Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 045 John Tyler

Elementary School R045

58 Lawrence Street
Staten Island
NY 10310

Principal: Christine Chavez

Date of review: April 19, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Gary Knight

The School Context

P.S. 045 John Tyler is an elementary school with 901 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 5% Asian, 17% Black, 47% Hispanic, and 27% White students. The student body includes 6% English Language Learners and 20% students with disabilities. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 93.3%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
To what extent does the school…	**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 *Framework for Teaching*, 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		
To what extent does the school…	**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		
To what extent does the school…	**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:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness to families.

Impact
The school leaders provide training around expectations, resulting in a culture of mutual accountability. School leaders and staff successfully partner with families to support their children's progress toward expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The school mission is that faculty is deeply involved in furthering their instructional practices and continuing their own learning, which will in turn provide a real-life model for students to do the same. Additionally, the expectation is that all staff understands every student's current level and supports him/her with where they need to go. The school leaders communicate said expectations in a myriad of ways, which include professional development sessions, principal notes, staff handbook, observation, and timely feedback aligned to the Danielson *Framework for teaching*, goal setting by students and teachers, and via the use of Google Docs.

- The school leaders further communicate expectations through the development of three school goals which are: students will experience lessons that are clear, purposeful, and provide multiple paths to understanding, students continually assess and improve the quality of their work through the use of tools, reflection and feedback, and, our school is characterized by safety, kindness, and the joy in learning. Teacher leaders communicate expectations to their content team members and the teachers in turn review expectations on an ongoing basis during professional collaborations, which provides an opportunity for discourse and check-ins regarding any challenges or concerns.

- Families receive communications via the school's website, school messenger, mailings of their children's Independent Reading Levels, parent handbook, parent teacher conferences, Tuesday parent-engagement time, letters, writing, math and social studies workshops, and via REMIND an online messaging tool. For example, a notice was sent home to parents of grade 5 students along with a rubric, informing the parents that their children were working on deepening their understanding of opinion writing. Attached were pre- and post-assessment scores, what their child was successful at, and what still needed work. The staff conducts English Language Arts parent read alouds and math problem-solving morning meetings, after which time, the parents are encouraged to meet with the literacy and math coach respectively, to receive additional strategies to use with their children at home. In addition, assignments are sent home for parents to work on with their children.

- In addition to class parent volunteers, the school empowers parents to be active partners through the School Leadership Team (SLT), which consists of three subcommittees, each inclusive of parents and staff. A parent stated, "Every idea on the SLT has the same weight."

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact
Teaching practices are informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts and engage all learners in appropriately challenging tasks. Although learners demonstrate higher-order thinking skills, there were missed opportunities to further push students' thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Staff believes that students learn best when instructional strategies are aligned to the school's learning standards, students use tools to monitor their own learning, and teaching strategies provide multiple entry points so that all learners are engaged. In a grade 3 class visited, students were engaged in finding the main idea and supporting details of a reading passage and citing evidence from text. In a grade 1 class, students were creating composite shapes using two-dimensional pattern-blocked shapes. Students in a grade 5 class were observed working in groups, using a color-coded memoir progression to identify what they are able to do well and what they need to continue to work on. Students were heard engaged in turn and talk, discussing where they fall on the progression and why. For example, "I think I'm blue because I did not explain why."

- Teaching strategies include providing graphic organizers, student groupings, students using a listening station, accountable talk and discussion prompts, and the use of an exemplar. For example, a grade 5 reading lesson assigned students to three groups based on ability: below, meeting, and, exceeding the grade 5 reading standards. Each group was assigned a similar task of discussing and comparing their responses to the social issues they are noticing in their books, but with variation in the extended activity ranging from students creating their own social issues questions to identifying multiple social issues in a text and noticing how these social issues connect to one another. In an Integrated Co-Teaching Class, students were given a word problem and had to explain why their addition and subtraction strategy worked using place value terms. An exemplar was provided to students as a guide to assist them through task. A grade 4 lesson on when immigration to the Americas began and how it continues today incorporated a listening station of firsthand accounts of immigrants' arrival at Ellis Island.

- Although scaffolds were present in most classes to provide multiple entry points, higher order questioning was either not present or questions reflected low-levels based on Webb's *Depth of Knowledge*. For example, in grade 3, the two questions asked by the teacher were, "What are some strategies you have for finding the main idea?", and "How is text organized to help us find the main idea?" In a grade 4 class, the teacher asked, "How are they describing the character?" "What did the text say in paragraph two?", and "What sentence shows where the story takes place?" In a grade 2 class, the teacher asked, "What did you teach the reader?" In another grade 2 class visited, the questions heard were, "Why would we move to the tens place? What do I have to subtract?", and "What is the next step?" Questioning techniques were not observed at time of visit to other classes.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings
School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects.

Impact
The school's curricula promote college and career readiness for all students. All learners demonstrate mastery in their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's staff worked collaboratively to develop curricula maps and to include school-wide focus standards connected to the instructional shifts. The two focus standards include: Key Ideas and Details; determining central ideas and themes of a text and analyze their development, summarizing the key supporting details and ideas, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas; analyzing how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. The instructional shifts of focus for English Language Arts is text-based answers and for math, deep understanding. A grade 3 planning document on social issues in Brazil required readers to integrate information from a variety of sources in order to understand how different factors affect life in Brazil. It also stated that readers will move within and across any type of non-fiction text, pulling all their information together. A grade 4 math curriculum document, plans for students to use place value understanding and visual representation to solve multiplication and division problems with multi-digit whole numbers.

