Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 018 John G. Whittier
Elementary School R018
221 Broadway
Staten Island
NY 10310

Principal: Robert Rodriguez
Date of review: January 14, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio
P.S. 018 John G. Whittier is an elementary school with 620 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 4% Asian, 44% Black, 46% Hispanic, and 5% White students. The student body includes 6% English Language Learners and 34% students with disabilities. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 92.0%.

### 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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<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>
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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 <em>Framework for Teaching</em>, 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>
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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>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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#### School Culture

<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>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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
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#### Systems for Improvement

<table>
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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>
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Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
The school leaders have structures in place to communicate high expectations and provide training to support staff. The school staff communicates high expectations to parents and provides ongoing support toward understanding their child’s progress.

Impact
Staff members are held accountable for school-wide expectations. Parents understand their child’s progress toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence
- The school leaders communicate high expectations through memoranda, leadership meetings and monthly newsletters called Faculty Notes. Each month, school staff receive the newsletter which provides information on expectations for collaborative inquiry where it states, “Determine areas of strength upon which you can build upon as well as areas of growth.” Additionally, the Faculty Notes includes information on the instructional focus on student engagement.

- The professional development plan reflects goals for training sessions aligned to the instructional expectations of the school in supporting teachers regarding student engagement and the elements of effective, rigorous planning and instruction. Short-term goals include revisiting the work of Norman Webb, Karin Hess and Bloom and designing coherent lesson plans that incorporate higher-order thinking questions to promote genuine discussions. School leaders hold staff accountable for the expectations and implementation of training through observations and provide feedback through debrief sessions on school expectations and how to improve the quality of lessons to meet them.

- Parents are provided progress reports in math and English Language Arts (ELA) which provide information on their child’s tests and current reading level. Additionally, the report contains the benchmark reading levels for the grade across the year to help parents gauge their child’s reading performance with the expectations of the grade. Information on the Common Core Learning Standards, events and other initiatives are provided via the parent-teacher association (PTA) and school workshops. One parent reported that speaking with teachers through phone calls and one-to-one conversations has enabled her to understand what her child needs help with and offer strategies and resources such as Cool Math or library workshops. Another parent stated that Family Night and curriculum conferences “…provide grade-level information on concepts to master for the year and they break it down in areas like reading and math.”
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Developing |

Findings
The use of questioning, scaffolds and strategies has yet to serve as multiple entry points in classroom discussions and the work products of all students.

Impact
Teacher practices are in the process of enabling all students to participate and demonstrate higher-order thinking and engage fully in challenging tasks across classrooms.

Supporting Evidence
- In one grade 5 Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math lesson, one of the teachers asked students, “How does your knowledge of place value help you with division?” Some students responded with, “It’s easier when the numbers are broken apart.”; “When you are dividing by 10 you can focus on separating the groups into other groups and add zero at the end.” Both students elaborated on their response with examples. Some students added to their peers’ responses without teacher direction. However, this level of discussion or accuracy in responses was not evident across classrooms.

- In a grade 5 math class, students worked in partnerships and individually on assigned multiplication problems. Partnerships were viewed as working together to obtain the correct answers and clarifying each other’s misunderstandings while the teacher provided instruction to a small group of students. However, in a grade 1 math class, students were working individually and in groups with their peers to respond to questions on addition using doubles. In the groups, some students were observed not fully engaged with each other to complete the task. In addition, options for further challenging students who completed their work were not observed.

- In a grade 1 ICT class, the teachers asked student pre-reading questions to understanding what a biography was and to determine the differences between two presidents, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt. Teacher questioning was mostly teacher-student-teacher questions which led to multiple responses from only a few, selected students. Similarly in a grade 3 literacy class, although students were participating in the lesson, many of the questions were directed by the teacher to the students with few opportunities for student discussion and most of the prompts given by the teacher.
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
School curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, integrate the instructional shifts and emphasize rigorous tasks.

Impact
Planning decisions across grades and subject areas build coherence, promote rigor and college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence
- The school uses *ReadyGen* for ELA and *GOMath!* as part of the kindergarten through grade 5 curricula. In social studies, the school uses the *Harcourt* program and supplements unit themes with resources from *ReadyGen*. The school utilizes the *FOSS* program for science. All curricula programs are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards.

