Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Brookfield School
Elementary School Q181
148-15 230 Street
Queens
NY 11413

Principal: Dina A. Wheeler

Date of review: December 18, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Lenon Murray
The School Context

The Brookfield School is an elementary school with 418 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 86% Black, 9% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92.8%.

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</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>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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</tbody>
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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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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Systems for Improvement</th>
<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>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

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

#### Findings
School leaders communicate high expectations to the whole staff based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching with job-embedded training and messaging. Administrators and teachers partner with parents through workshops, conferences and meetings while supporting a path to college and career readiness.

#### Impact
The structures that support the school’s high expectations build mutual accountability and collaboration among the staff, students and their families. This approach provides a path toward increased student achievement and college and career readiness.

#### Supporting Evidence
- The school leaders conduct frequent formal and informal observations and provide tailored feedback to teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The school supports inter-visitations, peer coaching, professional development by teacher leaders and informal conversations to hold staff accountable for meeting expectations. For example, the third and fifth grade teachers act as critical friends for all aspects of instructional expertise. They support each other with planning and executing daily lessons with the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the foundation.

- Monthly parent newsletters, regular parent workshops on the Common Core Learning Standards and parent links to technology on the school’s website promote clear communication to families on school expectations. Class Dojo is available to parents seven days a week and teachers are responsive to parental queries. Teachers also send consistent progress reports by email, phone and letters between report cards. Parent meetings have increased attendance each of the last two years. The School Leadership Team is active and the school partners with parents to promote college and career readiness. Some workshops that were delivered included “Common Core math”, “Solving word problems in math”, “Financial literacy” and “How to help your child with reading at home”. The parents on the School Leadership Team are actively engaged in the school’s needs assessment and bring suggestions for goal setting to the meetings. For example, the parents have fully supported all aspects of character education in the school.

- Parents said that they are highly satisfied with the school’s approach to college and career readiness which leads to an annual career day. During this career day, professionals from the school and community visit classrooms to discuss the parameters of their profession. Some parents volunteer to come into classrooms and explain what they do for a living. Parents are usually enthusiastic and no student question goes unanswered. Many alumni return to encourage students into study habits that make them lifelong learners.

- The school has a positive behavior approach that collaborates with parents to support the social-emotional well-being of each child. The school holds regular assemblies and town halls to establish the values of citizenship and caring for the community. Friendly competitions are used to promote the values of sustainability, collegiality and cooperation.
Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

Teaching practices provide instructional supports, including questioning and discussion techniques which reflect high levels of student thinking and participation, however, multiple entry points that support all learners including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, vary across the school.

**Impact**

Teaching practices provide opportunities for students to engage in tasks that meet the demands of the Common Core Learning Standards, including the instructional shifts. However, in some classrooms, strategic multiple entry points and high-quality scaffolds are not provided to allow all students to demonstrate higher-order thinking within their work products.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In all the classrooms visited, teachers used a workshop model of teaching that began with a mini-lesson and teacher demonstration of the concept taught. For example, in a fourth grade class the teacher worked on techniques for isolating the relevant parts of a text to answer an essential question. Students were instructed at certain points to turn and talk to each other as they generated discussion. However, the majority of student questions were for clarification since specific supports to ensure understanding were not available for all students.

- Students explained that their groupings were flexible and responsive to their needs. For example, some students with disabilities were stronger in math than in reading and were grouped differently for each subject. In a third grade special education class, students were able to complete their measurements of common classroom objects and convert the data to a picture graph. Some of the students were not able to explain their reasoning without teacher support. The teacher asked leading questions to facilitate their presentation. Different entry points included drawing, writing, using manipulative objects and using a graphic organizer.

- The English as a second language (ESL) teacher pulls students out at selected times during the school day to provide additional support to ELLs. Struggling students receive support from paraprofessionals and cluster teachers several times each week. The ESL teacher aligns her instruction with the units on which the classroom teacher is working. Students are required to express themselves orally and in writing multiple times during the school day. In working with a fifth grade class the ESL teacher went over math vocabulary in the context of a multi-step word problem. For example, the teacher emphasized the information provided by words such as quotient, dividend and divisor.

- A review of student portfolios in the vast majority of classes indicated that student writing has increased in volume since the start of the school year. Students have been working on argumentative writing in which they must justify their claims with textual evidence. Close reading led to research-based writing. For example, students wrote about the pros and cons of mandatory school uniforms.
Additional Findings

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
The school’s curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Assigned tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills consistently across grades and subjects for all learners including ELLs and students with disabilities.

