



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 096 Richard Rodgers

Elementary School X096

**650 Waring Avenue
Bronx
NY 10467**

Principal: Marta Garcia

**Date of review: February 9, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Heidi Pierovich**

The School Context

P.S. 096 Richard Rodgers is an elementary school with 975 students from grade kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 4% Asian, 25% Black, 61% Hispanic, and 9% White students. The student body includes 8% English Language Learners and 17% 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 91.4%.

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	Additional Findings	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	Additional Findings	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	Focus	Proficient
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	Celebration	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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
--------------------	-----------------------	---------	----------------

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training. School leaders and staff effectively communicate to students and parents expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

As a result, a culture of mutual accountability for the school's high expectations has school leaders and staff successfully partnering with families to support student progress toward the expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Administration communicates high expectations for literacy growth through many venues including the staff handbook and memos. In addition, administration and staff have developed school-wide expectations for reading goals for each student to be at grade level, all of whom were able to state their reading level and yearlong goals. The high expectations are measured through *Fountas and Pinnell* and supported with *MyOn* at home and in school.
- Parents stated they are highly pleased with the consistent communication with staff, which they believe ensures their children receive what they need to achieve their goals. One parent stated and others agreed that they visit the online application, *Skedula*, the parent grade portal, to check on their children's work status, assignments, and often use this information to email the teacher, sometimes through *Class Dojo*. Students are familiar with *Skedula* and upper grade students use it to check grades, communicate with teachers, or discuss progress with parents. Students also send messages to teachers via *Skedula* asking for clarification on an assignment. Parents were impressed by the teachers' level of communication, as teachers respond to their children's emails for help at any time.
- Parents stated that teachers contact them through phone, emails, texts, messages via *Skedula*, grade level newsletters, or even a backpacked notice, and the school's website, messenger, or phone blasts also provide additional information. Parents stated they receive the parent-student handbook and translated messages from the school. Parents stated that the school offers different workshops after school with a variety of topics including but not limited to understanding *Fountas and Pinnell* scores, introduction to *Skedula*, and the school 'partners in print' for English Language Learner (ELL) parents. Parents receive their children's learning goals that are revised mid-year based on data, for reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. Parents receive suggestions on how to support their children's goals. Armed with such support, parents stated they are partners in and empowered to support their children's learning.
- Administration sets high expectations based on previous school wide data and discusses with teachers prior to setting both teacher and student goals aligned to school goals. To support teachers meeting these goals, a collaborative effort between the administration, along with individual conversations with teachers, informs the professional development plan relative to teachers' needs. Administrators, teachers, and coaches, create and deliver professional development and lesson study sessions. To ensure implementation of these new learnings, administration consistently observes classes to look for new techniques, provide actionable feedback, and review and comment on lessons, as noted in *Advance*.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

Across the school, teachers use common assessments, ongoing checks for understanding, and rubrics aligned to the curricula, to identify student performance and progress toward goals.

