Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Bays Water
Elementary School Q104
26-01 Mott Avenue
Queens
NY 11691

Principal: Kathleen Grady
Dates of review: May 7, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Jean McKeon
### The School Context

P.S. 104 The Bays Water is an elementary school with 703 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 50% Black, 39% Hispanic, 5% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-14 was 91.0%.

### 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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<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>Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>Additional Findings</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>Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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#### School Culture

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

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<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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings
School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks embed rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all learners.

Impact
All students, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities are engaged in a coherent curricula and academic tasks that require high levels of thinking, speaking and participation which prepare them for college and career.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has used Core Knowledge in kindergarten through grade two for the last several years and utilizes the ongoing updates through Engage NY to refine the interdisciplinary units of study. In grades three through five, Expeditionary Learning is the basis for the cross-curricula units of study. Go Math has been used across the school since 2011, before it was recognized as the New York City’s Department of Education’s Common Core aligned preference. Teachers stated that Go Math supports the school-wide instructional workshop model and that the language component provides tools to teach the math language that aligns to the instructional focus. Continuous refinement and reflection of the cross- curriculum maps for English language arts (ELA) and math coupled with the yearly overviews in writing and math, ensure the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts coherently throughout the grades. Curriculum maps reflect grade level curricula, standards, unit overview, enduring understanding, essential questions, end of unit projects and assessments. Several teachers also utilize the school’s recommended lesson plan outline.

- The rigorous curriculum exposes students to real-world application through challenging texts and tasks. Students read the central, grade appropriate text that instruction and resources are centered around as exampled by Grade five’s current text “The Watsons Go to Birmingham”. Teachers also incorporate web-based resources that complement the text to enhance the units. NewsELA provides teachers with additional non-fiction reading selections that can be scaffolded with Lexile levels. Kindergarten students recently completed a research unit on astronomy that included several opportunities for student choice. To further engage students, teachers use the Go Math “ThinkCentral” online component that includes videos, extended responses, and re-teach and enrichment activities.

- The instructional shifts are strategically addressed in the curricula. The ELA curricula ensure a balance of information and literacy text in all grades. Kindergarten teacher’s list color-coded Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questions in their lesson plans and instruction. A special education teacher outlined DOK questions within her plan, which were aligned for specific groups of students. Vocabulary development is also evident across content areas. Teachers are utilizing a new vocabulary acquisition strategy learned at an outside workshop titled, “Explicit Instruction: Instructional Routines for Maximizing Student Response and Engagement”. In a grade five teacher’s plan, students were to be organized in tri-ads to answer questions on text-based vocabulary using this new strategy.
## Area of Focus

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### Findings

The school aligns assessments and rubrics to its curricula and uses ongoing common assessments and grading practices to analyze student learning outcomes.

### Impact

Assessment practices across the school provide students with actionable feedback and inform instructional adjustments, which have improved student learning outcomes. However, across the school, teachers are not yet tracking student progress and adjusting curricular in all subject areas so that all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, demonstrate increased mastery.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school utilizes the resources provided through Go Math! for beginning, middle and end year assessments, as well as unit pre and post assessments. Teachers group students for re-teaching and extensions based on these various assessment data sources. However, teachers are not yet tracking student progress and mastery on identified skills and key standards across the grades.

- School-wide use of Teacher’s College running records provide teachers and school leaders with valuable information about student progress towards grade level proficiency in reading. This reading data is broken down by class, grade, and whole school to identify students’ progress throughout the year. Teachers use running records data to form groups and targeted guided reading instruction to support students’ growth towards goals. School leaders review this data and conference with teachers on their expectations for student progress. Classroom teachers have the ongoing running record data displayed in their classrooms. However, the use of common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress towards goals across grades and to track progress is not evident in all subject areas.

- Teachers use rubrics to set forth expectations for student tasks and provide actionable feedback towards student mastery. Students stated that they like that teachers use rubrics on projects and assessments because it tells them what they need to do get a level 4. Students also like that the teachers leave notes on the final rubric sheets so they know what they did wrong.
Additional Findings

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Proficient |

**Findings**
Teacher pedagogy is centered around a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Student work products and discussion reflect high levels of thinking and participation.

**Impact**
Teaching practices support the school-wide belief on how students learn best so that students are engaged in authentic learning through group and triad structures. Students are cognitively engaged and demonstrate critical thinking in meaningful conversations and work products.

**Supporting Evidence**
- Across classrooms, students were provided with authentic learning experiences that challenged them and provided for numerous opportunities to make real-life connections. It is evident that students are empowered to be active participants in their learning. Grade one students were learning time through baking experiences. Students used clock manipulatives and partner discussions to identify elapsed time. Kindergarten students were identifying continents in their Columbus and the Pilgrims unit. Grade three students wrote persuasive opinion letters and had the choice to address their work to parents, the principal or a teacher.

