



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 085 Great Expectations

Elementary School X085

**2400 Marion Avenue
Bronx
NY 10458**

Principal: Theodore Husted

**Date of review: May 25, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Tracie Benjamin-Van Lierop**

The School Context

P.S. 085 Great Expectations is an elementary school with 1,023 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 29% Black, 69% Hispanic, and 0% White students. The student body includes 22% English Language Learners and 22% students with disabilities. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 91.0%.

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	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	Developing
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	Developing
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:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

Impact

Purposeful decisions build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students across grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses *ReadyGen* curricula for English Language Arts (ELA), and *GO Math!* for math curricula as well as curricular resources from Teachers College. Also, the school uses *Thinking Maps* curricula, which were originally brought into the school for their English Language Learners (ELLs) who represent 26% of the total school population. As a result of seeing how students were able to better organize their thoughts and demonstrate their thinking, the faculty decided to use the *Thinking Maps* curricula across grades and content areas.
- Teachers were provided with an overview for nonfiction literary essay writing to guide them in preparation for teaching the assigned tasks within the unit. The overview offered possible stories for inclusion within the unit and mandated texts to ensure that students read books on their appropriate levels. Recommendations included having students read texts to become familiar with the stories before the unit began, as well as encouraging students to write about their ideas of themselves as readers.
- A review of math lessons showed that lesson plan components include essential questions, notation of standards addressed, lesson objectives, task set-up instructions, student private work time, small group work time, “share/discuss/analyze time”, practice exercises with extension activities, and other additional considerations for the teacher. A math lesson on comparing customary units of length incorporated discussion of academic vocabulary to ensure students understood the words competition, distance, and comparison. The lesson plan also captured how the teacher would circulate around the room to address student misconceptions and ensure that students were working collaboratively within their groups.
- Thinking map graphic organizers are included in teacher plans to promote student independence, high-level discussions, and identification of student learning targets. For example, a bubble map used to support students in describing qualities by using descriptive adjectives and phrases in their writing was included in an ELA plan on identifying character traits in a fairy tale. In addition, a tree map used to help students organize their thinking and sort through conceptual or abstract concepts was included in a plan to promote student book club discussions focused on retelling, characters, setting, and problems and solutions.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson *Framework of Teaching* and the instructional shifts.

Impact

Student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leaders and staff believe that students learn best when they are engaged in meaningful student-centered tasks that provide them with opportunities to have meaningful discussions with peers. In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) grade 2 class, teachers used the parallel teaching model in which both teachers taught the same geometry concept but used different methods with their respective groups of students. In one group, the teacher used manipulatives, which launched a student discussion about common traits of a triangle and additional shape attributes for quadrilaterals. In the other group, students were partnered. However, most students did not speak with or face their partners. Students had limited opportunities to explore shapes independently as the teacher spent the majority of instructional time on explaining the meaning of shape attributes and geometry, although students had an understanding of the definitions.
- During an ICT ELA class, students worked on thesis statements and articulated the expectations of their learning targets, which connected to their work products. Students in small learning groups used an exemplar essay to guide their writing, while one teacher circulated around the room to check-in with students and the other teacher worked with a group who needed additional support. Some students used a box and bullet graphic organizer to assist in organizing their writing, while other students used one of the thinking map graphic organizers to connect their thoughts.
- In a self-contained special education class, students were unclear of the math learning objective as they worked on a worksheet titled, "Planning a Field Trip," which tasked them to use a graph to solve word problems. Some student worksheets were either incomplete, had incorrect responses, or no student work at all. Students attempted to support each other and share their thoughts, however, their conversation did not result in increased understanding of the task.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

