Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. K053
Elementary-Middle-High School K053
544 7th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11215

Principal: Heather Leykam
Date of review: January 26-27, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Audrey Madison
The School Context

P.S. K053 is an elementary-middle-high school with 455 students from grade kindergarten through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 7% Asian, 39% Black, 37% Hispanic, and 11% White students. The student body includes 24% English Language Learners and 99% students with disabilities. Boys account for 71% of the students enrolled and girls account for 29%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 87.5%.

School Quality Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</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>Additional Findings</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>Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</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>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<th>School Culture</th>
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<tr>
<td>Area of:</td>
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<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>
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<th>Systems for Improvement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Area of:</td>
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<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>
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Area of Celebration

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings
All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity and promoted implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. School leaders have embedded shared decision making practices throughout the school.

Impact
School-wide instructional coherence promotes increased student achievement for all learners as teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence
- Teacher leaders were identified by their peers and selected by administrators to participate in the Department of Education’s Teacher Leadership Program (TLP). Team agendas and minutes reveal that TLP members came to consensus and determined that their team goal is to focus on teacher pedagogy across the school, specifically teaching strategies that consistently provide multiple entry points and engage students in appropriately challenging tasks. Minutes reflect an inquiry approach, with questions such as, “How are we helping others? How are we supporting teachers to have more engaging lessons?” The group agreed that the unit plan would be a starting point and developed a survey for their site colleagues. At an observed team meeting, members examined and discussed the survey results, and summarized, “The leveled and rigorous ‘I can’ statements allow teachers to have clear objectives. Essential questions give purpose to our teaching. Multiple resources and vocabulary give access to all learners.”

- Teacher leaders facilitate professional learning community meetings (PLCs) at their sites, employing agendas that have been established by school leaders in the instructional cabinet. In one instance, PLCs across sites engaged in a problem-solving activity using pictures that highlighted teacher-centered instruction, and examined a proposed lesson plan template to support development of lessons that are more student-centered. Noted end results from different sites indicate, “Teachers were able to identify areas that they can use to plan for peer-to-peer interaction to take place, with short sections that are teacher-centered.” “The template will allow them to plan for small group instruction and break down questioning targeted for specific students and their various needs.”

- Minutes of PLC’s across sites, demonstrate that these teams have reflected on the school’s instructional focus, the related Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI) skill to assess peer-to-peer communication skills, and worked to norm their scoring practices using a common data collection tool to monitor progress toward the school goal. Minutes from various sites reveal that the norming activities and discussions provided clarifications for consistent and coherent teacher application of their benchmark rubric to multiple levels of learners. Additionally, one site determined their next steps would be to begin their inquiry process by researching strategies to improve peer-to-peer communication while another site would discuss specific areas of student need and challenges related to the targeted skill.
Area of Focus

Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy  Rating: Proficient

Findings
Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula and student work products reflect appropriately challenging tasks. Teachers continue to enhance questioning and discussion techniques to enrich student-to-student interactions.

Impact
Teachers meet the various cognitive needs of all learners employing supports for student thinking and participation. Nevertheless, there are missed opportunities for multiple entry points into peer-to-peer interaction that deepen student understanding.

Supporting Evidence
- One observed lesson, collaboratively planned and facilitated by the classroom teacher and a speech teacher, presented differentiated individual student outcomes for peer-to-peer interactions in a 6:1:1 class of students with limited communication development. Teachers projected picture symbols on an interactive whiteboard and modeled a conversation to support understanding. Teachers and paraprofessionals then provided students with scripted sentences, visual cues, verbal models, and Core Vocabulary prompts to support asking and answering questions. In another 6:1:1 lesson, a verbal prompt and question stem card were used to support one student to ask his peer, “Hi. Can we work together?” However, additional question stems and verbal prompts were not strategically applied to continue interaction.

