



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

I.S. X318 Math, Science & Technology Through Arts

Middle School X318

**1919 Prospect Avenue
Bronx
NY 10457**

Principal: Sebastian Braithwaite

**Date of review: May 26, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Clarence Williams Jr.**

The School Context

I.S. X318 Math and Science & Technology Through Arts is a middle school with 294 students from grade 6 through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 27% Black, 70% Hispanic, and 2% White students. The student body includes 18% English Language Learners and 24% students with disabilities. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 87.9%.

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	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	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	Additional Findings	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	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

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 the Common Core Learning Standards, including the instructional shifts. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused.

Impact

These professional collaborations result in strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers, improved teacher practice, and progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- The Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) team meets every two weeks to review student progress and plan for instructional revisions. A February 9 meeting agenda included “how students with disabilities will be supported in the ICT team setting.” The team meeting minutes stated that they must continue to ensure that lesson planning reflects the needs of students with disabilities in the ICT class. The team stated that lesson plans should include graphic organizers, step-by-step instructions, and audio-visual technology. This was reflected in a lesson provided by the team that showed a student with disabilities in a grade 8 math lesson plan will use a graphic organizer and color-coded cubes to work with fractions.
- Teachers collaborate to review the progress students have made and to identify strategies to implement to address identified gaps in learning. An agenda from a social studies team meeting documents the team’s focus on analyzing assessment data from an interim assessment. The team determined that students need to work on citing textual evidence and they decided to plan workstations with tasks that require students to cite three details from the text. The lesson plan that resulted from this collaboration includes a lesson objective for students to demonstrate their understanding of the growth of the Roman Empire by providing textual evidence.
- A cross-grade teacher leadership meeting was observed. The team stated that they were working on improving instruction for English Language Learners (ELLs) to enhance student performance. An example given was the incorporation of the bilingual Common Core progressions to ensure that students are engaged in meaningful activities. Fluency, was discussed as the team also decided to continue the use of Do the Math Now to build numeracy in all grades for math. The team also analyzed classroom assessments in English Language Arts and determined they needed to utilize more independent reading of informational and literary texts. The team noted that the data from the most recent assessment suggest that students struggle in the area of reading comprehension. The team discussed students from each of their classes. One teacher noted that while one student was able to cite text evidence in an essay, the introduction and conclusion lacked clarity. The team suggested grouping that student with stronger writers. The team agreed that prior to the next meeting one team member will model a lesson for the group addressing the various strategies they had discussed.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking.

Impact

Demonstration of higher-order thinking skills are evident in some student work products, including the work of ELLs and students with disabilities as well as student participation, however it is uneven and not evident in all classes observed.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade 7 English Language Arts class, students were proofreading their summaries on the Maya Angelou poem “Still I Rise.” One student summary stated, “In the poem she has too many challenges but she makes it through them. She knows her confidence makes people angry with her but she doesn’t care.” When asked why the poem is important, the student stated, “Because it’s inspirational.” When another student was asked why the poem is important, the response was, “I don’t know.” During student discussions, students critiqued each other’s work by giving feedback such as, “good job interpreting the poem”, “I don’t understand what you are trying to say”, and “The poem showed me how to go through the challenges and live life knowing what your true self is.”
- In a grade 6 English Language Arts class, students used the book *Crash* to discuss which character would be their best friend. The teacher gave students the choice of the main character, Crash, or supporting characters. Students were engaged in a think-pair-share to discuss their choices. One student stated, “I would chose Crash because he knows when to stop making fun of others.” Another student shared, “My friend would be Penn because we both believe that what is special to us doesn’t cost more. I can support this. When Crash goes to Penn’s house and sees he doesn’t have any toys, Penn explains that he would rather have Missouri mud from his grandfather instead of having expensive toys.” However, another student stated that he was not sure who his best friend would be because he did not know the characters well enough.
- In a self-contained grade 6 class for students with disabilities, the aim was “How do we describe the early Chinese Dynasties?” Students used a class notes worksheet that required them to write a paragraph about what they learned and any questions about what they did not understand. The worksheet also asked students to identify who was the first leader of the Zang and to list some achievements. One student wrote on a worksheet that “Cheng Tang was the first leader, Rich people lived in cities, and poor people lived on the farm. Achievements included bronze works, military technology, calendars, and religion.” The teacher stated that she was proud of the work. Yet other students were not able to fully engage in the task as their work reflected incomplete answers and some questions were not answered.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills, and are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