Impact

Across the school, staff analyzes common assessments to discuss student progress and to inform instructional adjustments to advance student achievement and to provide actionable feedback to students. However, the feedback does not yet provide feedback that is sufficiently meaningful so that students are fully aware of their next learning steps and demonstrate increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grades and subjects, students keep their work in folders that include their proficiency levels, *Fountas and Pinnell (F&P)* levels, goals, and class work. Student notebooks and folders show student work that includes to a large degree teacher responses in checkmarks, stickers, and some with statements of encouragement. Teachers provide students with feedback on their work and post the work on bulletin boards inside and outside the classrooms. The actionable feedback, rooted in rubric language, is written on the rubric and includes ratings, highlights, and areas to improve. Although most students can explain their teacher's feedback, not all students understand how to apply it to the next step or for the next assignment. Specifically, some students said they would remember and others were unsure how to apply the information next time, or their next learning steps. Thus, the feedback misses out on being meaningful and actionable.
- Teachers have aligned assessments to curricula and created or aligned rubrics and checklists to support achievement. Students learn how to use rubrics and checklists to help in completing the task appropriately, understanding the ratings, and to support them in revising their work to "see what part I am missing and then go back and add it before I hand it in. I look at a 4 and check it over to get a 4 because I want the best grade." Although students use rubrics to self-assess, only some classes have student reflections posted on bulletin boards stating, "I deserve a ... score, because (add reason)" or "My goal for next time is..." Administration states that this is a beginning practice of students' being aware of their next learning steps.
- To determine student progress toward goals, teachers use common formative and summative assessments and engage in the analysis of data. A consistent data cycle across the school includes teaching a lesson, analyzing student work for mastery and areas of need, reteaching and regrouping according to student need and data, and then reassessing. Teachers demonstrate the curricula revisions based on data and student work, adjusting student groups, and how and when to teach students differently. However, the data does not yet demonstrate that all students have increased mastery toward goals.
- Although teachers consistently check for understanding and use in-class data to determine next steps, this was not observed across a vast majority of classes. During classroom visitations, some teachers were able to check for student understanding using student self-assessment, questioning, and group roles.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

School leaders and faculty adopted selected curricula to ensure that they are providing instruction aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, and ensure that the curricula and tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits.

Impact

The school's adoption of curricula enables schoolwide coherence and college and career readiness for all students. Academic tasks provide opportunities for all students to be cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- The administration shared that they and teacher leaders work collaboratively to support staff to adjust the Common Core-aligned adopted materials such as *ReadyGen* for kindergarten through grade 2, *Expeditionary Learning (EL)* for grades 3 through 5, and *GO Math!* for all grades, to meet student needs. For example, teachers revised *EL* to include more writing for the novel studies and included a research project.
- Staff and administration revised the schedule to meet students' needs and provide a 30-minute period called 'zero period' for grades 1 through 5 to enable students to work in homogenous guided reading groups, based on data from *Fountas and Pinnell*, empowering teachers to focus on helping students improve their reading strategies and to support them in meeting their reading goals. Furthermore, to meet the grade 2 initiative by the Chancellor, the school has implemented an additional English Language Arts (ELA) period four times weekly, during which staff has implemented additional curricula from *ReadyGen*. Additionally, for students who are not on grade level, teachers use either *Wilson* or *Orton-Gillingham* programs to support students learning letters and reading.
- A review of unit plans and lesson plans indicated that teachers plan using prior knowledge, designing questions, class activities, considering possible challenges and misconceptions, assessments, and groupings. Lessons mostly contain small group leveled activities and lists of partners or group members. Essential questions are evident across grades and subjects. Teachers have planned and developed assessments, rubrics, checklists, and scaffolds to ensure access for all students to these Common Core-aligned curricula, as evident in curriculum maps, unit plans, and lesson plans, demonstrating coherence across grades. Lessons also include objectives using "I can" statements. Teachers often plan lessons with sections that include, "I do", "We do", and "You do" to provide students time to practice either independently or in cooperative groups.
- A review of the unit plans indicates that across the school an agreed-upon format is implemented with seven sections including topic/theme/duration, essential questions, Common Core Learning Standards, student learning objectives to know and be able to do, sequence of key learning activities, text and materials, and assessments. Lesson plans become more specific and provide access to activities for all learners so that they are engaged cognitively in higher order thinking. For example, math lessons include math talk to discuss math problem solving, model, and draw, so that teachers model problem solving using quick pictures to demonstrate math solutions and real-world problems.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	---------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and the school's articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