- Across classrooms, instruction focused less on teacher-directed whole class structure and more on teacher’s facilitating learning opportunities through student discussion and engaging tasks. Lesson plans and learning goals were well-planned which resulted in students actively engaging with each other in partner and group learning. During a grade three math class, students worked in five, well-structured groups. The classroom teacher shared that she was working with a group of students that hadn’t mastered multiplication patterns. The other groups were working on the same skill with white boards and each had a team leader to monitor time on task. A group discussion included the team leader sharing “I found another way you could do it” and explained her answer on an easel. In two kindergarten classrooms observed, students were working in ability groups answering leveled questions around a common text.

- The school leaders and teachers believe all students should be afforded opportunities to be engaged in rigorous learning opportunities. Graphic organizers, visual desk reminders, picture clues, and vocabulary supports were seen in classroom and offered to a variety of student’s additional learning tools. Laptops, computers and iPads are common classroom resources to further engage students and support learning. ELLs and students with disabilities (SWD) receive specific supports and scaffolds to support their thinking. With a growing number of ELLs, the school identified the need for additional strategies to support their language development. During classroom visits, non-English speaking students were engaged with the online, interactive program Imagine Learning that includes a baseline assessment, phonics and tiered reading passages. Formerly a program designed for English language learners, teachers saw the benefits and now use it with students with disabilities.
Findings
The school has a culture of learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and their families and provides supports to achieve those expectations.

Impact
Consistent communications, ongoing professional learning, and feedback from school leaders have resulted in teachers’ awareness of the school’s expectation and the implementation of these goals across all classrooms. Staff and school leaders offer ongoing feedback to help families understand student progress towards those expectations.

Supporting Evidence
- School leaders communicate high expectations in writing, in bulletins, staff handbook, through observations and formal feedback, and verbally during professional development. At the beginning of the school year, the school leaders provide all staff with a curriculum and staff handbook that outlines the beliefs and expectations related to teaching and learning.

- School leaders and lead teachers develop and deliver professional development aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Based on Advance, teacher observation data and school leaders’ reflections, the school has developed a professional learning plan that addresses specific Danielson Framework for Teaching components of Domain 3. Teachers take ownership of their professional learning and have many opportunities to present best practices, aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching to their peers. Additionally, staff, including parent coordinator, secretaries, data coordinator, and teachers, attend a variety of network professional learning workshops. As a means of accountability, school leaders observe teachers and school staff by looking for evidence of implementation of these trainings and provide actionable feedback on those high expectations.

- All stakeholders shared how student progress reports, Class Dojo, Engrade, the school’s online grading system, and their ongoing outreach, have allowed for open communication with families around student progress. Parents shared how they can speak to teachers after school, during Tuesday afternoon parent engagement time, through phone conversations, and through text messages. In the students meeting, they shared that teachers are vested in their success, and truly care about them.
Findings
Grade teams across the school are engaged in professional collaborations related to curriculum refinement, the integration of the Common Core Learning Standards, and analyzing student work and assessment data. Distributive leadership structures support the school’s efforts towards achieving its goals.

Impact
Teacher collaborations have resulted in the strengthening of teachers’ instructional capacity. Additionally, teacher leaders contribute their ideas and make decisions to affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence
- All teachers are required to work in professional learning teams (PLTs) and refine curricula through a cycle of research, planning, implementation, assessing and revising in order to achieve continuous improvements in student achievement. Teachers collaborate to focus on expanding upon higher order thinking strategies already embedded within the curricula. Additionally, teachers utilize the PLT time to create and revise Common Core aligned performance tasks in both interdisciplinary literacy and mathematics units. One team observed followed the school-wide protocol for looking at student work. Teachers analyzed a writing task from a sampling of students. Teachers recorded and shared their findings around the improvements students made on the writing task and further supports needed for a small group of students. The teachers then identified specific writing strategies to support student performance.

- The Professional Learning Planning team is comprised of teacher representatives from each grade, a special education, and English as a second language representative. This team meets twice a month with the school leaders to plan and refine the school-wide professional learning calendar and curricula. The team shared that they have had an emphasis this school year on writing as it aligns to unit tasks across the school. The representatives then share next steps and initiatives to their grade teams. Representatives from the professional learning team attended a workshop on explicit vocabulary instruction and are now sharing and modeling this initiative with their peers.

- Teachers participate in cycles of professional learning during dedicated time on Monday afternoons. The professional learning planning team maintains an updated calendar for PLCs, which are divided into cycles. The first cycle concentrated on instructional and curricula refinement. Early in the school year, the professional learning planning team developed a survey giving teachers the opportunity to identify their strengths and areas for growth. Teacher’s strengths identified through the survey, coupled with Advance ratings, helped the planning team identify teachers to facilitate professional learning for their peers. All teachers have conducted professional learning this year. This second cycle of professional learning included topics such as website sharing, higher-order questioning across content areas, physical movement in the classroom, creating Functional Behavior Assessments and implementing Behavior Implementation Plans and explicit vocabulary instruction. Upper grade teachers also conducted a professional book study on “Falling in Love with Close Reading”.