Quality Review Report

2015-2016

The STEAM Bridge School
Elementary School X481
1684 White Plains Road
Bronx
NY 10462

Principal: Katiria Rojas

Date of review: May 10, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Buffie Simmons
The STEAM Bridge School is an elementary school with 70 students in grade kindergarten. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 0% Asian, 26% Black, 53% Hispanic, and 19% White students. The student body includes 17% English Language Learners and 16% students with disabilities. Boys account for 66% of the students enrolled and girls account for 34%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 is not available due to new school status.

## 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>
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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>Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
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</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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<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>
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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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</thead>
<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>Developing</td>
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</table>
Findings
The use of rubrics and common assessments are aligned to the school’s curricula and provide teachers and students with actionable feedback on student progress towards set goals.

Impact
Actionable feedback provides students and teachers with an understanding of academic achievement. Data analysis results in adjustments to curricula and development of multiple strategies toward improving student achievement.

Supporting Evidence
- Across classrooms, teachers use various assessments, such as conference notes, checklists, benchmark data, behavioral data, and rubrics. Accordingly, standards based rubrics are used across grades and subject areas. Students are provided “glows and grows” feedback from their teachers verbally and in writing. For example, in an opinion paper, students were asked to explain if it is better to plow the fields with a tractor or horses. A student received a Level 4, based on the rubric for ideas and word choice; “Glow – You stated your opinion and supported with three reasons. Grow – Next time, use vocabulary words in your writing.” Another opinion paper asked students to explore if it is easy or hard living on a farm. Feedback for a student who received a Level 2 for ideas and a Level 3 for word choice; “Glow – You used the sentence starter to write your opinion. Grow - Next time, support your opinion with reasons.”

- Teachers analyze assessment data to measure student growth and identify gaps of understanding. When kindergarten teachers examined literacy assessment data, including baseline data, and Fountas and Pinnell running records, letter recognition assessment, and concepts of print checklists, they revealed a gap in early reading readiness skill attainment. Teachers across classrooms, made adjustments to curricula and pacing calendars to maintain reading readiness along with ongoing formative assessment. As a result of shared reading, there was a 46% increase in Level 4 and 25% decrease in Level 1 based on school’s benchmark data.

- Across classrooms students are invited to check their work using checklists which incorporate a rating scale. Additionally teacher-created rubrics have been developed in writing. Teacher continuously refine rubrics to strengthen connections to standards, content, and communication of next steps. The grading scale for students are proudly displayed in the school - Level 4 – 94-100; Level 3 – 83-93.9; Level 2 – 69-82.9; and Level 1 – 0-68.
## Area of Focus

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

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned with curricula and reflect core beliefs of how students learn best through multi-sensory instructional approaches that build student independence. However, student work products and discussion reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

### Impact

Teaching practices are informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and instructional shifts. Work products and student responses that enable higher order thinking are uneven across classes.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders stated the core beliefs and instructional focus emphasize differentiation, critical thinking, and independent learning. Administrators reported that evidence of these practices is evident through small group instruction, incorporation of multiple entry points, rigorous questioning, and student discussion. In one classroom when students were asked to self-assess themselves, the teacher posed questions, “What does it mean to annotate?”, “What does it mean if you are an expert?”, “If you have the purple post-its what does it mean?” A student stated, “I understand, but I need some help.” Teacher stated to the class as good readers and writers always go back to the text. Students turned and talked about what makes them an expert. The teacher used coaching methods, and modeling. Lesson plans reflected evidence of planning rigorous questions to support higher thinking however evidence of instructional focus varied across classrooms and this level of rigor was not evident across classrooms. In another class, only some students were provided with targeted questioning when they were unable to demonstrate knowledge and verbalize how they could count to 10 in multiples of tens.

- Due to a lack of teaching strategies to serve as entry points, many students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs), demonstrated difficulty with certain tasks. In a self-contained class, students were distracted. When the teacher asked how many numbers in a 10 frame, students were unresponsive. The teacher provided additional questions to assist with understanding, only some students were targeted, and were able meet the objective of the activity. Instructional supports, such as technology or manipulatives, were not provided and all students were provided the same activity.

- Across classrooms, instruction was mostly teacher directed and higher order thinking was evident in only some classes, by some students. For example, in math class, responses to most of the questions, such as, “What are the corner called on a triangle?”, “What do we call parts of a shape that meet together like this?” Students answered the questions. To extend the activity, the teacher asked, “How many vertices does a triangle have?” As students did not respond, the teacher stopped the activity and asked the students to circle the vertices on each triangle. Students in unison stated a triangle has three vertices. However, in other classes, teachers struggled with posing questions or allowed students to sit quietly, engaged in unrelated activities without follow-up. Additionally, in one class, students were tasked to find a number that is greater than 80. Students worked independently. A student stated “I’m done already” and waited for his classmates to be finished.
### Additional Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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#### Findings

The school utilizes a curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts which emphasize rigorous questions. Teachers make refinements to curricula and strategies so that all students have access.

