



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 238 Anne Sullivan

K-8 School K238

**1633 East 8 Street
Brooklyn
NY 11223**

Principal: Harla Joy Musoff Weiss

**Date of review: April 21, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Clarence Williams**

The School Context

P.S. 238 Anne Sullivan is a K-8 school with 555 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 17% Asian, 5% Black, 56% Hispanic, and 22% White students. The student body includes 27% English Language Learners and 22% students with disabilities. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 94.2%.

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	Well Developed
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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Focus	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

Impact

Teaching practices are informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and instructional shifts. Across classrooms, students are engaged, and have all the needs met allowing them to produce meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Student work reflected high levels of student engagement and ownership in all classrooms observed. In a Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) class, students demonstrated ownership of their work by explaining the importance of building a prosthetic hand. They discussed the challenges of building a hand, which they stated, taking into consideration, motion, strength shape, and purpose. The students worked independently in their small groups cooperatively and provided a demonstration of the prosthetic hand they were working on. They discussed reinforcing the hand to provide more motion, the differences between the dynamics of left and right hands, and what goes into building the different hands. Students further demonstrated ownership of their project by discussing and showing a student-created website to highlight their work.
- In a grade 2 science class, students were involved in a lesson on why objects are attracted to magnets. Students demonstrated ownership by working in groups organized by compatibility and ability. Students were given a form entitled “Are You Magnetic?” along with the materials to test the magnets on. Using Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* level 2 questioning, students predicted their findings, and recorded their results. Students demonstrated instructional shift 5, writing from sources as they wrote a paragraph demonstrating writing skills using vocabulary words such as attract, repel, and metal, to explain how they conducted their experiment. Students further displayed ownership by discussing with the group their criteria to gauge the success of the lesson.
- Across all classrooms observed, students were engaged in student-centered learning. Students engaged in peer-to-peer dialogue, using think, pair share, and turn and talk. The teacher also utilized multiple entry points. Students were encouraged to participate and engage in discussion throughout the lesson. In a kindergarten class, students participated in dialogue discussing family celebrations with a peer. One peer to peer match up, students compared and contrasted their families. In a grade 6/7 self-contained English Language Arts class students were given multiple entry points to explore the object of the lesson: “I can read vocabulary words we learned so far.” Students were working in three different groups. The first group was using a vocabulary chart defining and reviewing five words, with an instructor reading the words to the students to provide assistance. The second group had a separate group of 10 words to read independently. The third group had a list of 15 words that they took turns reading and defining.

Area of Focus

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards, including the instructional shifts. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have built leadership capacity.

Impact

Teachers play a role in strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers and have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school, however it is not evident in all staff members.

Supporting Evidence

- In a vertical math inquiry team, the agenda consisted of describing, looking at, and interpreting student work. The team began the meeting by looking at student work from an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) team that focused on diameter and circumference. They discussed how students were required to cover a hole using diameter and circumference. Some students followed the directions while some used only circumference. The team agreed that there was disconnection in the reading of the assignment. They discussed using the Read 3 strategy allowing students to improve their reading based on prior knowledge and learning new reading strategies breaking it down to three steps. The team directed discussions first on steps 2 and 3, which focused on the strategies that the students have learned, and making it applicable to the math assignment. They discussed next steps, which included connecting the vocabulary to real life and deconstructing a math problem one piece at a time. The team discussed the impact of the team interventions with a 51-point growth for students with disabilities and English Language Learners from the i-Ready Diagnostic test to the growth monitoring assessment, 4 out of 5 students demonstrated growth of at least on grade level.
- Teachers feel that school leadership supports initiatives and ideas from the instructional staff. The principal meets with the Professional Learning Committee to discuss academic needs such as curriculum revisions, materials and resources needed. School leaders specifically selected a grade 7 and grade 8 math teacher to mentor teachers in the after school program, provide feedback to the teachers on instruction, and oversee lesson planning and curriculum writing.
- Some teachers collaborate on adjusting the curriculum to meet the instructional needs of students. Based on meetings, inquiry groups targeted writing and normed a writing rubric for the grade level based on diagnostics and benchmark performance for grade 2. The Professional Learning Committee members stated that they worked on child friendly vocabulary to improve student's everyday language. Teachers participate in a 3:00 clock swap, where they discuss best practices and present to their colleagues weekly.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and content standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks and are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects.