The curricula are accessible for a variety of learners including ELLs and students with disabilities and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards. Students are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- A grade 6 science unit contains tasks that promote high order thinking skills that are Common Core aligned. Under biodiversity, “Students are required to make predictions and conclusions based on factual evidence.” Students will also be required to “analyze the cell theory and explain it in terms of cause and effect.”
- A teacher of students with disabilities in a self-contained classroom submitted a lesson plan based on data collected from students, IEPs, learning profiles and management needs. A student profile was attached to the lesson plan. It showed the student’s IEP goal, “Student will identify what happened first, in the middle, and last regarding a previously read story, past event, or situation 4/5 times for 5 consecutive sessions.” The lesson plan demonstrates that the goal addresses the Do Now, the group work, the independent work and the share out.
- Teachers demonstrated refinement of the curriculum. An example was presented in the grade 7 math curriculum. An adjustment was made based on reviewing the previous units. The teacher wrote that these units focused on covering as many Common Core Learning standards as possible. The teacher further stated that this was based on test preparation, explaining, “The unit was modified to target anchor standards to allow for deeper understanding of math facts and concepts leading to authentic student work products.” This was evident as the pacing guide for unit 6, fractions, showed the standards being connected to a foundational standard.
- A grade 6 English Language Arts unit on Seven Wonders of the World demonstrated Common Core Learning Standards in literacy that included citing textual evidence, analyzing in detail, introducing and supporting claims and providing a concluding statement. One of the goals in the unit was to write a grant to preserve one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The unit requires students to work in small groups as researcher, organizer, project editor, and visual editor. The unit also states that students will be asked to create and present a plan explaining why their world wonder was selected and why it will be the best candidate for preservation.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

Impact

Teachers provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Common assessments are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Grade 6 math teachers showed evidence of student improvement in a "Do the Math Now!" unit completion assessment on multiplication and division. The assessment showed the progress of five grade 6 classes from pre-assessment to the end-of-unit assessment. The data showed a 15% increase for all grade 6 students. ELLs performed better on multiplication where pictures were provided. The ICT class showed 15% growth. Overall students performed at 80% proficiency for the end-of-the unit assessment, with one class moving from 51% proficiency to 72%. The "Do the Math Now!" program replaced the *GO Math!* program "to better address the needs of the students."
- Rubrics are used in most classes observed and teachers give detailed feedback to students. A classwork rubric in an algebra class rated a student's work on the following criteria: "Computation/accuracy. Organization/notation, and written explanation" using 4 points from levels 1-4. An example of student work showed it received a level four in computation and accuracy, with feedback stating all of the mathematical computation had been completed accurately. For organization and notation, the work also received a level four stating, "All of the words numbers and symbols are ordered, clear and understandable. Answer is clearly and appropriately marked." The teacher wrote to the student, "Well developed use of academic vocabulary, which is logical and comprehensible."
- Teachers provide actionable feedback across classrooms. In a grade 6 social studies class, a teacher provided feedback to a student on an essay on Athens verses Sparta stating, "I like how you provided an example to back up your opinion. One strategy you can transfer to the next unit is to make sure all paragraphs have at least 5 sentences." Another student's essay reflected teacher feedback. The teacher stated, "I like how you used adjectives. Make sure you proofread your essay before publishing to avoid grammatical errors."
- An English Language Arts teacher demonstrated evidence of actionable feedback based on teacher intervention. A student wrote a poem based on personal experience where the student succeeded at something. The teacher stated, "Wonderful job; you took all my comments and advice and created an outstanding narrative poem. Well done."

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations, including professionalism, instruction, communication, and other elements of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, to the entire staff. They also consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

School leaders provide training and have a system of accountability for expectations and offer ongoing feedback to help families understand student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal used a professional learning day for the first day of school to communicate high expectations to staff. The agenda shows the area of professional responsibility from the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* was addressed in topics such as, the overview of the staff handbook, Chancellor’s regulations, and procedures for opening day. It also included instruction around, “academic expectations for students and lesson planning.” All staff members signed an attendance sheet, provided by the principal, acknowledging attendance and participation and training in the above areas.
- The principal distributes a monthly parent newsletter. The November newsletter included information on a high school fair that month and parent-teacher conference dates. A January newsletter includes grade 8 updates for high school applications with contact information for the school guidance counselor. Each newsletter has a parent resource section that provides information on all New York City high school fairs.
- This spring the administration and staff participated in a College Day at Fordham University. The school provided documentation on the trip that stated that the trip was opened to grade 6 and grade 7 students. Students were able to ask panelist from the college questions about higher education. The principal stated that faculty members met with small groups and had discussions about attending college. Impact was seen during a parent meeting when most parents expressed the significance of the trip. One parent simply stated, “It influenced my child’s decision to go to college.”