Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 166 The Richard Rodgers School of the Arts and Technology

Elementary 03M166

132 WEST 89 STREET
MANHATTAN
NY,10024

Principal: Debra Mastriano

Dates of review: Dec 10, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Ilene Altschul
### The School Context

P.S. 166 The Richard Rodgers School of the Arts and Technology is an Elementary school with 594 students from PK through grade 5. The school population comprises 8% Black, 21% Hispanic, 57% White, and 10% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013 - 2014 was 96%.

### School Quality Criteria

#### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school regularly...</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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<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>Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<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>Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
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#### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
</tr>
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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>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
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#### Systems for Improvement

<table>
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<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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</thead>
<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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers strategically provide supports and extensions into the curricula to meet the needs of all students. Students are engaged in high-level discussions and are accountable to the success.

Impact
As a result of strategic entry points into the curricula, all learners have access, are cognitively engaged in challenging tasks and take ownership in their work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The school-wide practice of math centers enables all teachers to provide instruction and support in mathematics at the students' instructional level. In a kindergarten class, students were grouped according to their ability engaged in a variety of math games such as count on two more, is less than, roll three digits and fill in the frames. Some students had sentence stems to assist in their mathematical discussions. In a first grade class, students were solving an equation and explaining their thinking using a variety of strategies and manipulatives. In a fourth grade class, the teacher was working with one group of students while the other students were engaged in independent practice and working on either challenge and enrichment activities or reinforcement activities to ensure that all students met the objective.

- In two classes, students were actively participating in historical fiction book clubs. Students were grouped according to their reading level. In fourth grade, students were learning about how characters deal with difficult challenges and struggles. The teachers were working with a group of students to push their thinking about the characters and ensure that their thinking was meaningful. Other groups were discussing their books, referring back to specific events and utilizing sentence stems to help guide their discussions. In fifth grade, students were learning about perspective and how narrators influence how a scene is told. The teacher was providing direct instruction to a small group of English language learners and developing their understanding of perspective. Other groups of students were discussing their historical fiction books, generating their own questions as well as referring to the guiding questions.

- Teachers are utilizing Teachers College writing units of study and the writing pathways to identify student exemplars across grades. Students apply their learning from the exemplars to understand the expectations for the final work product. Mentor texts are provided for students to learn about author’s craft. Students generate their own topics in writing. In a second grade class, students were writing “gripping stories” by thinking of emotions that characters have when there is a problem.

- A review of student work products reveals consistent evidence of writing across content areas including reading response, literary essays, informational writing, opinion and argumentative essays, and students explaining their thinking in mathematics.

Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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### Findings
Across the school, common assessments are utilized to identify student progress and adjust instruction. Teachers use school-wide rubrics to provide feedback to students with next steps however, strategic tracking systems vary amongst teachers.

### Impact
Teachers are grouping students based on learning needs and assessment data however the varying levels of strategic targeted feedback towards a clear portrait of student mastery is impeding an increase in achievement for all students.

### Supporting Evidence
- Across classrooms, common formative and summative assessments are utilized to identify students’ levels, strengths and areas for additional support. Teachers utilize Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) running record assessment, on-demand writing, Early Childhood Assessment of Mathematics (ECAM), math screeners for grades three through five, Engage NY module assessments, and performance tasks. In addition, across all content areas, teachers observe and confer with students.
- Teachers utilize the results of the assessments to identify groups for the students. Book clubs are formed according to the students’ reading levels to ensure that they are reading an appropriate leveled book. In mathematics, teachers use the results from ECAM in kindergarten through grade two and screeners in grades three through five to identify areas of weakness. In third grade, teachers had math centers around developing students’ fluency in mathematics as a result of the screener assessment.
- During the third grade team meeting, teachers were assessing student work in writing an opinion piece. They analyzed the process and the development after the support from the teacher was given in small group instruction. Team identified the next step is to adjust lessons to include small group lessons in writing on using boxes and bullets to further develop the reasons. Another team explained that they developed an action plan to stretch small moments across three or more pages. There was inconsistent evidence that teams were identifying trends across the grade focusing on subgroups.
- Student work is evaluated using a rubric which indicates the standards along the continuum assessing the work for content and development. Students indicate that the feedback they receive helps them know what they need to work on and what they are doing well. They also indicated that it helps them write their goals however, a couple of students indicated that the goals were identified for them.
- Principal states that the inquiry teams are looking closely at the data for the lowest third of their class and that instruction is targeted to meet their needs. Teachers are aware of the levels and progress of students. The English as a second language (ESL) coordinator has provided a toolkit for the teachers to address the needs of the students. The Special Education coordinator works collaboratively with the teachers and they are developing additional academic intervention services to support the struggling students. There were varying levels of evidence that the data was being tracked by sub-group to ensure progress for all learners.
**Findings**
School leaders and staff ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts coherently across grades. The curricula and instruction include rigorous tasks and habits through authentic learning.

