



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 105 Sen Abraham Bernstein

Elementary School X105

**725 Brady Avenue
Bronx
NY 10462**

Principal: Christopher Eustace

**Date of review: February 5, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Daisy Concepción**

The School Context

P.S. 105 Sen Abraham Bernstein is an elementary school with 1,264 students from grade kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 8% Asian, 11% Black, 66% Hispanic, and 13% White students. The student body includes 20% English Language Learners and 18% 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 93.3%.

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	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	Additional Findings	Well Developed
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	Celebration	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	Focus	Proficient
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:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use common assessments to track progress and to create a clear picture of student progress toward goals across grades and subjects. School-wide, teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

All students demonstrate increased mastery. A culture that values student-self assessments translates into supportive teacher actions and informed adjustments that ensure that all students are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Assessment practices such as exit slips, conferences, rubrics, self-assessments, and checklists were observed across seven out of the nine classrooms visited. In a math lesson on open number lines, a teacher began a lesson with a thumbs-up or -down check to gauge student understanding. After the mini-lesson, students worked in pairs using a classwork checklist, which asked, "Is the work complete?", "Is the work correct?", and "Can you explain it?" Students used information from a number line to complete a bar graph with missing data. The teacher listened in on pairs of students and recorded their strategies on her data tracker. Where a pair of students struggled with the problem, the teacher asked them a series of questions such as "What information do you know?", "If you know that, then how could you use that to solve the problem?" She then asked the student to use the count-up or tally strategy and the student chose and used a strategy to solve the problem.
- Teachers revised common math assessments to include more problem-based questions, and used results to inform instructional adjustments that support deeper conceptual understanding and reasoning in comprehending multiple representations and routes in problem-solving. A review of the mid-year performance data for math demonstrates that in a ranking of grade 3 and grade 5 class performance, the highest gains were made by classes with students with Individualized Educational Plans and in grade 4, the highest gains were made by a class with English Language Learners.
- At a student meeting, all students spoke about how self-assessment and peer feedback is an important part of their learning. One student showed her work along with her self-assessment, where she gave the reasons why she thought her work should receive a Level 3 as the rating. She said that she had included all the rubric-based feedback that she had received from both her teacher and peer, and that she knew she still needed better selection of evidence and was working on that. She then proudly showed the teacher score, which was a Level 3 and stated that self-assessing helps her understand the work.
- In a grade 4 math class, students gathered at a "re-teach" station. A few students shared that they were there because the teacher had asked them to be there, but many more shared that they were there because the teacher has open seats at that table for students who self-assess and that they felt that they could benefit from a re-teach. Students shared that the self-assessment and the open seat policy allowed them to "own their own learning."

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for professionalism and instruction including elements of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and provide training to the entire staff. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness and emphasize ongoing feedback to families designed to help parents understand expectations.

Impact

Teachers are reflective in their participation in professional conferences with supervisors and understand expectations around professionalism. Families understand their children's' progress towards expectations, however are not yet fully active partners in jointly supporting progress.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders provide teachers with professional development in Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, Understanding by Design, and Depth of Knowledge (DOK) as a way of supporting rigorous instruction. School leaders also support teachers' development of goals through reflection at quarterly conferences. During these conferences, teachers reflect on their growth using a tool called a *Teaching Configuration Map* aligned to the Standards for Professional Learning and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and evaluate whether or not their goal is really the best for them at the current time of year. These reflections are captured in teacher surveys that allow the school to make adjustments to professional development based on the teachers' current needs and focus. School leaders hold teachers accountable through observations aligned with Danielson *Framework for Teaching* outcomes. An example of this feedback was, "Although your assessment techniques were effective...students should self-assess and monitor their own progress."
- In September, the school leaders ran a series of workshops on teacher practices based on identified needs from the June teacher survey, which showed that teachers were interested in building knowledge for questioning, engagement, and assessment so that they could strengthen their Understanding by Design planning templates. School leaders did not conduct any observations in the Danielson domains until the teachers had received this training. These domains were aligned to the *Teaching Configuration Map* and teachers received professional development in generating questions using the six facets of learning and on creating authentic, standards-aligned tasks. A review of observations shows that teachers improved in Danielson domains for questioning and assessment.
- Parents feel that students receive rigorous instruction based on the work that students bring home and the quality of the homework that students engage in. They spoke about the transparency in following student performance through Pupil Path and regular communication with teachers who are always accessible during Family Tuesdays, and by appointment, and via email. Progress reports, promotion in doubt letters, and calls from teachers keep parents informed about student progress. Parents shared that through various workshops they are aware of the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards and understand the process for middle school.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts, as well as by discussions at the team and school levels. Across the vast majority of classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

