



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

State Street School

25Q032

**171-11 35th Avenue
Queens
NY 11358**

Principal: Debra Errico

**Date of review: January 12, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Dr. Marion Wilson**

The School Context

The State Street School is an elementary school with 939 students from grade Pre-Kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 18% Hispanic, 12% White, and 67% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 96.5%.

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	Focus	Well Developed
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	Additional Findings	Well Developed

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 that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, the instructional shifts, and team discussions. In addition, student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

Impact

As a result of these shared beliefs and teaching practices, classrooms are student centered, with students taking ownership for their work. Teachers facilitate learning and provide multiple opportunities for students at all levels to display their strengths, work on areas needing improvement and ultimately experience success in achieving learning targets.

Supporting Evidence

- Instruction, outcomes, strategies, and learning activities are derived from standards-based curricula and reflect school leadership's espoused beliefs about optimal student learning situations; beliefs are influenced by the priorities of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and CCLS instructional shifts. For example, the school's instructional focus was highlighted throughout classroom visits where all activities incorporated students having to engage in discourse and debate around the critical skill identified for their specific grade. The authentic conversations amongst peers included defending a claim and supporting reasoning across content areas through varied strategies and techniques.
- Students, across classrooms, produce work and engage in discussions that reflect critical thinking, creativity, innovation, and problem solving, as well as student ownership of the learning process. For example, in one fourth class students were engaged in discourse surrounding the math problems involving adding and subtracting fractions. Teachers shared varied questions and students had to create their own problems, explain their thinking, and challenge themselves to a higher level using a continuum.
- Ample student-to-student dialogue, using academic vocabulary and evidence-based accountable talk, is built into lessons. Students can articulate what they are working towards, whether it is important, and how they help determine the direction of lessons. For example, students in a fifth grade science-infused, mathematics lesson used the fishbowl technique to solve real world mathematical and scientific word problems. Students collaborated to research, defend, ask questions and were required to jigsaw with other students to make decisions based on trends in gasoline and car prices. Students shared that this type of activity would help them later in life when they have to make important life decisions about cost effective, financial decisions, trends and patterns in consumer spending while writing to support and defend their decisions based on evidence and logical reasoning.
- Teachers, teams, and administrators can articulate how their school-wide beliefs are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and aligned to curricula. For example, both teachers and administrators articulated that they believe that students learn best in small group settings, which are flexible, through conversations, high engagement and motivation, as well as with visual supports. These practices were evident across a preponderance of classrooms.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

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. In addition, teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

High quality assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Additionally, teachers continue to find new ways to make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs and students are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Students are actively involved in the collection of information from assessments, and provide input. Students keep journals, notes, and portfolios, and track their work using student-friendly checklists for projects, homework assignments, and informal as well as formal exams. Students consistently self/peer-assess against the assessment criteria (rubrics and checklists), and monitor their understanding and progress either by taking initiative or as a result of tasks set by the teacher. Students are aware of their next learning steps, and can articulate clearly what they need to do and will do to make improvements.
- A variety of feedback to students, from both teachers and peers, is accurate, specific, and timely, advancing learning as evidenced by students' articulation of checklists and rubrics showing progression based on lesson target and where they fell on this continuum. Students articulated incorporating self-reflection, peer feedback and teacher feedback as they improved their work and made progress.
- Teachers and administrators articulate coherent reasons for assessment choices. Assessments are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and content standards across content curricula. These choices deliver a range of data, some daily, some monthly, and some quarterly, to sustain collaborative inquiry and continuously improve instruction. The school uses running records, daily conferences with students, collection of student work samples, performance assessments, end of unit assessments, teacher-created assessments, as well as rubrics and checklists to continue their efforts to provide a laser-like focus on determining student mastery of subjects.
- Teacher monitoring of student understanding during lessons is visibly active and continuous. Teachers were observed "taking the pulse" of the class, and making frequent use of strategies such as questioning for explanation, thumbs up and down, stop and jots, parking lot post its, dry erase slates, and written exit slips. These strategies are used by teachers to gather information about individual and groups of students understanding and learning trends. In turn, teachers identify the specific needs of all students to modify instruction and accelerate progress for those who need it or provide additional support for others.