- Instructional shifts such as deep understanding and application are reflected in the math curricula. In a grade 4 math lesson plan, the task reflects prompts which require students to explain their thinking and discuss the use of strategies with a partner. In a grade 3 math task, students were presented a problem which demonstrated an error and students were required to determine and explain the error as well as produce a model to show the correct product.

- Tasks reflect prompts and alignment with Depth of Knowledge (DOK) level 3. In a grade 5 lesson plan, the task includes discussion questions such as, “Did the questions used to identify Chinese immigrants truly identify them?” In a grade 5 social studies curriculum map, the essential question is, “How did geography influence the development of the Western Hemisphere?”
Findings
Teachers use rubrics and other assessments aligned to the curricula to measure student understanding of concepts. Assessment practices include the use of ongoing checks for understanding and self-assessments to gauge students’ understanding.

Impact
Effective adjustments and actionable feedback result in meeting students’ learning needs across classrooms.

Supporting Evidence
- The school uses running records and citywide periodic assessments. In addition, rubrics are used for all curricula areas and teachers use end-of-unit performance tasks which are aligned to the ReadyGen and GOMath! curricula. Teachers reported that they used these assessments for setting goals with students. The grading policy consists of percentages and performance levels 1 through 4.

- Students are aware of rubrics and checklists and how they are used to determine their grade and identify next steps. In addition, they reported that their teachers provide them with verbal and written feedback. A teacher recommended to one student that he edit his work to replace missing words. On another student’s work, the next steps were, “Add more details to help the writing make sense. Reread the text to find areas for those details.” In addition, students are aware of their goals. During an interview, a student said he was working on understanding high-level vocabulary words and another shared, “My goal is to go from a reading level V to a W.”

- Teachers check for understanding during classroom lessons by students using color cards to indicate their understanding, if they need help or if they do not understand. Other approaches include thumbs up or down. Groups are formed based on in-the-moment formative assessments such as “quick checks” and exit passes and through teacher-to-student conferences. In a grade 4 ICT math class, one teacher conferred with a student to assist him with division and the placement of the zero. The teacher used concrete, step-by-step questions such as “What is the problem asking you to do?” and “How many in a group?” to guide the student to the correct answer.

- Self-assessment takes place through the use of student self-evaluations using specific success criteria. A review of student work revealed self-reflections such as, “Next time, I will add more linking words”, and “write my story with more details.”
**Quality Indicator:** 4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development  
**Rating:** Proficient

**Findings**
All teachers participate in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations aligned to school goals and the Common Core Learning Standards. Distributive leadership structures are in place that enable teachers to have a voice in key decisions.

**Impact**
Inquiry-based collaborations and leadership capacity result in strengthening instructional capacity of teachers and affect student learning.

**Supporting Evidence**
- An inquiry handbook for all teacher teams provides information on the purpose of teacher teams, a sample professional learning cycle which indicates weekly activities and the impact of them, sample protocols such as the data-driven and assessment previewing, and note-taking guides. Roles for each meeting are rotated across the team. A review of teacher team binders reflects agendas, minutes, and protocols used to analyze student work and reflect on professional articles aligned with the school’s instructional focus. During a grade one team meeting, teachers used the Four A’s protocol to discuss an article on self-assessment and as a next step, decided to focus on learning intentions, crafting them in student-friendly language and making sure they link to the big picture and purpose for learning.

- During a grade 4 meeting, the teacher team used a tuning protocol to review and discuss two targeted students’ work. Teachers analyzed their work, shared their noticings of each students’ strengths and areas of focus in writing. Some areas of focus were determining different points of view from two characters and using text evidence to support their claims and elaborate on their perspectives. Next steps included using graphic organizers, annotation strategies, signal words and a focus on text evidence. Teachers agreed to bring strategies for annotation and close reading for the next meeting after discussing how targeted students were performing across the grade.

- The Instructional Cabinet and Professional Learning Team consisting of a combination of the school leaders and teachers, meet bi-monthly to discuss professional learning cycles and training. For example, members from this team attended professional development on the implementation of learning intentions, specific lesson objectives, as part of the school’s instructional focus. Information was shared with grade-level teacher leaders and staff to integrate into teams to support teachers’ requests for training in this area. In addition, the Instructional Cabinet analyzed student work and along with teacher input decided to modify the pacing of the grade one reading calendar.