Quality Review
Report

2015-2016

P.S. 048 P.O. Michael J. Buczek

Elementary School M048

4360-78 Broadway
Manhattan
NY 10033

Principal: Tracy Walsh

Date of review: January 21, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Heidi Pierovich

The School Context

P.S. 048 P.O. Michael J. Buczek is an elementary school with 600 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 1% Black, 96% Hispanic, and 2% White students. The student body includes 30% English Language Learners and 19% students with disabilities. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 94.2%.

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	**Additional Findings**	**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	**Celebration**	**Well Developed**

Area of Celebration

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

Findings

Distributive leadership structures afford teachers and teacher teams the opportunity to make key decisions about teaching and learning through the systematic analysis and revision of curriculum and student work products.

Impact

The work, frequency, and variation of teacher teams provide all teachers with opportunities to engage in shared leadership and professional collaboration resulting in improved teacher capacity and mastery of student goals for groups of students across the school community.

Supporting Evidence

- When grade or subject teams meet, they use a looking at student work protocol to determine next steps in teaching based on student work and data. A teacher stated and others agreed that the "math tracker is used for grouping students based on assessment scores and what skills to re-teach and determine next instruction steps." This becomes a cycle of inquiry, whereby they use the student work to make instructional changes. The team meeting notes are used to guide next steps to ensure that targeted groups of students achieve mastery. For example, the fifth grade team just analyzed the data on the mid-year assessment and determined that many students did not do well on a specific question, which has led them to devise a plan to reteach this skill during the morning meeting and reteach it again and then reassess to analyze the change. Teachers stated that this lesson study has supported their personal practice and increased student mastery.

- Teachers stated that they share best practices and support each other's growth. One teacher stated and others agreed that intervisitations have been the "best professional development so far because we give each other feedback and see how it will improve our own teaching." One teacher gave an example that, since she is a new teacher, from these intervisitations she has gleaned and implemented "support in small moves for the next step in a lesson and even an engaging method to use on the SMARTboard." The teachers agreed with this statement, providing examples of other's suggestions such as providing support for English Language Learners (ELLs). One teacher explained, "Because the skill of retelling is different for beginner, intermediate, and advanced groups, I scaffold differently for each group and have shown growth for the lower levels, as they are more able to retell main points of a story, identify character actions and dialogue." She was able to share data to demonstrate student growth in those skills. Teachers agreed that these team meetings are invaluable to their professional growth, whether they are experienced or new to the profession.

- Distributive leadership is clearly embedded in the school. Instructional leaders facilitate each teacher team meeting and are part of the administrative cabinet. Teachers are empowered to make decisions based on student needs. For example, the grade 3 team explained that while grading the on-demand writing assessment, the first at the beginning of the year, staff determined that the rubric was not measuring what they had intended, and so they revised the rubric and retaught the skill of restatement. After giving the second on-demand writing assessment, the team analyzed the results finding that students improved at restating the main idea, instead of copying the citations. Teachers also create and deliver professional development, as they are on the professional learning committee.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Student work products and discussions are not always accessible to all students.

Impact

The uneven engagement in appropriately challenging tasks and uneven demonstration of higher-order thinking skills in student work products, including the work of English Language Learners and students with disabilities, do not yet reflect even levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- In some classes, students had opportunities to discuss, and in others the discussion was teacher dominated, moving in a Ping-Pong fashion from the teacher to students. In a grade 3 ICT class, students had the opportunity for a turn and talk and cited text evidence to support their answers. Yet, in a grade 4 ICT science class and a grade 2 literacy class, the discussion was teacher-centered, moving in a teacher to student and student back to teacher again, without student-to-student discussion. Additionally, in a grade 3 English as a Second Language (ESL) class, students had the opportunity for a turn and talk, but there was not ample time for both students to share or complete their discussions, leaving some students unable to demonstrate their thinking.

- In some classes the level of rigor and questions for all students was evident while in others it was uneven. In a grade 1 math class, the teacher dominated discussion, asking students fill-in-the-blank and low-level Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questions where only a few students answered, while a majority sat silent, and a several played with the math snap cubes and were distracted. Similarly, in a 12:1:1 4/5 split math class, the teacher asked students to agree or disagree but did not ask students why they agreed or disagreed, missing an opportunity for students to share their thinking and support their opinion with evidence.

- In some classes, students were provided multiple entry points into materials while in others it was not consistently provided. In a grade 2 literacy class, students had different graphic organizers. The higher-level students had more items on their timeline to complete while struggling students had less. Similarly, in a math lesson for a 12:1:1 special education class with mixed grades 4-5, students were grouped and had leveled problems and activities to work towards adding or comparing fractions, using fraction tiles and math games. In a grade 1 math class, students used snap cubes and tens and units rods for students to demonstrate grouping. However, in other classes, students were provided the same activity without differentiation or scaffolding, resulting in less active and vocal participation. For example, in a dual language grade 1 class, in popcorn reading fashion, students read the community service worker titles and explained their jobs, which the principal stated "was opposed to the schoolwide focus on close reading that is used on the alternate English-speaking days."

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

School leaders and faculty adopted selected curricula to ensure that they are providing instruction aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and using student data to plan and refine rigorous academic tasks.