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. In addition, 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

As a result of school-wide coherence in curricula development and revision, curricula across grades and content areas ensure that all learners must demonstrate their thinking and promote college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has clearly defined criteria for what it means to exit a grade level and to attain the enduring understandings and key skills that ensure success in college and career. The school's curricula, Teachers' College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP), has been strategically and purposefully utilized, updated, revised, and supplemented for all grades. In addition, upon review of unit plans and maps and after analyzing gaps for Mathematics, the school researched and redesigned curricula maps incorporating Math K-5, Engage NY, and Lucy West's Metamorphosis to support mathematics instruction. The science cluster teachers utilize both Foss kits along with an inquiry-based approach.
- School leaders and teachers can articulate how curricula, across and within grade levels, are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and scaffold student success to promote college and career readiness for all students in grades K to 5. For example, the curricula were revised to incorporate a significant increase in the amount of opportunities students had to engage in student-to-student discussion and afterwards required to complete a writing response related to literature previously read. This is evident in unit plans and curricula maps. For example, students across grades were read to and then, responding to a prompt, had to discuss with partners and then respond to literature by writing in their journals about a book entitled, *Not Norman*, a story about a goldfish. Each writing prompt became increasingly demanding depending on the student's performance and grade level. Exemplars of the expectations for each grade were displayed throughout the building.
- Rigorous habits and higher order skills, such as those that require students to create their own meaning, integrate skills into processes, and use what they have learned to solve real world problems, are identified and embedded coherently across grades and subjects. For example, tasks were developed to have students complete graphic organizers about the South American economy with subtopics related to increasingly complex and various articles and text related to the subject.
- Habits of mind are evident across classrooms and can be seen embedded in tasks, such as word problems requiring students to persist, and in questioning where students have to apply past working knowledge to new situations in order to solve problems and think interdependently to complete classroom activities.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness, and successfully partner with families. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students and provide clear, focused, and effective feedback and guidance supports.

Impact

As a result of these practices, families and students are aware of the high expectations for student progress, and students continue to make significant improvements on class work assignments and state exams and are able to work to their highest level of performance.

Supporting Evidence

- The school provides parents with an additional three hour time allotment to attend various workshops beyond classroom visits. Workshop titles include Digging Deeper into the Common Core Learning Standards, Special Education Reform, English as Second Language strategies to use at home, and Power Brain. The school also scheduled additional individual meeting time with all parents from September through early November to discuss action plans for ways that parents can support their child with goals at home.
- The administrative team established systems to facilitate ongoing communication to parents and have successfully implemented the Parents as Partners program at the school. Letters are sent home electronically and parents are able to respond and communicate directly with teachers about individual student concerns. Parents are responsible for monitoring their children’s homework and also offer specific feedback to teachers to help improve student performance and help in the crafting and planning of classroom lessons.
- The guidance team, which includes the guidance counselor, youth development coordinator and school-based support team help to lead lessons on college and career readiness assemblies and developing habits of mind, such as grit and self-discipline that promote success for students. In addition, personal habits of self-regulation are continuously messaged to students through the use of school-wide behavior matrixes.
- Feedback to students is provided informally on a frequent basis through conferences with the teachers. In addition, student-friendly checklists for all subject areas have been developed to clearly establish criteria for exemplary, high-quality standards of work, discussion, and performance. Students are aware of their strengths, next steps for growth, and are actively involved in reflection and self-assessment of their work.

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

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations using an inquiry approach that focuses on improved student achievement for all learners. Additionally, embedded leadership structures provide a means for teachers to make key decisions about curricula and teaching practices.

Impact

Teacher teams function at a high level of collaboration and cooperation resulting in improved teaching practices across the school with highly effective practices displayed. In addition, teachers are able to make individual classroom level decisions which affect student learning causing even greater student progress towards goals.

Supporting Evidence

- The vast majority of teachers collaborate in professional teams where they develop and implement school wide instructional practices, embedding Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts to continuously promote improved academic achievement for all learners. For example, all teachers are involved in a four week cycle of professional learning. On the first Monday, teachers work in grade level inquiry team assignments. On the following Monday, K-5 vertical teams examine curriculum against the standards and identify gaps and implementation for change based on assessments administered in class. The third Monday consists of reconvening as a grade level team to jigsaw the information from the week prior. Finally, teachers are able to turn-key outside professional development or share results from interclass visitations and promising practices learned from one another.
- To ensure extension of student thinking, teachers engage in inquiry-based collaborations that meet twice a week to analyze the integration and collected responses from Think-Pair-Share activities and how these strategies help to improve student thinking across classrooms. These meetings have significantly impacted the quality of student work for all students including subgroups.
- School leaders and teachers offer specific and clear examples of teacher leadership that illustrate how teachers and teacher leaders play a vital role in school-level decision-making. For example, the school uses a Butterfly Share site to post minutes and student work from teams in an effort to help them reflect on their practice and achievement. The website contains voluntary videotaped lessons where teachers can discuss best practices or plans for improvement outside of the administrative process.
- Administrators and teachers are able to identify distributed leadership structures that are deeply-rooted in the school's day to day operations and articulate how they serve as a conduit for teacher input in strategic decisions build capacity and that affect student achievement. All teachers are part of one core team and also related departmental/subject area teams. For example, some teams are the data team, mathematics team, social studies team, literacy team, field trip team, and professional development team. Using the professional learning guide, teams assess and evaluate their own professional learning and make self-directed revisions as necessary.