Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Elizabeth L. Farrell
32K116

515 Knickerbocker Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11237

Principal: Seiw Kong
Date of review: November 19, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Lillian Druck
The School Context

Elizabeth L. Farrell is an elementary school with 518 students from grade kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 3% Black, 93% Hispanic, 1% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 25% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 93.7%

School Quality Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Culture</th>
<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
<td></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Systems for Improvement</th>
<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
<td></td>
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Area of Celebration

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Findings
School leaders utilize a wide range of strategies to promote high expectations across the entire school community. The staff partners with families to ensure student progress and effectively communicates the content knowledge and skills students are expected to attain.

Impact
School systems such as the Danielson Framework for Teaching, hold staff accountable to meeting expectations related to instructional and professional responsibilities. Families reinforce organization skills, school responsibilities and academic work at home, so that students acquire positive work habits that help them attain college and career readiness skills.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate high expectations to teachers through formal and informal observations, curricular planning sessions, and professional development on the Danielson Framework for Teaching. During professional learning sessions, staff and administrators focus on the teaching framework components requiring attention as noted in teacher surveys and observations, for example, using questioning and discussion techniques.

- During team meetings, teachers stated that they eagerly participate in varied collaborative activities such as inter-visitations, ARIS Learn Opportunities, common planning sessions, and professional dialogue that exemplify the school’s culture of mutual accountability for high expectations.

- Students are referred to as “scholars” by all staff members and families. The SCHOLAR acronym posted at the entrance of the school building reads as follows: Studious Champions Honoring Opportunities to Learn, Achieve, and Reach Success. Student friendly rubrics help students identify the skills they need to acquire in order to improve their work and meet the expectations to move to the next performance level. They use Reflection Goal Sheets to list their successes as “Things I do well,” and their goals as “Things I still need to work on”.

- The Student Academic Behavior Rubric outlines the expectations for student conduct and actions during instructional time and when interacting with peers. Level 4 represents exemplary behavior and it includes attributes such as, “always present; persistent work habits; actively participate in group work; always prepared and organized for school”. Families state that the rubric is informative and useful in reinforcing the school’s expectations at home.

- The school initiated a Scholar Dollars system which provides incentives to classes that consistently demonstrate progress toward meeting the school’s expectations related to cooperative skills and positive attributes. The accumulation of Scholar Dollars provides students with the opportunity to participate in community service activities and acquire skills that promote college and career readiness.
Findings
Instructional practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the school’s beliefs about how students learn best. However, strategic entry points into the curricula and high quality supports and extensions for English language learners and special education students vary across subject areas.

Impact
In some classrooms, teaching strategies were not fully refined to ensure strategic multiple entry points embedded into academic tasks in order to add further value to work products and discussions that reflect student ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- Most class visits reflected the use of grouping for targeted instruction, including triads, partnerships, and small groups. Teaching strategies and resources included conversation prompts, word walls, teaching charts and turn and talk routines to encourage student thinking and participation.

- Student binders include math talk cards that provide sentence frames to prompt accountable talk and questions to promote thinking. For example, “I noticed”, “Can you tell me why you think that?” “Why are our answers different?” However, students were not observed using these prompts across the vast majority of classrooms visited.

- The use of visuals, instructional charts and manipulative materials to support English language learners and students with disabilities varied across classrooms. During an English as a second language (ESL) math class, students used unifix cubes for addition and subtraction activities. In Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classrooms, some students had access to triangle number cards, dry erase boards and play money as they worked on math activities.

- Paraprofessionals participate in professional development to further support differentiation through small group and individualized attention based on students’ needs. However, during class visits paraprofessionals were not observed providing additional support, or utilizing alternate resources or strategies to provide multiple entry points for high needs students.
Quality Indicator: | 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: | Proficient
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Findings
The school aligns curricula to Common Core Learning Standards and offers students rich instructional programs that emphasize rigor and higher order skills across grades and subject areas.