Impact
The curricular decisions of the school build coherence while promoting college and career readiness for all learners. Curricula and academic tasks extend student thinking across grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence
- Reading, writing and math units of study are now aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards instructional shifts. Network trainers supported the teachers as they refined vertical connections. Some of the planned strategies inserted include tiered-academic vocabulary and word walls, reading and math fluency, multiple methods of problem solving, text-based writing and writing to persuade.

- Curricula maps present evidence that the school develops rigorous and challenging tasks by adapting materials from Engage NY, the New York City Department of Education Common Core Library, and the New York City science and social studies scope and sequence. Teachers discuss the content before administering performance tasks across grades. For example, students did a unit in which they researched either sharks or frogs in their natural habitats.

- Lesson Plans in all content areas emphasize essential questions requiring critical thinking. Higher-order thinking strands and strategies for ELLs, special education and struggling students are built into the lessons. Some examples of highlighted strategies include flexible small groups, guided reading, sentence starters, task-specific graphic organizers, visual cues, discussion prompts and academic word walls. With their plans, third and fourth grade teachers wrote out the main questions they intended to ask throughout their lessons.

- Unit plans in all content areas illustrate many different approaches to academic and performance tasks with multiple scaffolds for all students. Teachers coach students in college and career readiness skills such as note-taking, accountable talk, discussion techniques and research skills.
| Quality Indicator: | 2.2 Assessment | Rating: | Proficient |

**Findings**
The school uses common assessments across classrooms in all grades and subject areas to track student progress. Teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of checks for understanding.

**Impact**
The school’s systems that monitor progress during instruction and through data analysis are used consistently to guide adjustments in units and lessons to meet students’ educational needs.

**Supporting Evidence**
- The school uses common assessments in all content areas which provide crucial information on student performance and progress toward goals. Some of these assessments are the pre, mid, and post assessments with every unit of study, and school-wide formative and summative assessments, such as Measures of Student Learning every six to eight weeks. Teachers also utilize benchmark assessments within English language arts (ELA) and math, writing-on-demand and chapter tests.

- Teachers monitor student progress in academic intervention services, guided reading, homework assignments and Saturday academy which prepared students for state testing. Teachers maintain their data in ring binders or store it online on Class Dojo. Teachers adjusted their groups based on the fact that students were not including text-based evidence in their answers to test questions.

- Across classrooms, teachers use several different measures as checks for understanding. These include mid-workshop interruptions, in which clarifying questions are asked and answered. Other techniques include individualized conferring, exit slips, peer student checklists and task-specific rubrics. Students use self-assessment checklists every few weeks when they publish their writing pieces and also provide peer feedback to one another. Examples of adjustments observed during visits to classrooms, include additional time in guided and shared reading, technology on laptops or books on tape and video clips to re-teach the lesson.

- A review of teachers’ conference notes indicate that formative assessments often lead to immediate adjustments such as regrouping students, re-teaching concepts and tutoring. For example, within the third grade special education class students were uncertain of the number of details required to support a main idea. The teacher re-visited the concept using an anchor text to explain that a minimum of three details were necessary.
Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development
Rating: Proficient

Findings
Teachers consistently examine student work and data in inquiry-based professional collaborations. The leadership structures provide a methodology for teachers to have input on key decisions about curricula and instructional practices.

Impact
The work of teacher teams has resulted in improved teacher practice and student progress on assessments. The shared leadership structures build capacity to improve student learning.

Supporting Evidence
- Teacher teams review the results of benchmark assessments to make instructional decisions on adjustments of teaching practices on each grade, based on student data and performance. For example, the third grade teachers discussed their techniques for annotating texts during close reading during a teacher team meeting. They shared methods for teaching students so they can take ownership of their work. In review of most recent data from unit assessments only a minority of students still need extensions and supports, with quickly identifying main idea concepts.

- Teacher teams meet informally three to five times a week on their common prep and lunch periods without any administrative demands. ESL and special education teachers are embedded and integrated into the teams. Teachers examined written student work that includes evidenced-based writing. The principal indicated that classroom observations demonstrated an increase in explicit instruction of writing to inform. Teachers now include anchor text with examples of high quality writing.

- Teacher leaders, who represent each grade, meet weekly with the administrative cabinet to discuss professional development and teacher-led initiatives. The administration is responsive to teacher concerns. In addition, teachers from the professional development committee are involved in making decisions about professional learning offerings at the school and have agreed upon the year-end sessions. Teachers also take the lead with every major school implementation, such as the new curricular resources they piloted. Teachers explained that they felt empowered to have input on decisions affecting the selection and refinement of curricula resources, the placement and grouping of students and the selection of new teachers.