Quality Review Report

2015-2016

Conselyea Preparatory School

Middle School K577

208 North 5th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11211

Principal: Maria Masullo

Date of review: December 18, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Gary Knight
Conselyea Preparatory is a middle school with 505 students from grade 6 through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 3% Asian, 3% Black, 59% Hispanic, and 35% White students. The student body includes 3% English Language Learners and 19% students with disabilities. Boys account for 42% of the students enrolled and girls account for 58%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 94.7%.

### The School Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Quality Criteria</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional Core</strong></td>
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<td>To what extent does the school…</td>
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<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>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>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<td><strong>School Culture</strong></td>
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<td>To what extent does the school…</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>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<td><strong>Systems for Improvement</strong></td>
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<td>To what extent does the school…</td>
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<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>Well Developed</td>
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Area of Celebration

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness and successfully partner with families.

Impact
The school has formed a culture of mutual accountability for expectations, supporting student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence
- The school has a staff handbook that includes all expectations around teaching and learning such as the school’s vision, its principles of Learning, expectations around professionalism and professional commitment. The handbook is distributed to every staff member and requires a signature of receipt. Along with the handbook, staff is provided checklists of expectations, given an instructional focus, participates in learning walks and professional development.

- Individual expectations are also set for each staff member and they are held accountable through observation and feedback. Teachers hold each other accountable with a developed intervisitation process and through team and grade level structures. These structures allow for teachers to provide feedback to each other. Teacher leaders discuss with administration teachers’ concerns or challenges regarding set expectations.

- The school has several methods of effectively communicating with families, which include an orientation in June for incoming students that addresses goals, mailings over the summer and a “meet and greet” in September for the entire school that addresses curriculum, school policy, and meeting the Parent Teacher Association members and staff. Tours are also conducted for parents. Successful partnerships with families include parents participating in and co-planning and co-facilitating the aforementioned school-wide events and workshops. Parents are also invited to meet with a dedicated staff member that assists them in creating a NYC Schools account as an additional means of participating in their child’s education.

- In addition to quarterly progress reports, communication takes place with families via weekly spreadsheets that are produced by teachers, informing families of student progress along with weekly phone calls, and individual appointments. The school also uses Jupiter grades, an interactive web based program that informs families of their child’s daily academic activity.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings
Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices strategically provide multiple entry points and are aligned to the curricula. Teacher’s practice is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. Although multiple entry points were provided, there were missed opportunities to provide high-quality extensions.

Impact
Teaching practices reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best. Students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence
- The school has developed a master list of multiple entry points for teachers to incorporate as a part of their practice and lesson execution. The multiple entry points used during lesson delivery include visual, aural/musical, verbal, logical, interpersonal, intrapersonal and bodily-kinesthetic approaches and strategies for math, language arts, science, social studies, music, physical education, special education and art. For example, in a grade 7 class consisting of students with Individualized Education Programs, the teacher’s lesson included a video, varying levels of graphic organizers, calculators, student discussion and grouping, color coded and labeled handouts and a shopping circular for kids to use during activity.

- Lessons included learning clear objectives, the integration of Common Core Learning Standards, higher order thinking skills and questions guided by Webb’s Depth of Knowledge and Bloom’s taxonomy, tools used for ensuring rigor in the classroom, prior knowledge, content-specific vocabulary, motivation/discovery, and differentiation strategies, including strategies for English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Specific curricula and Common Core alignment include the use of a close reading strategy, students engaged in the use of evidence-based texts to support arguments and, as observed in a social studies class, students identifying aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose.

- In all seven classes visited, it was evident that the provision of multiple entry points is common practice. In six of the seven classes visited there was evidence of differentiation and higher-level questioning. One of many examples of differentiation was observed in a grade 6 math lesson in which students were grouped based on performance, then each word problem that was assigned to groups differed in level of difficulty and steps. However, in a social studies class at the time of the visit, it appeared that all students received the same materials for the activity. In a grade 7 English class, it was evidenced that questioning led to higher order thinking. The questions involving analyzing and making connections to the text. However, in a grade 7 math lesson observed, the majority of the questions centered on recalling information from previous lessons and did not present an opportunity to further push higher order thinking. Also, extensions to lessons were not observed in most classes.
## Additional Findings

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

Rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks and the curricula and tasks are planned and refined using student data.

