



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Albert V. Maniscalco

Elementary School R046

**41 Reid Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10305**

Principal: Andrea Maffeo

**Date of review: March 12, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio**

The School Context

Albert V. Maniscalco is an elementary school with 322 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 15% Black, 37% Hispanic, 38% White, and 9% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 13% 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 92.0%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	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		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	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	Additional Findings	Proficient
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	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	Celebration	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The vast majority of teachers engage in systematic analysis of student data relevant to shared improvements in teacher practice and curricula. Effective teacher leadership in teams plays an integral role in key school decisions.

Impact

Analysis of student performance data and shared decision-making practices result in improvements in curricula and implementation of targeted pedagogy that supports mastery of goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and key teachers collaborated on a handbook of inquiry team practices for use in guiding this work throughout the year. The handbook indicates clear roles for teachers to include a facilitator, secretary, time keeper and organizer for each meeting. Additionally, it provides information on how to conduct team meetings, phases throughout the year and it establishes a clear structure for the use of protocols. School leaders and teachers indicate that the teams meet each week to review student work using a protocol known as *Looking at Students' Thinking*. Additionally, teachers report that the school-wide expectation is to set clear goals in order to monitor student progress throughout each cycle. A review of school documents, including agendas, notes, protocols, student work and a professional learning calendar, reflect a clear system for formalized meetings. In addition, key teachers serve as active members of the school's cabinet, which meets weekly. Furthermore, team decisions have led to changes in curricula pacing based on analysis of student work and the needs for all learners across grades.
- During a team meeting, grade 4 teachers and the science cluster reviewed student work using the *Looking at Students' Thinking* protocol. The teachers reported that their goal for students during this cycle was focused on comprehension skills such as main idea and supporting details. During the meeting, teachers analyzed student work and determined that on this task, main idea was a continued concern. Specifically, gaps in student work reflected the following: use of irrelevant details and lack of clarity in main idea statements. In addition, the teachers discussed text complexity as a possible issue in students' lack of comprehension. The teachers decided to focus on the concept of main idea. Strategies discussed during the meeting included re-teaching and deepening student understanding of main idea as well as honing in on annotation to focus on their understanding of this concept and development of this skill. Teachers agreed they would focus their instruction on this over the next few weeks and use post assessment data to assess student progress towards this goal.
- Cycles of inquiry are developed in phases based on student progress towards goals. In an interview with the grade 4 team, teachers reported that their first goal for inquiry this year was context clues and academic vocabulary. Teachers reported that student progress on post assessments earlier in the year allowed them to move on to main idea and supporting details as a secondary goal. Specifically, one teacher reported that based on the last assessment, most students met mastery of this inquiry goal.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teacher practices reflect inconsistent use of multiple entry points towards higher-level thinking skills and student discussions.

Impact

The uneven school wide teaching practices do not always ensure that students, including subgroups, show progress towards demonstrating higher-order thinking in academic tasks and student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, there was some evidence of teaching strategies to provide students with scaffolds, where appropriate, to engage in academic tasks. For example, in one class, students were working on main idea and supporting details and were provided with graphic organizers to assist them with this concept. Additionally, some students were able to work with partners. Although some students were able to use the graphic organizer to assist them in developing the main idea of the given text, others struggled with the task. One student wrote, "The princess" as the main idea; another wrote, "The frog princess" as the central message. Other students wrote the character traits of the main character but did not indicate the central message of the story.
- School wide teaching strategies include ability-based partnerships and grouping for tasks that required students to collaborate on ideas. In one self-contained class, the teacher provided rulers and counters to the entire class and grouped students by ability, ensuring that paraprofessionals provided support as needed. The teacher assisted some students by asking them to solve fewer problems and to implement the math task, in steps, with her guidance. A higher-level group used the same tools but was able to complete several problems as a group. All of the students were able to complete the same task at their own pace. This level of differentiation using student ability groups was only evident in some classes.
- Across classes, teacher directed discussion was evident. Student-to-student discussion was evident in some classes yet the academic level of talk was low. In one science class, students were engaged in a challenging task that required them to determine the densities of cold and warm water. Although the task required students to draw conclusions, teacher questioning and scaffolding for struggling students did not lead all students to high levels of student thinking. The teacher asked most of the questions and they led to one word responses.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school's curricula align to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Planned curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills.