Impact

There is coherence across grades and subject areas that promote college and career readiness for all students. All learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, must demonstrate their thinking and have access to engaging academic tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty have aligned the curricula with Common Core instructional shifts, as evidenced in lesson plans. A grade 3 English Language Arts lesson plan demonstrated instructional shift 3, staircase of complexity. The plan demonstrated this by requiring that students participate in closed reading during a guided reading lesson. The plan included Common Core Learning Standards such as ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text referring to the text as a basis for answers, and, determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language. The lesson plan shows four reading group reading different novels according to their reading levels, using closed reading. Students were required to cite text-based evidence to support answers. Each reading group was required to work under a different set of Common Core Learning Standards to differentiate the plan to address the heterogeneous groups. These practices were evident in all English Language Arts classes observed, resulting in a course pass rate of 97% last year.
- In a grade 2 English Language Arts lesson plan, instructional shift 4, which focuses on text based answers, was demonstrated. The learning target was explicitly stated and asked students to analyze information and respond to questions about the Greek myth *Atlanta and the Golden Apples*. The plan required students to ask and answer questions orally and in writing requiring understanding of the details of a fiction text. The lesson plan reflects the curriculum on fiction text. Rigorous practices are embedded into the lesson through the use of higher order thinking questions, with evidence of depth of knowledge 2 concepts, asking students to explain, describe, predict, write in their opinion, compare and contrast, and categorize.
- The pre-kindergarten unit on math demonstrates higher order thinking and rigorous habits, as evidenced in the unit of study on bridges using STEM. The learning target was “I can build a stronger paper bridge that will support at least 25 pennies.” Students identified the cause and effect relationships, demonstrating Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* level one, verify predictions by explaining how and why. Teachers assigned groups consisting of English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Multiple entry points included teachers assisting English Language Learners by speaking in their native language, and assisting students with disabilities by referring to anchor charts.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. Teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Teachers provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs and students are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Students stated that in all classes they use rubrics to peer assess and teacher assess and that they were helpful in understanding how they are performing. Students were able to identify that they used rubrics for writing, essay, math, and projects. They also stated that all of their teachers use rubrics to provide actionable feedback. This was evident in a writing rubric in which the teacher stated: "You have a good introduction to the topic, next time try elaborating on your concluding paragraph." School wide writing initiatives have resulted in 100% progress in a mid-year school wide writing assessment for grade 3 English Language Learners showed and 71% progress for students with disabilities on the same test. This growth was based on comparisons to beginning of the year benchmark assessments.
- In the vast majority of classes, students used a peer assessment technique called "Fist of Five" in which students evaluate themselves by raising their fingers to represent their level of understanding. The teacher uses this peer assessment to check for understanding and incorporates a talk and turn to help students with comprehension. Another example of peer assessment was evident in a grade 6 math class. Students used a scoring rubric for an oral presentation rating each other on presence, language skills, organization, mastery of the subject, visual aids, and overall impression, rating each other from 0-5.
- Teachers give actionable feedback to students in all classes during instruction that is evident in student work across classrooms as well as in student discussions and teacher discussions. Using "Glows and Grows", a teacher provided the following feedback to a student on a rubric, "You were able to write several facts about the topic; next time lets work on descriptive words." On an English Language Arts paper on September 11, the teacher provided the following feedback: "Well written, and informative, good conclusion, for grows, explain in more detail." Another example of feedback to students was displayed on a figurative writing worksheet. The teacher stated that the student knew how to identify figurative language and was excellent in explaining what each example in the text meant.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations from the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to the entire staff, and provide training. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations to families connected to a path to college and career readiness

Impact

School Leaders provide training, resulting in a culture of mutual accountability for those expectations. School Leaders successfully partner with families to support student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leadership uses various methods of communication to staff to reinforce high expectations. The Danielson *Framework for Teaching* is used to assess teacher performance. All teachers are informed during staff development and beginning of the year orientation on instructional expectations. Professional development logs provided by school leadership require teachers give feedback to student, and they must use effective questioning techniques, and think: Claim, Evidence, Reasoning, Audience, and Counter Argument (CERCA). Teachers share mutual accountability for these expectations as documented in the professional development calendar. Teachers participate in the professional learning of these expectations, by department and interest. During a team teacher meeting, teachers stated that they mentor each other and hold themselves accountable for the writing and impact of the curriculum.
- The Danielson *Framework for Teaching* is used to assess teacher performance. School leadership uses all four domains of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to assess and provide feedback to all teachers. School leadership meets as a cabinet to go over observations to ascertain what they have learned looking for commonalities and deficits. Based on this information, throughout the year, teachers set instructional goals and work as teams to meet departmental and grade level expectations.
- The principal conveys expectations for college and career readiness to parents, and requires students to take ownership of preparing for the next level. This is evident, as students are required to keep a “My Road Trip to College and Career Readiness” journal. The journal contains terms to know, how to make informed decisions about the future, reflection, and a log on how to best utilize after school time to prepare for the next level. Kindergarten teachers have demonstrated expressing expectations for college and career readiness with a checklist that includes what is required for each grade level as students move through their educational journey. Students spoke to the checklist, stating it was instrumental in keeping them on track and preparing for each step towards college and career readiness. During a student interview, three students stated that the checklist was one of their favorite things about the school as it related to college and career readiness.