Impact
Rigorous academic tasks and Common Core aligned resources foster critical thinking skills and promote college and career readiness skills for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- Lead teachers developed curriculum maps, lesson plan overview guides and pacing calendars aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. They incorporated Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to support instructional planning and access to lessons for English language learners and students with disabilities. For example, lesson plans, charts and the flow of the day activities include tiered vocabulary, strategies for answering text dependent questions, and modeled writing to provide students with an understanding of what they were expected to produce.

- Curriculum maps and lesson plans integrate the instructional shifts. For example, documents across subject areas include the use of text dependent questions to encourage rigorous conversations based on common texts.

- Lead teachers and grade level teacher teams utilize the backward planning strategy to thoroughly address unit objectives, and to target content skills and Common Core Learning Standards that are essential for students to master. During a team meeting, teachers stated that the backward planning strategy helps them better organize their lessons and create academic tasks with the end in mind. For example, grade level teams carefully analyzed the performance based rubric for informative writing in order to gain a clear understanding of the skills they needed to teach based on the expectations of the task for students.
Quality Indicator: 2.2 Assessment  Rating:  Proficient

Findings
Teachers use common assessments, rubrics and grading policies aligned to the school’s curricula to gain a clear understanding of student progress toward goals.

Impact
Teachers make effective adjustments to curriculum at the teacher team and classroom levels to provide actionable feedback to ensure all students make progress towards meeting their goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grades, students use a Math Portfolio Checklist to list their beginning, middle and end of year benchmark assessment grades and their Go Math unit assessment rubric scores. Students also use Ready Gen and math rubrics to identify their level of performance and to plan for academic improvements as noted across the continuum which consists of level 1 through level 4.

- Across classrooms, teachers use post-it notes to provide specific “glows” and “grows” related to student work. For example, “I love how you solved your word problem!” and “Re-read your explanation to make sure it makes sense”. A student explained how he used the feedback on the post-it attached to his work to improve his writing on a subsequent writing assignment. He also referred to the writing rubric attached to his work to illustrate the progress made in meeting his writing goals and his advancement from level 3 to level 4 score on the rubric.

- Teachers and students in grades 2 through 5 use social studies response rubrics to circle the indicators mastered and to highlight the areas they need to work on to move up to the next level. At the student meeting, one student shared that she needed to use social studies academic vocabulary in her responses to questions. Another student stated that she needed to use specific details and examples to support the topic she wrote about.

- All grades recently completed on demand writing assessments. Early childhood grades produced opinion writing and grades 2 through 5 produced informational writing pieces. The data from these assessments helped teachers make adjustments to lessons based on students’ writing needs, specifically in the areas of focus and development of ideas in the early grades.

- Students use rubrics across subjects. Rubrics explicitly describe the performance expectations for assignments. Students have access to student friendly checklists, peer review opportunities, and reading strategy sheets.
Findings
Teacher teams across all grades conduct inquiry-based meetings to analyze assessment data related to student achievement, discuss instructional strategies to improve Common Core aligned student learning outcomes and examine student work to surface learning gaps.

Impact
Professional collaborations strengthen teachers' instructional capacity, contribute to school-wide coherence and result in effective classroom practices leading to student mastery of reading goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams examine the standards that are below and above their grade level to plan lessons that address learning gaps for students approaching grade level or to extend the learning for students exceeding grade level goals.

- Teacher teams generate text dependent questions across subject areas to reinforce students' habits of mind of referring to the text for evidence to support their responses and to promote critical thinking skills.

- The analysis of data generated from Ready Gen benchmark assessments provides teacher teams with information about student comprehension and mastery of vocabulary. The data from performance based assessments and writing rubrics helps teachers evaluate student progress toward grade benchmarks.

- Grade level teams analyze running records every other month to match students to independent reading levels. Through small group and individual conferencing, students receive actionable feedback regarding their progress toward meeting their independent reading benchmarks. Students and teachers refer to the attributes of the respective reading levels to help students set goals for the next reading level.

- Data/RTI Talk sessions are conducted every month. These professional collaborations provide teacher teams and administrators with the opportunity to discuss student data, provide feedback regarding student progress in meeting their goals, and plan specific academic or social-emotional adjustments to meet students’ needs.