Impact

The school's adoption and refinement of curricula enable school wide coherence and college and career readiness for all students. Academic tasks provide opportunities for all students to be cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- The administration shared that they and teacher leaders work collaboratively to support staff to adjust the Common Core-aligned adopted materials such as *ReadyGen* and *GO Math!* to meet their students' needs since 30% are English Language Learners (ELLs) and 20% are students with disabilities. For example, staff discerned the need based on data, and adjusted certain readings from long epics to shorter, more accessible pieces of literature first to help students build stamina and meet the same standards, as well as to adjust the design of lessons, making them more student-centered instead of teacher directed. A review of curriculum maps and lesson plans indicated that teachers have planned with the end in mind using essential questions, enduring understandings, and skills to create a view of the unit as a whole as well as the smaller components of the lesson plan. Also evident in curriculum maps, units plans, and lesson plans is that teachers have developed assessments, rubrics, and scaffolds to ensure that all students have access to these curricula that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards.

- A review of the lesson plans indicates that across the school an agreed-upon format is implemented with a focus on engaging students, teach and talk, practice, and summarize. Each addresses providing access for all learners, with activities for tier 1, 2, and 3 learners. Curriculum maps in literacy and math indicated that instructional shifts especially in the areas of building fluency, perseverance, and constructing arguments are evident. Further evident are lesson revisions based on student work and data to support reteaching.

- Curriculum maps and lesson plans indicate that tasks are differentiated for ELLs and students with disabilities. The principal and staff shared their connected schoolwide practices, "a list of methods that are integrated into to lesson plans, to build students' understanding from year to year." A review of curriculum planning documents demonstrates evidence of the use of these connected schoolwide practices. For example, two of the connected schoolwide practices include close reading and scaffolded discussion prompts for all to have access to the curricula and tasks so that they are cognitively engaged.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
The school uses common assessments aligned with the school's curricula to measure student progress toward learning targets across grades and subjects.

Impact
The school has a system to analyze student progress using multiple assessments of student learning as well as checks for understanding to inform adjustments and to meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence
- Teachers use multiple checks for understanding on a consistent basis to monitor and adjust instruction. These include 'math talk' hand signals, stoplight cards, and thumbs up/down. In most classes, teachers and students used schoolwide 'math talk hand signals' that are now being used across the curricula including in literacy, science, and other subjects, which allowed the teacher to provide immediate support via modification to those students who misunderstood concepts. The hand signals include thumbs up, middle, or down, one finger to show use of another strategy, or two to show that the student knows two strategies. These hand signals are used by students but are held close to the chest so others cannot see. There is also an applause that uses a one-handed gesture. Additionally, some teachers implement stoplight colored cards, red for needing assistance in understanding and green for 'I'm good to go." Further, in several classes, teachers had students use thumbs up or down to indicate whether they understood something or were ready for the next step in a process.

- Teachers use Google Docs to manage and maintain their math, writing, and reading trackers that support them in determining student progress toward goals on common assessments. Teachers implement the common assessments from the Common Core-aligned texts and teacher-created on-demand writing assessments. For example, teachers completed the second on-demand writing assessment and uploaded the data to the 'math tracker' so that they could determine adjustments to lessons including grouping of students and using graphic organizers.

- Teachers across grades and subjects administer assessments according to the dates listed on the testing calendar and have intentionally created a 'flex week' to implement the on-demand assessment and reteach skills to students after assessing their strengths and areas of growth. During their teacher team meetings, they analyze the data to determine follow up on adjustments to curricula and instruction as needed, with an expanded version during flex week. Last year this practice was only for grades 3-5 and it was expanded to grades K-2. Additionally, the type of activities during flex week has been revised from a large project that extended or continued the unit. Instead teachers now stop the unit and reteach based on the common assessment results. Furthermore, teachers create concept charts and use the enduring understanding to plan learning targets for small groups, whole groups, and next steps. Teachers stated that the flex week has supported their students' improving on the third grade goal of retelling of the parts of the story, where large group instruction did not meet the standard.

Quality Indicator:	**3.4 High Expectations**	**Rating:**	**Well Developed**

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training. Expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness are communicated by staff and school leaders as they partner with parents.

Impact
There is a culture of mutual accountability to support student progress toward high expectations.

Supporting Evidence
- The administration provides consistent communications of high expectations to all staff through several measures including staff handbook, weekly school newsletter, bulletins, and professional development. School leaders support staff's implementation of these expectations through a consistent cycle of observations and actionable feedback, which then informs the professional development plan. The principal stated and teachers agreed that the administration is conducting additional and more frequent observations. Teachers and teacher leaders create and present the professional development that is based on feedback from classroom observations.

- Teachers stated that they consistently communicate to families regarding their children's progress toward these expectations. Communications include phone calls, emails, texts, backpack letters, grade-team newsletters, and notifications through Class Dojo, an online system for communicating grades, assignments, and information. A few are using the newly adopted Skedula, an online grading systems that also provides communication for stakeholders. All parents stated that they check Class Dojo daily, while a few stated that their teachers use Pupil Path, the parent portal for Skedula, as some teachers have yet to make the change from Class Dojo to Pupil Path and Skedula.

- Parents shared they are able to contact teachers directly through Class Dojo, and have received direct responses that have supported their children in completing homework or projects, or were provided additional supportive assignments as well. Parents also stated that they partner with the staff as they work together to support their children's academic growth. For example, parents explained that teachers often send photos of their children's work through emails and Class Dojo informing them of their children's success or need for support. It is at these times of partnership, that parents stated they collaboratively support their children in meeting the school's high expectations.

- The school provides workshops for parents to help them understand the middle school application process. Parents and students discussed attending college visits and middle school tours and fairs and shared how helpful these were in their determining which middle school to attend based on their career goals. These workshops supported the selection process and completion of the application.