**Impact**
The school’s curricula decisions create coherency across all grades. As a result, all students demonstrate their thinking and are on a path of college and career readiness.

**Supporting Evidence**
- Through the support of consultants in literacy from Teachers College, teachers have developed coherent units of study. The school follows Teachers’ College reading and writing curriculum to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment. Students are engaged in complex texts as a read aloud as well as self-selected independent reading text for further practice and to develop their love for reading. Teachers “mine the curriculum” to plan and differentiate for their students. In fifth grade, students studied Westward Expansion and were working on a writing unit titled “Lens of History” where students used note taking strategies, conducted research and used primary source documents to produce an informational essay.

- In mathematics, teachers adapted the Engage NY units. This year in grades two through five they added Number Talks, to further develop students’ math discourse and mathematical fluency. All students have math journal tasks where students solve a problem and show the process making their thinking visible.

- Teachers state that they meet for common planning time once a week and use that time to plan out their units ensuring coherency across the grades. They stated that there is a common language and vision. Teachers are all aware of the instructional focus around writing across content areas. In addition, when teachers plan the units they indicate the supports for struggling students such as math centers, guided reading groups, sentence stems, graphic organizers, process charts and checklists, and front loading of content specific vocabulary.

- Across grades, there is consistent evidence of students engaged in rigorous tasks. Students are engaged in book talks, high level problem solving and significant amount of high-quality writing projects. Students have completed units in literary essay, argumentative writing and informational reading and writing.
Quality Indicator: 3.4 High Expectations  
Rating: Proficient

Findings
School leaders and teachers inform students and families of the high expectations. Families receive regular updates and feedback regarding student progress.

Impact
As a result, the school has established a culture for learning where students are consistently challenged to meet high expectations for college and career readiness and families are prepared to support students to meet these goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers and staff set high expectations for their students and clearly indicate them to the students through the use of checklists and rubrics, feedback written on student work, and verbally through conferences. Teachers push students to the next level and provide bookmarks reminding students of the necessary skills to move to the next level.

- Parents indicate that they have seen tremendous growth in the curriculum and the expectations. They stated that the kids are achieving as a result of the rigorous curriculum in all content areas.

- Parents confirmed that school holds workshops to explain the expectations and they have an opportunity to come in and observe the class. A mathematics workshop helped third grade parents to understand and develop strategies for multiplication and division.

- Teachers and the administration send out newsletters and emails to keep parents apprised on activities going on in the school. There is a parent representative for every class to meet with the teacher and address any class concerns. Parents state that the teachers and administration are accessible and provide feedback to ensure that their child is supported and making progress.

- Students state that the school prepares them for middle school and teaches them the skills they need for college such as meeting deadlines, organizing their materials, using checklist and rubrics, and working with their peers in book clubs. Students expressed that the school sets high expectations and that the work is challenging, particularly the writing work but their peers or teachers will help them.
Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations. Teachers take on leadership roles providing them with a voice in key school-wide decisions.

Impact
As a result, teachers’ instructional capacity is strengthened and there is an increase in student achievement.

Supporting Evidence
- Teachers meet once a week for common planning in addition to the weekly meeting for inquiry work. Teachers utilize the ATLAS protocol to look at student work. Teachers cycle through the process of assessment, analysis, and action. Teachers create action plans to address the needs of groups of students, whole class or individuals. Teacher teams have primarily been focusing on writing across content areas.

- During the third grade team meeting, they begin their meeting reviewing the norms and the roles for each during the meeting. One teacher presented student work and then the others provided analysis and suggestions for next steps.

- Teachers stated that as a result of collaboration they have been able to address the needs of their struggling students and develop action plans for small group instruction. In the third grade team meeting, they determined that the student’s thesis statement wasn’t broad enough and needed to be important to a larger audience. Student work showed the development and progress across several drafts. Teachers then offered the suggestion to use boxes and bullets to organize the information which the teacher will reteach with the student.

- Teacher teams are led by data leads. The data leads are members of the professional learning committee and meet with the administration to review data and determine areas of focus, school goals, and next steps within professional collaborations. This structure enables all grades to be represented and offers an opportunity for shared decision making.

- Teachers have taken on the role of presenting workshops to their colleagues sharing best practices or information learned at off-site workshops. This suggestion was developed by the teachers. One teacher explained that he provided a workshop on using the writing progressions that the teachers were then able to implement in their own class. Principal states that this holds the teachers accountable and provides them with an opportunity to support their colleagues in strengthening their instructional practices.