Impact

Student-centered instruction is embedded across the vast majority of classrooms. Students actively participate in tasks that require high levels of thinking and take ownership for their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are focused on the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* components: 3b Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques, 3c: Engaging Students in Learning, and 3d: Using Assessment in Instruction. Across the school, a teacher team initiative to increase effective instructional practices is strengthening opportunities for students to actively engage in discussion where they explain their thinking to their peers and monitor their own understanding through peer and self-assessments fostering greater student independence.
- In a grade 4 class, students were observed in an animated student-led conversation about the best strategy to use to work with fractions. Students challenged each other with questions such as “How do you know this?”, “I want you to prove that fact to me.”, and “Does equivalent mean the same?” One student asked for additional time to think saying, “Give me a minute, let me figure out this pattern and I will explain it.”
- In a grade 5 science class, students were engaged in collecting evidence from two texts, one on the effects of logging on the rain forest, and the other on the products that come from the rainforest. Students examined each text structure to gauge how the author organized the writing to convey his point of view. Students annotated the texts and engaged in a conversation about the two points of view. One student stated that one text, in addition to explaining the need to harvest, “stated that logging clears the forest so that other trees can get sunlight to grow”. This viewpoint was received with a counterclaim from a peer who said, “Of course the text would say that. This text is written by someone who wants to promote logging as a business.” Another student was heard thinking-aloud saying, “But the problem here is that we need products from the rainforest and logging does help other trees grow and prevent fires. How can we do both?” A review of student notes indicated collected information from both texts in order to write an argument essay.

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks, and are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

All students, including the lowest and highest achieving students, engage in cognitively challenging curricula tasks that require them to demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Unit plans reveal Common Core-aligned lessons that require students to read multiple texts and use close reading strategies to analyze text structure, learn academic vocabulary, and understand information to either write explanatory information pieces and opinion or argument essays. For example, a lesson on ecosystems listed the use of various texts, a slide show that included pictures and graphs depicting ecosystems' facts, and time for student reflection and discussion to respond to questions. Questions posed included, "What do you notice about levels of organizations in an ecosystem?", "What do you think might happen if an important population vanished?", and "How does the ecosystem effect our lives?" Scaffolds such as partner work and graphic organizers were in place for students needing supports.
- Aligned to the school-wide focus on applying all learning to real world and current day events, and the school-wide focus of understanding text structure, students in a grade 5 social studies lesson on civil rights activism read the Langston Hughes poem "Dreams". Students were required to analyze the poem to answers the following questions, "How can interpreting figurative language help you think critically about a poem?", "What is the message of "Dreams" and how do you interpret the last line?", "How might you apply this advice in "Dreams" to your own life?", and "How might civil rights leaders use this poem in support of their cause?" Similar type tasks focusing on comparing different types of text and understanding text structures were observed across all grades including kindergarten.
- The school uses *EnVision 2.0* as its math program. In response to a recently published change in the sequence of and in an increased rigor of units, teachers included more assessment check points to gather student work, and made adjustments such as using additional scaffolds, increased small group instruction, and use of math centers and extensions to ensure that students had access to this new curriculum. The school also created a mid-year Measure of Student Learning performance task as a checkpoint and indicator of student progress. Student performance data from these assessments demonstrated that students, including the lowest and highest achieving students, made gains across the grades.

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

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity and promoted the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work, and student work for students they share.

Impact

Teachers are reflective about pedagogy, goal setting, and instruction and assume collective responsibility for improving their practice resulting in school-wide instructional coherence and increased student mastery of performance standards.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use a *Teaching Configuration Map* with a five point rubric to measure four areas that drive school improvement: understanding of the Common Core Learning Standards, unit planning, assessment, and analysis of data and instruction. Teachers rate themselves individually and collectively. This data then generates a school-wide profile of teacher instructional and pedagogical need and serves as the basis for professional development, instructional focus, and a pedagogical school wide focus resulting in opportunities for selecting of teachers for inter-visitation, teacher-led professional development, share fairs, and structured inquiry.
- Teacher leaders and peer instructional coaches, representing each grade and content, meet weekly with the instructional cabinet to discuss data trends that impact instruction and teacher practice. School leaders and staff plan collaboratively and facilitate professional development that focuses on assessment and instruction. In teacher meetings, teachers reported that they have focused on refining assessments because they realized the data that they were collecting did not measure the current curricula expected outcomes. For example, English teachers, in grade 1, looked at their assessments and realized that pre- and post-assessments were not aligned to the instructional goals of the unit. In an old grade 1 assessment, students read a simple paragraph and listed similarities and difference about two characters. In the new assessments, the text is slightly more complex and students are prompted to use only text-based responses as supporting details to compare and contrast. Additionally, teachers added are some true and false questions. In math, teachers incorporated more problem-based questions. A review of Danielson *Framework for Teaching* data reveals teacher improvement in use of assessment. A review of the mid-year performance data for math demonstrates that in a ranking of grade 3 and grade 5 class performance, the highest gains were made by classes with students with Individualized Educational Plans, and in grade 4, the highest gains were made by a class with English Language Learners.
- A review of English Language Arts school data demonstrates that students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) and English Language Learners (ELLs) have made double-digit gains in achievement in the Measure Of Student Learning (MOSL) simulation since the September, New York City Performance Beginning-of-the-Year Assessment. For example, students with IEPs have made score gains ranging from 12 to 28 points. Similarly, ELLs have made a score gains of 13 to 32 points.