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

Impact

Limited feedback is provided to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers inconsistently make effective adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Although rubrics and checklists on bulletin boards incorporated different content areas, a review of student work presented rubrics being used primarily in ELA. Student work revealed that more detailed feedback was provided on reading and writing assignments, whereas work in other content areas included check marks, brief comments such as "great job", or no feedback at all. During the student interview, a student shared, "I received a rubric for my writing. I learned I needed to make my conclusion paragraph stronger." Another student stated, "My rubric was used for reading. I needed to use more quotes from the text." The school's focus on reading and writing is reflected in student achievement benchmark data that indicated on track performance in meeting ELA targets for the 2014-2015 school year. However, their math achievement benchmark results were flat according to the Renewal Benchmark update data.
- In a math class, students who had misconceptions about the task proceeded with their work as the teacher circulated throughout the classroom to check-in with students but did not address their misunderstandings. In another math classroom, students worked in groups putting blocks of tens in rows but worked without purpose as they did not understand the reason for the task, and had no checklists or resources to guide their work. Once the task was completed, students were unable to assess if they had done the task correctly. While they worked, the teacher focused attention primarily on another group of students.
- In an ELA class, student folders had Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) data for students to track their performance and reference when conferencing with teachers. Student conference notebooks included feedback referencing DRA results and next steps for the student to follow with a targeted skill to be discussed at the next teacher-student meeting. However, student conference notebooks in other classrooms visited did not include feedback connected to next steps for students.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and are developing training and a system of accountability. The school is developing systems to provide feedback to families that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

Although teachers understand expectations and are working together, communication to families regarding student progress toward meeting expectations varies.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal routinely communicates instructional expectations to the staff via an email memo titled “Reflections and Expectations,” that serves to keep the faculty updated on professional development expectations for learning walks, curricula foci, and student-centered learning environments. For example, one memo announced continued professional development on increasing engagement and critical thinking using complex texts and tasks. Team members were reminded to come prepared with their binders and their grade-level materials.
- Grade 4 faculty conducted a learning walk in grade 3 classrooms and summarized their observations in a “noticings and wondering” document. Noticings included: “In bilingual classrooms, students are provided with visuals and scaffold structures to support language acquisition and understanding of concepts.”, “Students use checklists for writing.”, and “In some classrooms, conference notebooks and other students’ work was not readily accessible.” Wonderings included: “How can we make next steps in reading conferences more specific?”, “Should a next step in a reading conference be a task?”, “Where are writing conferences kept?”, and “How are they documented?”
- The school communicates with parents via phone blasts, memos, and through its website. However, during the parent interview, parents stated communication efforts are inconsistent and vary. One parent commented, “My child’s teacher communicates with me by email all the time.” Another parent stated, “It all depends on the teachers. Some will call, text, or email you, and others will not.” Families who have children who graduated from the school agree that they have seen changes throughout the years, especially related to technology. The school hosted a Family Tech Night during the spring focused on myON, a digital literacy platform designed to increase student literacy engagement and improve reading levels.

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 the achievement of school goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students on whom they are focused.

Impact

Instructional capacity of teachers is strengthening resulting in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Grade teams use protocols to guide their collaborative efforts in reviewing student work and assessing student progress. For example, an agenda, minutes, and follow-up email for the grade 2 team showed evidence of teachers reviewing grade-wide DRA data before visiting a fellow colleague's classroom to observe a fishbowl activity and guided group instruction. After the observation, teachers shared their noticings, asked clarifying questions, and provided next steps for the teacher including considering activities for students reading beyond grade level and shortening the length of the lesson. Continuing the inquiry work, a teacher volunteered for the next week to demonstrate a guided lesson for the team. As a result of the collaborative and inquiry focused work, students improved from being 30.46% on target in the fall to 40% on target by January for targeted skills.
- A grade 3 team reviewed student work for a Teachers College writing lesson plan using the consultancy protocol. Teachers recommended that the teacher increase modeling for students, include exemplars, and encourage students to use the same practices modeled during the guided practice section of the plan during their independent practice.
- At a team meeting, a teacher stated, "We are not afraid to take risks here." Teachers across grades, record model lessons and share their practice publicly on the school's website. Teachers also participate in lab site collaborations in math for grades 4 and 5, in which they make connections between student work in class and the teacher's instructional practices. As a result of this work, teachers have identified student challenges that have informed teacher moves and instructional groupings, which teachers have memorialized on Google Docs.