Impact

Purposeful decisions to build coherence and rigor across grades and subject areas, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, promote college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses ReadyGen and GoMath! from kindergarten to grade 5, curricula that are both aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. A review of literacy pacing calendars across all grades indicates an emphasis on comprehension strategies such as annotating text relative to instructional shift three on text complexity and citing text evidence.
- Collaborative school level decision-making by administration and staff demonstrates efforts to support coherence across grades. Teachers used similar questions, materials and standards during two math lessons on measurement. Measurement tasks demonstrated similarities in the structure of the lesson format and assessment of skills. Additionally, the school-wide focus on citing and explaining solutions was evident in both tasks. Similarly, teachers focused on citing text evidence using complex texts and close reading strategies to improve comprehension in a grade 5 plan on the Great Migration and in a social studies lesson in grade 4 using a short text.
- Lesson plans and tasks use essential and guided questions to support at-risk students, ELLs and students with disabilities toward developing higher-order thinking skills. One English language arts lesson used Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questions across a continuum of levels to support students in rigorous thinking such as, "Describe details in the paintings", "What inference can you make based on the visual images presented in the text?" and "What conclusion can you draw from these visual images?" The same level of planning was evident in math where a teacher designed a lesson on measurement using DOK questions to lead students towards higher-level thinking. Sample questions included, "Would it make sense to use inches to measure the length of a football field?", "Can you elaborate?", and "Why is it important to be able to estimate measurements?"

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, assessment practices and grading policies align with the school's curricula and teachers consistently use ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Assessment practices across the school result in actionable feedback to students so that teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classes, teachers use a variety of assessment practices to determine student learning needs. Questioning, conferring and exit slips were evident in several classes. In one class, the teacher asked a range of low to high-level questions to determine student understanding and demonstrate how the text adds to the illustration. The teacher asked students several questions during the lesson and jotted the names of students having trouble with their responses. Once students began an independent task, the teacher went to the students who had difficulty and she conducted a re-teach on the key points. Similar adjustments were evident in other classes, mostly through teacher one-to-one conferences with the students.
- A review of student work products in folders and on bulletin boards revealed the use of student self-assessment checklists. Students discussed how they use rubrics with their teachers to assess their completion of tasks and their next steps. One student said that she used her writing checklist when creating an animal report for her science class. She continued, "We use it to check to see if we did everything, like introducing the animal clearly and include domain specific vocabulary and whether we need help with something. If we need help, we ask the teacher." Another student stated he used his checklist with his teacher and independently before and during the writing process to make sure he had corrected his mistakes. Other students provided similar responses about their use of self-assessment tools in the class.
- During an interview, students were able to use the rubric and share teacher feedback provided to them during and after the completion of academic tasks. Students were able to share how the rubrics and feedback provided them with information relative to areas of strengths and focus. One student said that she performed well in the areas of organization and sequence yet needed to add more domain specific vocabulary. Based on teacher feedback, the student stated some words she could have added were "awesome" and "audition" to help connect her ideas more efficiently.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff through school-wide training opportunities and other structures. The school offers ongoing feedback to help support families and students toward meeting these expectations.

Impact

A system of accountability and ongoing feedback results in the improvement of school-wide practices and student achievement toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- A variety of documents articulates the school’s expectations around teaching and learning, such as emails, memoranda, a teacher inquiry handbook and a school staff handbook. The teacher inquiry handbook provides detailed information on the expectations of inquiry to include the use of assessments to identify and target students in need of support. During a team meeting, teachers were clear about the school’s instructional focus and discussed how the analysis of data is providing them with information to guide their implementation of strategies into their pedagogical practice.
- Feedback to teachers is ongoing throughout the year. Teachers meet in one-to-one sessions with the administration to review lesson objectives and observations and to obtain feedback on their lessons. The administration uses post-observation conferences to provide feedback to teachers on their alignment to the school’s instructional focus to allow students to formulate questions for discussion and to provide sufficient wait time for those who struggle with attaining specific skills. Teachers reported that they found the feedback and training opportunities helpful. In one meeting, one teacher stated her feedback helped her think further about the rigor in her lesson for higher achievers by adding more DOK level 3 and 4 questions and to use more challenging texts.
- Social media, phone calls, emails and notices provide parents with information on upcoming events, including insight into the Common Core Learning Standards. Workshops and family visits to literacy classes provide parents with the expectations and insights about some of the instructional activities students engage in such as essays on social justice and other literacy-based activities. Additionally, parents reported that workshops on reading expectations provided by teachers helped them to support their children at home and ensure they were on the “right track”.