and comprehension skills to students in kindergarten.
- Teachers work as a team to design additional performance tasks and review student work to determine which Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts are present in the final student product. The team works to align tasks in units that they create to ensure that lessons are targeting standards that must be addressed. For example, after analysis of data from Developmental Reading Assessments (DRAs) showed that use of the *Core Knowledge* curricula did not yield the expected gains in student achievement, teachers used a "Revision Protocol" and an *Understanding by Design* (UbD) approach to develop new units of study for literacy, to meet the needs of all students. The unit maps address what students need to be able to do, standards to be targeted, skills students will have by the end of the unit, and assessment tasks. Lesson plans show that audio and visual aids and high-level questions are embedded elements of task design in all content areas.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

All assessments are aligned to curricula and provide a clear profile of student mastery of targeted skills. All teachers implement varied forms of ongoing assessment and use the resulting data to inform instructional adjustments and promote self-assessment by all students.

### Impact

Assessment practices generate actionable and meaningful feedback about student achievement. Feedback from ongoing assessments drives curricular and instructional adjustments that address student needs, and results in student awareness of their next steps for progress in learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- After each instructional unit, teachers administer assessments aligned to the unit and to applicable Common Core Learning Standards. Reading assessments are implemented daily via observations of independent and guided reading by all students. Further, formal assessments such as the Developmental Reading Assessment Second Edition Plus (DRA2+), Developmental Screening and Authentic Assessment - Work Sampling System, NYC Performance Writing assessment and *GO Math!* assessments are administered as part of a school-wide focus on literacy and numeracy skills building for all learners. DRA2+ and *GO Math!* assessment reports show that, since October 2015, a vast majority of kindergarten students have increased their proficiency by at least one level across baseline and midline assessments in reading and math, respectively.
- Teachers reported that they use data from ongoing assessments to develop narrative profiles of each student's strengths and learning needs, leading to staff sharing detailed feedback with students and other staff. In addition, conferencing logs show that teachers constantly record feedback on student growth in areas such as math problem solving, phonemic awareness, encoding, decoding, sight word recognition and oral language acquisition. Assessment logs reflect findings and suggested next steps, including the identification of new resources to support the goal of ongoing improvement in staff and student achievement. Teachers stated that based on ongoing assessment during instruction, they group students for varied class activities and re-group them as needed for follow-up activities.
- Teachers create checklists and rubrics that are presented in a grade-level appropriate manner so that expectations are clearly articulated to students. They use rubrics to provide students with actionable feedback that is aligned to the standards covered by the lesson/unit. This was evident in samples of student work on bulletin boards both in and out of the classrooms, and in student portfolios. During a teacher team meeting, teachers described how they created and modified rubrics and checklists to make them student friendly and to ensure language that is clear to students. During the student meeting, students pointed to feedback linked to checklists and rubrics and were able to readily discuss how they use the feedback to "fix the work". In commenting on her performance on a project about tigers, a kindergarten student said, "I wanted a 4, but I got a 3 on the rubric because I forgot to label my drawings and pictures in my book about the tiger."

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The school leader consistently communicates high expectations for teaching and learning to all teachers and provides multiple supports for their success in meeting the expectations. All staff members engage families in learning partnerships to maximize student achievement.

### Impact

Collaborations across all stakeholders create a culture of shared accountability for high expectations that result in ongoing improvement in teacher pedagogy and student achievement.

### Supporting Evidence

- According to the principal, the communication of high expectations for all staff begins before any teacher is hired and drives strategic selection of teachers, based on the school's mission and vision. The principal provides staff members with a handbook and newsletters which convey explicit expectations for teaching and learning, including instructional moves expected in alignment to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and daily use of the workshop model of instruction to support student-centered lessons in all disciplines. The principal holds all staff accountable for the expectations, through check-ins at staff meetings, bulletins, individual and team discussions, and handouts with reminders about instructional strategies grounded in the goal of developing the whole child. Teachers stated that high expectations result in constant structured as well as voluntary collaborations among all staff members during and after school.
- Teachers note that they are supported in meeting the expectations as they participate in daily common planning sessions and weekly professional development sessions. They engage in collaborative planning, review of assessments and discussion of lesson content and teaching points with the school leader, a staff developer and their peers. These supports engage teachers in honing their pedagogical skills and gaining information on strategies and resources to enrich instruction for all students. Minutes of team meetings show that teachers are trained to focus on creating and maintaining an inclusive and print-rich classroom environment, effective lesson planning, designing questions to elicit higher-order thinking and using data to drive instruction in all classrooms. A review of *Advance* data shows all teachers improving their practice as measured by the targeted components of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.
- The school leader and teachers consistently communicate to families, expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness, through emphasis on ways to develop positive academic and personal behaviors among all students. Parents reported that they learn about expectations for their children through workshops, a parent handbook, class visits that they are invited to once per month, information sessions, one-to-one interviews with teachers, and letters from teachers. Further, parents have access to the school website, a Facebook web page, *News360* newsletters, Shutterfly and Engrade web-based postings, all of which keep them informed about school events and expectations for their children. Parents also participated in home-school partnership activities such as Muffins with Moms, Author's Tea, Black History month presentations, school-wide spelling and math bees, career day, poetry slam and a Read-a-thon fundraising event. They praised the school for maintaining an "open door", especially on Tuesdays when they are able to conference with staff in investigating ways to support their children's developmental needs.