- In a 12:1:1 lower-grade elementary lesson, puppets were used by students in one group to retell a story. Teacher questioning included, “What happened first?, Why was Chicken Little running?, What happened at the end of our story?” Paraprofessionals led another group of students to sort pictures of the characters from the same story by color on the interactive white board while verbally prompting students to describe the color of the character to a friend. In another 12:1:1 class of middle school students, students made predictions for chapter two of a book that they were reading based on what had happened in chapter one. The first page of chapter two was projected on the interactive white board, and each group was given a copy of the text. Students offered their predictions to paraprofessionals and the teacher.

- In a 12:1:4 class, one student responded to the question, “How do goods and people get from one place to another?” through eye gaze and his communication device. Other students responded to the teacher with the use of model transportation objects or pictures of planes, bikes, and trucks. In a kindergarten class, an interactive white board, communication boards, pictures, Core vocabulary words and single cell communication devices were used to promote student engagement in peer-to-peer communication during morning meeting routines for greeting, attendance, and the letter sound of the week.

- Photographs with captions of a science culminating performance task reflect that students across several classes gave presentations about living and non-living things. Students quizzed the audience, were pictured in a power point presentation, and were prompted to question peers. A bulletin board display depicts students using coordinates, plotting points on a coordinate grid displayed on an interactive whiteboard and checking their coordinates on individual grids.
## Additional Findings

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards, and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

**Impact**

All students, including lowest and highest achieving students, are cognitively engaged in rigorous tasks and have access to coherent curricula that promotes college and career readiness for a variety of learners.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders expressed that the instructional coaches and administrators adapted Scope and Sequences based on “the resources provided by EngageNY, District 75 curriculum modules, and curriculum supports such as Attainment, Equals and Unique”. Unit plans for elementary, middle, and high school populations were also developed by the instructional coaches and are aligned to Scope and Sequence across content for school-wide use. A review of curricular documents reveals unit overviews that clarify the intended learning and demonstrate integration of the instructional shifts. For example, a balance of informational and literary text is evident as the kindergarten through grade two units for English Language Arts span nursery rhymes and fables as well as informational text on animals and taking care of the earth. Upper elementary, middle, and high school unit overviews incorporate text-based answers. Academic and content specific vocabulary is identified for each unit across content.

- An essential question from a high school social studies unit plan posed, “How do goods and people get from one place to another?” High school lesson plans reflected alignment to the unit plan. Lower elementary essential questions, “What can I learn from listening to a text?, and “How do I respond to various forms of literature?” were reflected in differentiated objectives of a kindergarten lesson: “I can describe the setting in the story; I can sequence events in the story; and I can share my favorite parts of the story.”

- Unit plans identify culminating performance tasks to be used as formal assessments evidencing understanding of the essential questions. A middle school performance task requires students to conduct a food experiment to answer the essential questions, “How can I physically change food? How can I chemically change food?” Lower elementary students engage in animal home sort activities to answer the question, “Where do we find animals?”

- Several lesson plans reflected student groupings based on SANDI scores, linked to cognitive development and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals, identifying students in each group and adaptations to the lesson such as resources or level of questioning. Another plan offered expectations for the use of students’ preferred method of communication, also identifying students in each group, such as: Group One- Rotating answering yes/ no questions; Group Two- Use devices, body language and eye contact for appropriate answers; Group Three- Use devices to have students answer questions. Several lesson plans conveyed differentiated “I Can” learning objectives for varied groups of students.
Findings
Teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned to the school’s curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. The school uses common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress toward goals across populations, track progress, and adjust curricular and instructional decisions.

Impact
Both students and teachers receive actionable and meaningful feedback regarding student achievement as a result of detailed assessment data. All students demonstrate increased mastery based on instructional decisions and adjustments made at the team and classroom levels.

Supporting Evidence
- To determine progress toward the instructional focus of increased peer-to-peer collaborative interactions, school leaders have established the use of Benchmark Data Collection sheets, tracking SANDI skills to monitor interactions aligned with verbal skills such as verbal responses and types of collaborative exchanges, and non-verbal skills, specifically eye contact and body language. A scoring rubric provides teachers with guidelines regarding prompt levels.