#### Impact

Using student data results when planning for rigor across the curricula result in the consistent engagement of all students leading to college and career readiness and school-wide instructional coherence.

#### Supporting Evidence

- The school uses *Ready Gen* for English Language Arts (ELA) and *GO Math!* curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. In science and social studies, teacher created lessons and curriculum maps integrate *Ready Gen* materials and teaching points reflecting alignment to the Common Core Standards. For example, kindergarten ELA weather unit objectives require students to answer questions about key details in a text and describe the connection between pieces of information, both aligned to Common Core Standards reflecting use of key ideas and details, and integration of knowledge and ideas.

- Lessons reflect alignment to Common Core Learning Standards to promote college and career readiness. For example, students annotate to answer questions about chimpanzees in a text. The lesson plan includes Common Core Standards, materials, essential questions, mini lesson, learning centers activities differentiated, guided practice, and instructional outcome. Unit maps and lesson plans address the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities, as evidenced by plans that included a writing focus sheet to ensure Universal Design for Learning (UDL) access for all students and stated strategies the teacher, such as T-chart and sentence strips. All students have access to math manipulatives to construct visual representations of concepts.

- A review of student work and curricula demonstrates emphasis on rigorous essential and guided questions. For example, one lesson plan indicated how students were required to compare and contrast animals with a nonliving thing. Students created dioramas of various animals’ habitats. For an opinion writing paper, students shared past and present farm life. Students were instructed to write an opinion piece about farm life from the past and the present.
Quality Indicator: 3.4 High Expectations  
Rating: Proficient

Findings
School leadership has created structures to communicate high expectations aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and uses feedback to hold teachers accountable. The school consistently communicates expectations and offers feedback to families to help parents understand their child’s progress.

Impact
School wide systems of accountability and ongoing feedback to all constituents are leading to improvement of student progress toward instructional expectations connected to a path college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence
- School leaders primarily use training opportunities to communicate their expectations towards teaching and learning, as well as an instructional that focuses on students becoming independent learners and having differentiated support. For example, the professional development plan consists of offsite and onsite training opportunities on small group instruction, classroom environment as well as instruction in alignment to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teachers were given a classroom environment checklist to assist in setting the stage for teaching and learning.

- Families receive monthly newsletters, outlining important calendar events and detailed descriptions of school-wide activities and learning objectives. Newsletters are backpacked home. The school communicates their expectations using variety of structures such as the parent handbook, calendars, and letters sent home. For example, the parent handbook provides parents’ with the school mission and vision statement, inform parents of the school expectations that students learn best by a supportive environment that allows differentiation which leads to engagement. As a result of communication including verbal and written teacher feedback, families affirm that they are aware of the academic progress students are making.

- Parents reported that teachers communicate their child’s progress in school via phone calls, emails and one-to-one conversations. To assist parents with understanding the expectations based on the Common Core Standards, the school offers homework help to students. One parent reported since the emergence of this principal, outreach efforts have been expansive and families understand the school’s expectations.
Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development

Rating: Developing

Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations on teams that promote the school goals and implementation of the Common Core Standards. Teachers are starting to take ownership of professional learning time and structured opportunities for collaboration.

Impact
The use of an inquiry approach is developing across the teams and teachers are beginning to make decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence
- Teacher teams are developing an inquiry approach and purposefully being led to focusing on instructional adjustments and curriculum mapping. The teams are working on shifting away from worksheets which did not present students with challenging, relevant content. During weekly team meetings, teachers engage in inquiry protocol, such as tuning protocol and examining student work. This has resulted in introductory revisions to lesson planning. In this founding year, teachers have made efforts to forge professional relationships beyond the school, partnering for planning and preparation of professional learning sessions.

Since the school has only one grade, they have been monitoring progress with their students. Teachers conducted a mid-year assessment in both ELA and math. Once the data was inputted into a data analysis track sheet, teachers discuss next steps for students. The data showed that 45% of students were reading far below grade level. As a result of these meetings, students in the lowest third in reading were provided with push-in support around letter and sound recognition, and blending/decoding skills.

- Teacher teams have begun to meet twice a week to work on instructional and curricular next steps to improve practice and support the learning of students within the building. Teachers meet during their professional development period to plan curriculum and inform instruction with a focus on ELA. For example, kindergarten teachers met to share reading center activities that focus on phonemic awareness and comprehension. In addition, integrating the reading and writing together, teachers present writing strategies that have worked in their classroom throughout the unit.