- The school recognized that their previous curriculum for math was useful in terms of fluency; however, it was not effectively meeting the needs of its students in terms of applying knowledge to real-life. As a result, a new curriculum was selected to better support acquiring all skills and addressing students' needs. To address cohesion, teachers worked to disaggregate and understand the standards and then structured the *EngageNY* modules to coincide with math standards. In addition, clear learning outcomes and success criteria were developed for each math unit. To further build coherence, the staff collaborated on the unpacking of standards across content and school leaders provided professional development training, partnering with a consulting agency that worked with teachers on curricula across grades and subjects

- Teachers promote higher-order thinking through variation in planned questions and materials presented in support of lesson. Embedded in curricula documents reviewed are essential and key questions. A grade 5 plan on social issues had the following essential questions: "What social issues are related to each other?", "What does the author want you to think/feel about these social issues?", "How does the author do this?", "Whose point of view is missing from the text?" and, "How might this story change if it was told through another character's point of view?" Rigorous habits are also emphasized with close reading protocol, discussion prompts, allowing students to demonstrate thinking, and the generation of learning targets. Teachers also use an online application, specific to differentiated activities that promote learning for diverse populations, as a guide throughout the planning process.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings
Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments that are aligned with the school's curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. Common assessments are used to create a clear picture of student progress toward goals across grades and subjects, track progress, and adjust curricular and instructional decisions.

Impact
The teachers' assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. All students demonstrate increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- The teachers administer school-wide formative assessments to determine where their students are along their progression of learning. Mid- and end-of-module, running records, and on-demand writing assessments, are also used to gain information that is used to provide relevant feedback. Some examples of documents reviewed include a grade 1 assessment that required students to identify main topic and retell key details of a text and a grade 2 unit assessment on balance and motion in which students had to describe the different ways objects can move and explain what causes them to move. Students had to include a labeled diagram and science vocabulary.

- Reading and writing learning progression charts clearly detail each student's success criteria for each writing level. For example, mastery, which is indicated by the color purple and is the highest of four color coded categories, indicates that students must identify an appropriate craft move, explain how it affects a story element, and support claim with two relevant exact details, including specific quotes. Rubrics aligned to units of study that are also used, include narrative writing, science, and library/technology. Students receive feedback to their work based on these assessment tools. Feedback forms reviewed for a writing task provided comments to students on the quality of their argument, use of sources, formal structure, presentation, and overall comments. For example, "I love how you remembered to use structure and transitional words.", "Next time, try to put your thoughts in order and use relevant details to support your claim." During review of evidence, other feedback included a comment such as, "you need to keep working on rereading the question and your answer to make sure that your answer matches what the question is asking and makes sense to the reader."

- The school uses common assessments to determine progress as evidenced in reading levels, writing, and math modules. The school's tracking of independent reading levels on the Teachers' College Running Records captures student outcomes between September and March. Grade 1 tracking documents revealed students jumping multiple levels, one from level B to level F and another from level C to level G. Using this information teachers plan specific next instructional decisions that include additional practice with sight words. School-wide groupings were also determined based on reading levels with academic intervention supports provided. School-wide assessment data tracking sheet indicated that student outcomes increased over time. Students who scored level 1 decreased by 18.3%, level 2 decreased by 11.8%, level 3 increased by 2.9% and level 4 increased by 74.1%.

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

Findings
The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations. Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work including classroom practice, assessment data, and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused.

Impact
The teacher's structured professional collaborations result in school-wide instructional coherence, increased student achievement for all learners, and in shared improvements in teacher practice and mastery of goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has a tiered-team structure that includes, but is not limited to, a professional development team and grade level teams. The grade level team conducts inquiry meetings to analyze student data and support staff developing an understanding of Common Core Learning Standards. A review of teacher team meeting agendas evidence teachers engaged in professional collaborations regarding topics such as formative assessment student data, school-instructional goals, and student learning goals. A grade level document referenced teachers reviewing student work as it relates to grade 4 math unit on place value.

- A special education teacher articulated that being a part of a team structure has afforded her many benefits, which include being better able to release control and create a more student-centered classroom experience and for students to have accountable talk. Another teacher shared that the professional collaborations and sharing of best practices has enabled her to better plan for next instructional steps and strategies for having her students own their educational experience. A third teacher shared that the teacher team structure allows for bouncing of ideas off one another and for them to look at things with a different lens, such that "a little idea turns into this great work." Ideas shared are followed up with at the various grade levels in an effort to create a sense of cohesion across the classes. For example, a teacher stated that time is scheduled to share findings with the whole school, that Google Docs is school-wide for all grades to access and review, and that it helps with transference.

- The grade 5 math team was observed conducting their inquiry meeting. Teachers were looking at students' strengths and weaknesses with multi-digit whole number and decimal fraction skills on a formative assessment. Additional documents included a math progression rubric and a checklist. Some of the student misconceptions discussed included difficulty explaining their process in words, not fully analyzing the question, and completing steps in an incorrect order. Based on findings, the next steps identified were to bring small group work, differentiated samples, videotape of students work, analyzing each other's class and the students' conversations, and having students reflect on conversation in the video. An analysis of a math module 3 data for targeted students, specific to multi-digit whole number and decimal skill, revealed that approximately 75% of the students are either approaching, meeting, or exceeding, compared to approximately 55% on module 1. However, all students have progressed when compared to module 1. Similarly, evidence on multi-digit whole number operations shows that 70% of the students assessed are meeting expectations.