- While the school is currently compiling mid-year data, school leaders state that initial analysis of SANDI communication development, thus far, shows students making progress from Unit One to Unit Two. Teacher input from four 6:1:1 classes, indicates a 4% increase in types of collaborative exchanges, although there was a 4% decrease in verbal response; a 7% increase in eye contact and a 5% increase in body language. Teacher input from one 12:1:1 class indicates a 2% increase in types of collaborative exchanges, although there was a 0% increase in verbal response; a 13% increase in eye contact and a 13% increase in body language.

- Teachers use of rubrics to assess individual “I can” learning targets or culminating unit performance tasks were attached to student work products. Rubrics align to the school’s common language, providing a leveled score based on SANDI levels of independence and accuracy. An upper elementary performance task in science targeted “SANDI Skill # 43 Writing: Selects a relevant event and writes to share five details.” One student received a score of Level 3 indicating that there was support through prompting, and teacher comments, “Great work following the scientific method. I liked that you used full sentences when explaining what you would be doing during this experiment. Excellent job using our vocabulary word ‘melting’ to show how our chocolate changed states from a solid to a liquid. Next steps: Make sure you are identifying when the state of matter is changing. (solid to liquid or liquid to gas).”

- A New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) data analysis document compares the school’s English Language Arts (ELA) and Math scores to District 75 scores. According to school leaders, “Our students scored Level 3 and Level 4 in both ELA and Math because of the complexity of our assessment tasks.” Graphs show zero Level 1 and 2 scores and performance significantly higher than District 75 in Level 4 in both content areas. As a result, school leaders have decided to consistently choose NYSAA tasks of higher complexity levels for students who score at higher levels on SANDI assessments.
Quality Indicator: 3.4 High Expectations  
Rating: Well Developed

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations, ensure training is provided for all staff, and effectively partners with families to support their children’s progress.

Impact
School leaders and staff are mutually responsible for attaining high expectations for themselves and students. Parents successfully partner with the school and actively support their children, as they make continual progress, and, as appropriate, transition to Least Restrictive Environments and post-secondary settings.

Supporting Evidence
- The staff handbook and the school’s yearly strategic plan present the instructional focus on peer-to-peer interaction as a goal. “How” is defined as, “Through the appropriate identification of Preferred Mode of Communication (PMC), use of core vocabulary and deliberate instructional design.” Indicators for success, are specified, “As measured by student benchmark assessment growth in SANDI Communication Development skill #57/ Common Core Learning Standard Speaking and Listening #1 and professional growth in Advance for components 1e, 3b and 3c.” School leaders monitor teacher growth for these Danielson components through observations and documentation in Advance Measures of Teacher Practice. Comparison data from round one to round two of observations indicates the percentage of teachers rated effective or highly effective has increased in each component: 1e from 74% to 88%; 3b from 62% to 81%; and 3c from 73% to 92%.

- According to school documents, Core Vocabulary is a set of words that are used frequently in a variety of settings to communicate and respond quickly and effectively. District faculty enrollment logs evidence that at least six teachers have attended vocabulary workshops facilitated by District 75. Additionally, one speech teacher has attended several workshops regarding supports for students with complex communication and social needs. Agendas and minutes document school-wide professional development across sites in Core Vocabulary, connecting this training to Advance components 1e, 3b, and 3c. Minutes also reveal that teachers have reflected on alternate ways to teach the vocabulary, such as consistently pointing to Core Vocabulary symbols, teaching words in different languages, or displaying words on popsicle sticks.

- The school documents its processes for partnering with families, from the intake packet completed when a student enters the school, through the articulation process or transition to least restrictive environments. Minutes reflect that fifty-one parents/guardians attended this year’s Front Door two-hour training session, receiving their certification of participation, which allows them to apply for a range of home and community-based services.

- The school further documents movement of 30 students to least restrictive environments, as reflected in the Department of Education database. Six students from 12:1:1 programs to work programs; ten students to inclusion programs; eight students from more restrictive populations to 12:1:1 programs, and six students from more restrictive populations to 8:1:1 programs. One hundred percent of the school’s 23 seniors are currently placed at community work sites such as Burlington and the Gap. One student was hired part time at the store Five Below because of his personality and work ethic, as well as his initiative to ask if paid employment was possible.