Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Franz Siegel Elementary School
09X035
261 East 163rd Street
Bronx
NY 10451

Principal: Graciela Navarro

Date of review: November 6, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Claudette Essor
## The School Context

PS 35 Franz Siegel is an elementary school with 709 students from grade K through grade 5. The school population comprises 29% Black, 67% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 25% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 93%.

## School Quality Criteria

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</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>Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<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>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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 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>
</tbody>
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### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

Teams of teachers systematically analyze key elements of teacher pedagogy, student work and data, and actively participate in decision-making that positively impacts learning across the school.

Impact

Teachers regularly share strategies that improve their practice and collaborate with administrators in selecting key instructional resources and developing individualized student support systems that result in mastery of goals by groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- At weekly grade team meetings, a teacher leader uses a tuning protocol and timer to facilitate a data-driven problem-based discussion introduced by a pre-determined pair of teachers, who present their findings about student work and pose a question to be answered by peers as they analyze data /student work distributed at the meeting. For example, at the team meeting observed, the presenting teachers distributed writing samples from students and asked peers to review the work and suggest strategies for getting students to improve their writing by incorporating more descriptive words than those noted in the samples distributed.

- The meetings with teacher teams and minutes of past meetings illustrated a system of collaboration that involves all teachers taking turns to analyze student data, identify areas of need, collaborate with peers to develop strategies to address the needs, implement one or more of the suggested strategies, and report on the impact of that intervention at a future meeting.

- At one team meeting teachers stated that they are heavily involved in the decisions that are made in the school, due to the principal's leadership style, administrators' participating in team meetings as thought partners and being open to ideas presented by teachers during daily interactions and at staff conferences.

- The principal used observation data to demonstrate that administrators have already noted improvement in teacher practice, based on a comparison of last year's performance rating for individual teachers with their current performance, and used a spreadsheet to show improvement in student achievement on the 2014 New York State assessments in English language arts and math, with significant gains by English language learners.
**Area of Focus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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</table>

**Findings**

Although teaching practices reflect some alignment to teachers’ and administrators’ shared beliefs about how students learn best, instructional strategies do not yet incorporate effective questioning by a majority of teachers and learning activities that support higher order thinking by all students.

**Impact**

Opportunities to accelerate learning by all students are not maximized via instruction that consistently engages of students in rigorous tasks that lead to high quality work products.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms, lessons reflected the workshop model and some applications of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, with explicit modeling of tasks by the teacher, use of established grouping and center routines to support task completion and time for students to practice the target skill.

- In the classrooms visited teachers asked some low level or yes/no questions and in a few cases answered the questions themselves. For example, in one class students chanted answers as the teacher asked questions such as, “Do plants grow just anywhere?” and in another class the teacher read chunks of text, paused frequently to ask for the meaning of a word and then answered the question herself.

- In all classrooms visited students worked in groups but in most cases all students worked on the same task, with no visible modifications for the most struggling or accelerated learners.

- Although there were samples of high quality student work on hallway bulletin boards, in some classrooms visited there was little evidence of student work and student folders mainly showed tasks with low demand for higher order thinking. Further, in some classrooms visited, there were collections of worksheets and graphic organizers with student responses to low level tasks. For example, in a third grade Integrated Co-teaching Team class that included students with disabilities and English language learners at beginning and intermediate levels of the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, the teacher asked the students to create a web with words/phrases about things done or seen in the winter.
Findings

The school's curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and other applicable content standards, with tasks that reflect the instructional shifts and offer students opportunities to actively participate in diverse and engaging learning experiences.

Impact

Learning tasks designed to promote high levels of student engagement in learning contribute to a program of coherent instruction that addresses college and career readiness skills for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses Common Core aligned curriculum materials such as Ready Gen, Core Knowledge and Go Math, supplemented by tasks from Engage New York, and New York State scope and sequence in science and social studies.

- Grade level teams, including a math and science team, a K-1 and a Grade 2-5 English language arts team, engage in ongoing alignment of curricula to the school's instructional focus (deepen writing across genres and content areas).

- Unit maps show tasks that require students to engage in complex tasks such as a fifth grade unit task that requires students to “use partial quotients to divide by 2-digit divisors”.

- Observation of teacher teams and a review of minutes of meetings show that teachers review student work and data, revising tasks to promote access by all learners. For example, at one team meeting, teachers of an Integrated Co-Teaching class noted that student narrative writing did not show much use of descriptive words so they decided to modify the task by adding a word bank for students to use in improving their writing.

- English language learners have access to chapter summaries in Spanish and bulletin boards showed tasks that offered students choice in selecting independent learning activities, such as a science project in which students shared findings about a type of frog they chose to research.
Quality Indicator: 3.4 High Expectations  Rating: Proficient

Findings

Administrators communicate high expectations for learning throughout the school community and implement varied systems for supporting staff, students and parents in meeting the expectations set for them.

Impact

The school’s outreach to families, combined with targeted and individualized supports for staff and students, has contributed to students’ progress towards college and career readiness and shared accountability for learning by all members of the school community.

Supporting Evidence

- Through tools such as a “Weekly Post” newsletter, a staff handbook, classroom walkthroughs and individual conferences with staff members, administrators articulate high expectations to staff, regarding instructional practices, professional development and other areas of school operations.

- Teachers at one team meeting stated that the principal holds them accountable for expectations by observing lessons, attending or having an assistant principal attend team meetings and collecting minutes and agendas. In addition, they are required to bring student work to meetings to show the results of their implementation of strategies suggested by peers or an administrator, as a follow up on a lesson taught.

- During one of the team meetings teachers stated that administrators constantly use the Danielson Framework for Effective Teaching to outline high expectations for instruction, including targeted focus on those expectations in the summer and follow up with ongoing professional development support to help them meet the expectations.

- Parents reported that staff members invite them to participate in conferences on Tuesdays, met with them at Curriculum Night, host workshops and send home curriculum newsletters and assessment reports that tell them about their children’s progress and offer tips to help them provide follow-up support to “get their children ready for the next grade”.

- The principal demonstrated that the school’s grading policy which includes score ranges that are higher than those required at each performance level on the scale used on elementary school report cards citywide, is designed to push all students to meet high expectations, including college and career readiness goals, by challenging them to produce higher scores on their work at each performance level.
Quality Indicator: 2.2 Assessment  Rating: Developing

Findings

While there are common assessments across classrooms and a school-wide grading policy aligned to the curricula and relevant standardized assessments, the provision of actionable feedback about students’ performance on assessments, among staff and between staff and students, is not yet an established practice across the school.

Impact

Assessment practices do not yet consistently result in the sharing of feedback that serves as an accurate barometer of students’ learning needs in all disciplines and a lever for timely adjustments to curricula and instruction that effectively target students’ individual needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has administered Measures of Student Learning baseline assessments and teachers reported that they are in the process of analyzing the results to discern next steps in lesson and unit planning or implement revisions to existing plans.

- A few samples of student work in the six students’ folders examined showed rubric-based performance level scores with teacher comments on post-its while others showed only checkmarks with no comments. In addition, in several of the folders examined, there were collections of work that showed no evidence of evaluation by a teacher.

- Three of the six students who were interviewed during the meeting with students confirmed that they had taken 2014 New York State assessments but when asked about their proficiency level score on the English language arts and math assessment, they responded that they did not know because their teacher had not told them or their parents about their scores. The other three students stated that their teacher sends home their tests and their parents sign and return them to the teacher.

- Classroom bulletin boards with student work did not consistently show teacher use of a rubric to provide actionable feedback to students via comments with next steps for students to improve their work.