Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 330

Elementary School Q330

110-08 Northern Boulevard
Queens
NY 11368

Principal: LaShawnna Harris

Date of review: February 26, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Shirley Wheeler-Massey

The School Context

P.S. 330 is an Elementary school with 573 students from grade kindergarten through grade 4. The school population comprises 2% Black, 88% Hispanic, 1% White, and 9% Asian students. The student body includes 31% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 95%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
To what extent does the school…	**Area of:**	**Rating:**
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	**Additional Findings**	**Proficient**
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	**Focus**	**Developing**
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	**Additional Findings**	**Proficient**
School Culture		
To what extent does the school…	**Area of:**	**Rating:**
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	**Celebration**	**Well Developed**
Systems for Improvement		
To what extent does the school…	**Area of:**	**Rating:**
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	**Additional Findings**	**Proficient**

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings

School leaders effectively convey high expectations regarding teaching and learning through explicit feedback and professional learning opportunities for all staff. School staff effectively collaborates with families in relation to students' college and career readiness.

Impact

Ongoing and effective communication with teachers has led to more ownership and joint responsibility of improving pedagogy and student learning across the school. Supportive partnerships with families have created a school culture that ensures students are positioned on a path to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Before the start of the school year, school leaders host a two-day all staff summer retreat, where the instructional expectations are outlined and reviewed through various sessions that focus on curricula, team building and instructional technology. It is during this time, that new teachers are armed with the necessary tools and supports so they can have a successful start to the school year. In addition, teachers are provided with the school's *Instructional Norms and Expectations*, which defines the instructional focus, the school's goals, as well as specific curricula, planning and instructional expectations that align to that identified focus. Furthermore, the principal provides weekly follow-ups to these expectations within the school's website, *The Learning Tree.* Teachers are held to those expectations through regular visits to classrooms, followed by clear and specific feedback that aligns to the school's focus on Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* components, 3B-Questioning and Discussion techniques and 3C-Engaging Students in Learning.

- The school's instructional coaches support teachers across the school in a variety of ways through in-class coaching cycles, organizing inter-visitations and facilitating on-site professional learning sessions. Follow-ups to teachers are also communicated through *The Coaches' Chronicles*, a newsletter that provides resources to teachers, instructional updates and highlights teachers for their best practices. Additionally, teachers participate in learning walks where they observe best teaching practices, provide the visiting teacher feedback on the practice and work on implementation of the practice within their own classrooms. Teachers expressed that these opportunities for learning are helpful because it allows them to see teaching strategies firsthand and assures them that their own students are capable of accomplishing similar skills.

- From the onset, parents receive clear guidelines of what is expected to ensure their child's success through the new student orientation, the Family Handbook and receive ongoing information regarding their children's progress throughout the school year. Parents receive progress reports in between the distribution of report cards and specific letters that inform them of their child's progress on baseline and benchmark assessments. In addition, parents are provided information regarding the Common Core Learning Standards and the state assessments through the *Breakfast with the Principal* and at workshops that are offered by the school. Parents shared that they have partnered with teachers to provide workshops at Parent's Association meetings, aligned to the on-line resources available to assist children at home. Parents have also worked with their child's teacher to create in-school and at home action plans to improve their child's reading and math skills.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing

Findings

Teaching strategies across the school inconsistently provide multiple entry points and opportunities for students to participate in discussions that demonstrate their thinking and understanding of content.

Impact

Inconsistent teaching strategies have led to uneven opportunities for students to demonstrate high level thinking during discussions and within their work products.

Supporting Evidence

- In review of student assessment data and visits to classrooms, school leaders collaboratively determined with the staff that the instructional focus for the year needed to be on increasing student engagement, which aligns to Danielson's Framework for Teaching component 3C-*Engaging Students in Learning*. This was determined by the school as the next step in their journey to improve students' academic performance. However, this instructional focus was inconsistently observed across the classrooms visited. Of the seven classrooms visited, only three made clear attempts to get students to demonstrate their thinking verbally either through turn and talks, during small group discussions or partnerships.   In some cases, students worked independently without opportunities to discuss or share their work with a partner, while in other instances during class discussions, teachers posed questions and missed opportunities to have students discuss their ideas or thoughts around the topic or content. For example, in one classroom students worked on a task that required them to select a picture from the text and respond to provided questions. Although the teacher circulated to ask individual students questions, they were not provided an opportunity to discuss their opinions or writing around their selected pictures with their peers.

- During visits to classrooms, one group of students were observed working in small groups and partnerships through various math stations discussing strategies and approaches to multi-step problems, math games and fraction problems. However, in another classroom, the teacher posed questions to students to determine their understanding of "the gist" of an informational text and had them respond directly to her, missing opportunities to have them discuss their ideas or their thinking amongst each other. The teacher dominated the majority of the discussion, while students passively responded to questions and then worked quietly and independently on a close reading activity, which did not allow them to fully express themselves verbally or within the assigned task.

- While across classrooms, students were provided scaffolds to support their learning, such as visual aids, sentence starters, teaching charts, graphic organizers and math manipulatives; multiple entry points and differentiated tasks were inconsistently provided to address students' specific learning needs. In one classroom, some students worked on revising their writing task, while others worked on a graphic organizer to structure their thoughts and ideas, while the teacher worked with a small group to provide additional support with gathering information for their writing. However, in another classroom, students were provided the same writing prompt and task and worked independently without any variation to address the needs of students with disabilities, English language learners (ELLs) or extensions for high achievers, who were observed navigating and completing the academic task quickly.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
School leaders and staff effectively implement a Common Core aligned curricula that integrates the instructional shifts. Teachers utilize student work and data to develop and refine curricula and academic tasks.