The school's alignment of pedagogy to the curricula and is focused on the engagement of all students, including high performers, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities, in challenging tasks. However, this is not yet evident across the vast majority of classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- The administration and staff believe that students learn best when “in a child-centered classroom with a teacher as facilitator, children involved and asking questions, sharing learning, challenged to explain work, in group discussions, with differentiation, with the students beginning to self-assess, and teachers checking for understanding.” Across classes, students worked in small groups and demonstrated participation.
- Across classrooms, students were provided multiple entry points into the lessons being taught. In a grade 4 English as a Second Language (ESL) math lesson, students answered the ‘unlock the problem’ using whiteboard slates and showed them to the teacher. He scanned their answers to determine students to be placed in the ‘reteach group’ and others to receive the enrichment activity. All students availed themselves of the fraction tiles as needed to help them in working through the response. Similarly, in a kindergarten math lesson students used counting cubes, ‘acting out’ strategies, and leveled problem sheets to solve a series of word problems with partners, as well as additional extensions for early finishers. In a grade 3 class with many ELLs, the literacy lesson involved students worked in groups to read about a frog's habitat, the group with the teacher used ‘paper zoom-in frames’ to help them focus on the segment of the textbook while completing a graphic organizer with restate the question, answer the question, cite evidence, explain the evidence or RACE. Students in other groups had leveled tasks with sentence frames to create questions or prepared questions for their teammates to answer. Yet, across the vast majority of classes, students did not have extensions and scaffolds. For example, students in a grade 3 science class, were to create a circuit and then test objects to determine if they are conductors or insulators. Yet, the directions for this hands-on group activity took almost 15 minutes with little to no visual modeling or scaffolds to support students' learning or extension provided for early finishers.
- Although across classes most students' work products demonstrated the instructional shifts and higher-order thinking, some students were not provided these opportunities. In a grade 5 Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) literacy class, heterogeneous groups of students conducted a gallery walk to discuss and to determine inferences about natural disasters as noted in several nonfiction texts. Although teachers checked-in with several groups, in some instances they did not facilitate the discussions as per the schoolwide belief of teacher as facilitator, but instead interjected into students' deliberations preventing high-level student engagement. In a grade 2 math lesson, the teacher modeled with a few students and they had an opportunity to discuss. However, the rest of the class was not engaged or part of the discussion, so the teacher was unsure if those students understood.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	---	----------------	-------------------

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Professional collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning standards, strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers who have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers are engaged in grade and vertical teams, as well as common planning time. The non-classroom teachers are also on teams aligned to school-wide goals, as in increasing parent communication. Teacher teams meet and use data from Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) and formative assessments to determine commonalities of student success or areas of growth across the grades. Then the grade teams select students from the bottom, middle, and top third and follow a procedure to develop lessons to meet student’s needs in each group. Then one teacher volunteers to demonstrate the lesson while the rest of the team observes using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and with a lens to improve pedagogy and student achievement. In the following meeting, the team meets to discuss feedback. Teachers collaboratively revise the lesson and then all teachers teach it. The next meeting they bring targeted student work, analyze the data, and track student performance, and if less than 85% of the class did not do well, then they look at the pedagogy used. The cycle continues as teachers continue to create more lessons depending on both student achievement and teacher pedagogy effectiveness. To bring the cycle schoolwide, grades also meet vertically sharing findings several times yearly.
- Professional development is provided to staff via sessions often conducted by teachers, literacy and math coaches, and administration. Teachers often avail themselves of monthly professional learning sessions outside the school to support learning and then turnkey this information to their team members. The impact of these sessions resulted in a large group of teachers implementing the techniques in their classes, to varying degrees of success. Additionally, professional development extends to include visits during delivery of lessons that are conducted by teacher team colleagues. When teachers observe colleagues, they then debrief with those observed, and ultimately confirm how each will implement a strategy and lesson in their own classes. Teacher stated that this helps them see the strategy in action with students.
- Teacher leaders facilitate the teacher team meetings and meet with administration on Mondays as needed. Administration selected teacher leaders based on their leadership and facilitation skills. During each teacher team meeting, each teacher has a role and all bring student work and data. The teacher leaders facilitate the teams with the support and collaboration of the team members. Teachers stated that sharing best practices has positively influenced their professional growth as they learn from each other in this trusting and collegial environment. One teacher shared and others agreed, “I enjoy learning from my colleagues during inquiry, but especially visiting other’s classes. I gain so much from observing how they implement strategies and how their students react. It helps me to improve my teaching and planning.”