**Impact**

All learners demonstrate thinking, are cognitively engaged and have access to the curricula.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Curriculum practices include: the incorporation of Bloom’s taxonomy and Webb’s *Depth Of Knowledge* in plans to expose students to higher order thinking. In addition, unit and lesson plans embed, reciprocal teaching which allows students across the grades and subjects to demonstrate their thinking. The curricula and lesson planning intentionally concentrates on analysis, synthesis and evaluation components of the Bloom’s Taxonomy learning domain, to further address high order thinking skills are addressed.

- The school has incorporated the administering of a multiple intelligence survey to capture student data. The results are analyzed, charted and broken down for every student across the grades and the information is used primarily to inform and revise curricula and plans to ensure all students have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged. For example, on a Regents Science lesson plan, it clearly identifies the various learning styles will be addresses as a part of the plan.

- Curricula and unit plans incorporate along with essential questions, the use of Socratic seminars, literature circles, four corner debates and think-alouds, which are all methods of getting students engaged in academic tasks with an emphasis on thinking and reasoning analytically.
Findings
Across a variety of classrooms, teachers use assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula, offering a clear picture of student progress towards goals across grades and subjects.

Impact
Actionable and meaningful feedback is provided and adjustments to curricular and instructional decisions are made to meet the needs of all students.

Supporting Evidence
- Mock Measures of Student Learning (MOSLs) are given in science and social studies and interim assessments are administered quarterly in all four content areas. Teachers analyze the data for trends. Instructional decisions are made accordingly, such as informing the creation of student groupings for academic intervention and support with specific skills. Teachers create rubrics to address the identified skill deficits. Student performance in specific skills are monitored and assessed ongoing through the use of quick assessments and exit slips. Data revealed that overall, students are strengthening specific skills, such as identifying the main idea.

- Students receive actionable and meaningful feedback that informs them of next steps needed to improve work. For example, in a grade 7 English class, one student received the following feedback, “You are a gifted writer with such creative ideas and your audience wants more!” “Give more details, descriptions, sensory images, rich vocabulary - flush out this plot.” Similarly, in a grade 7 social studies class, feedback read, “Continue to elaborate with supporting evidence that is relevant and offers an analytical approach, cite more, analyze and explain with richer details.”

- In addition to rubric-aligned written teacher feedback, teachers have one-on-one conference time with students, facilitate peer evaluations, and students self-assess with an aligned rubric. For example, one student self-assessed her writing and made the following comment: “I think I should get a 3.5 because I would be between a 3 and a 4 in all categories.” “I have a clear order and my evidence is there.” “I used all strategies and have correct language and conventions.”

- Rubrics are used in all classes and subjects. In art class, a 4 point rubric is used to assess the drawing of a human face and in music, a 4 point rubric is used to assess the playing of the recorder instrument.
Findings
The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity and promoted the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Distributed leadership structures are embedded so that there is effective leadership.

Impact
There is school-wide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners. Teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence
- Teachers were observed engaged in an inquiry-based collaboration, analyzing student work and the use of a deconstructed argumentative rubric. As a part of the inquiry process, teachers discussed the impact on student learning and students’ various learning styles. The inquiry process provided teachers an opportunity to reflect and to share outcomes with other colleagues who can benefit from findings and outcomes discussed. Overall progress has been noticed for students with disabilities, in student writing across grades, specific to stronger claims and citing evidence from text.

- The grade 6 team, based on student performance in math, developed a strategy called CUBE (Circle, Underline, Box, Evaluate, Solve and Check), which teaches students to annotate and make connections to aid in solving word problems. The CUBE method was evidenced as a common practice in a grade 6 math lesson. This strategy has allowed for students to better extract the necessary information when reading word problems.

- The school is structured so that there is a teacher team for every subject, with instructional leaders selected by teachers. These teams review and analyze units and student work for their respective areas, confer with special education certified teachers regarding modifications and supports, and use all data obtained to drive future instruction. Teacher leaders for the various teams liaise with administration regarding details of the meetings and make recommendations when and where necessary. For example, in math, the teachers voiced their concerns with curriculum. They expressed the need for additional supplements to support the curriculum. As a result, GO Math! was added as a resource. Being viewed by the leadership as “experts in the field”, they were approved as recommended resources that would supplement the curriculum.