Impact
The school's collaborative efforts to implement and refine their standards-based curricula, has led to instructional coherence across the school. Ongoing, careful reviews of student work and assessment data ensure that students are being exposed to engaging learning experiences.

Supporting Evidence

- Since the school's inception five years ago, teachers have been utilizing curricula that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. The school is currently using teacher-created English language arts (ELA) units in the lower grades, Ready Gen and Expeditionary Learning within second through fourth grades, supported by Lucy Calkins writing units of study and the Go Math program across all grades. To ensure coherence, units of study for ELA and math, reflect specific planning for their diverse learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities using long-term targets, essential questions, and strategies to engage their learners, exposure to complex text across all grade levels, a focus on academic vocabulary and various assessment tools. In addition, units of study integrate the introduction to the instructional shifts such as close reading tasks, citing text-based evidence, the balance of fiction and non-fiction literature and real-world math problem solving opportunities.

- In review of teacher's lesson plans, there is clear evidence that teachers are identifying learning targets aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, using I-Can statements, with scaffolds and resources to support the needs of different learners within their classrooms and some clearly reflecting the planning of tiered tasks to address the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities, as well as opportunities for independent or partner work to apply or implement strategies taught during mini-lessons or guided practice.

- Within grade teams, teachers work collaboratively to look at student work and data and utilize a unit planning template to map out revisions and modifications to units to address the gaps within student learning identified within their data reviews. For example, based on last year's end-of-year kindergarten math data, which revealed that students struggled with number sense, the school elected to revise the pacing calendar to extend the first two units within the Go Math program, to provide additional support and exposure to their new, young learners. Additionally, this year, grade 3 teachers decided to make adjustments to their ELA Expeditionary Learning road map, to include two additional units of study of an author study and fairy tales, to ensure the balance of non-fiction and fiction text, as well as to make certain that all appropriate standards and instructional shifts are being addressed for the grade level.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
Across the school, teachers utilize assessments and rubrics that are aligned to the school's curricula to monitor and determine student progress.

Impact
The analysis of student performance has provided opportunities for teachers to provide feedback to students and make curricula and instructional adjustments in response to learners' diverse needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are utilizing a variety of assessments such as Fountas and Pinnell running records, performance tasks in reading and math twice, benchmark assessments, I-Ready, teacher-created exams, as well as unit assessments from Ready Gen and Go Math programs. Throughout the school, teachers and students are using rubrics to outline and understand the expectations around tasks for reading, writing and math. In review of feedback to students on student work products on classroom and hallway bulletin boards and within student portfolios, teachers provide clear and explicit feedback that informs of what they did well and next steps for improvement. During classroom visits, students were observed using feedback to make adjustments to their work, using colored pencils that identify the corrections, so teachers can identify the alteration to their work. Students are also engaged in the feedback process, as they complete checklists to ensure they are meeting the expectation of the tasks and in some cases, provide their peers feedback on their work.

- School leaders and staff are tracking student's progress from assessments within an on-line data management system, through data walls and binders that are maintained by staff advisors, and during collaborative data talks, which allow them to track mastery of content, the standards and movement within reading levels. Teachers use the data from these assessments to organize small groups within their classroom, identify students for pull-out academic intervention services and to modify the curricula and instruction as needed. For example, based on the item analysis from a grade 3 benchmark assessment, students on the grade were organized in homogeneous groups within their classrooms, to address gaps in their learning within identified skills. In addition, based on interim checkpoints, teachers utilize the data from I-Ready to plan differentiated instruction, where students can work independently on individualized lessons that provide remediation on identified skills.

- Through close monitoring and tracking of assessments, the school has created their English Language Arts and math Saturday Academy lesson pacing calendars, based on grade-wide data and the percentage of students mastering specific standards. In addition, through close analysis of benchmark assessments, the school has seen a decrease in grade 1 students scoring at level 1 in reading, and an increase in level 2s and 3s, after a six week update after the mid-year benchmark assessments. Furthermore, the school has also seen progress from the math beginning of the year assessments to the mid-year assessments, where students across the school, demonstrated on average of 20% increase of students scoring at or above grade level.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
Through inquiry-based professional collaborations, teachers analyze student work and assessment data and share best teaching practices.

Impact
Professional collaborations have provided opportunities for teachers to hone in on their skills which have resulted in improvements in student learning outcomes.

Supporting Evidence
- Across the school, teachers are provided daily common planning periods where they engage in inquiry-based professional collaborations to look at student work and data to determine students' need and to refine curricula and academic tasks. It is within these grade meetings that teachers are identifying learning targets, sharing best practices, resources and strategies to support and address the gaps in their students' learning. During the observed meeting, teachers were looking at their students' I-READY data to determine the two skills they needed to focus on to further support their learning and to organize strategy groups that included struggling students, as well as high achievers. Teachers discussed some of the success they were having with some of their teaching approaches for some of the identified skills and shared how having the opportunity to meet has helped them try unconventional strategies that they wouldn't have thought of, if not for the dialogues within teacher teams.

  While teachers generally meet as grade teams, which include English as a second language (ESL) teachers who support the planning for ELLs, there is also an Instructional Support Team that meets with the administrative team to plan professional learning sessions, organize coaching cycles for identified teachers and to analyze data to monitor the team's work towards achieving the school's goals. Teachers throughout the school shared how they appreciate the collaborative opportunities to discuss their challenges with colleagues or with school leaders and to receive support when deemed necessary from their own struggles.

- Many teachers expressed feeling more equipped to address the school's work around providing meaningful feedback to students and increasing student engagement. They shared how their focus on this during their grade meetings and visiting a colleagues' classroom to observe how her students engage in the feedback process, has armed them with strategies to better support their students. This focus has resulted in an improvement in their students providing each other feedback, along with overall improvements in their writing, based on more targeted and specific feedback the teachers have provided to their students.