



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2014-2015**

**The Family School**

**Elementary School X443**

**1116 Sheridan Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10456**

**Principal: Pamela Lee**

**Date of review: January 14, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Rosemary Stuart**

## The School Context

The Family School is an elementary school with 525 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 28% Black, 66% Hispanic, 1% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 38% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 91.7%.

## School Quality Criteria

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

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to parents and teachers and provide training on how to improve pedagogical practices and increase student achievement.

### Impact

School leaders and teachers are jointly accountable for improving their pedagogical practices and they partner with families to support students as they make progress toward meeting high expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers set long-term goals at the beginning of the year and keep a log of professional development they have attended related to those goals. The principal and assistant principals hold mid-year conferences with each teacher to discuss the progress the teacher is making toward meeting their own goals and to determine support that might be needed to help the teacher improve pedagogical practices aimed at even higher levels of achievement for all students.
- School leaders provide teachers with detailed feedback outlining the support that is available to them to improve their practice. For example, one recent observation indicated that an additional week of residency from a coach would be provided to help the teacher improve lesson planning by incorporating additional higher order questioning.
- The school provides parents with an individualized progress report in October, January, March, and May which includes a section outlining how parents can help their children be successful. One progress report notes that a grade 4 student was still performing at a level 2 in math in January. The parents were informed that they could help their child by working on division facts every night.
- The parents on the School Leadership Team (SLT) help develop the school goals around college and career readiness and then take responsibility for helping all parents in the school community to understand and embrace those goals. They created a survey in four languages for parents that included questions such as, "As a parent/guardian what subject(s) do you feel you need help with to help your child?"
- Parents expressed that they are well aware of the connection between what their child is doing now and what they will need to be able to do in college. According to the 2014 School Survey, 97% of parents believed the school is preparing their children for college and career.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

School leaders and teachers adapt units of study from Common Core aligned programs to incorporate the instructional shifts and include rigorous tasks.

### Impact

Consistent lesson planning promotes college and career readiness for all students and builds coherence across grades. However, not all tasks require students, including English language learners and students with disabilities to demonstrate their thinking.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers utilized the Common Core Learning Standards in more depth this year to plan units and lessons. In some grades, they have changed the sequence of lessons to make the instructional shifts more evident. For example, in grade 2 the teachers have changed the core focus from teaching fairy tales to narrative writing. Not all lesson plans identify the inclusion of the instructional shifts to explicitly build coherence across all grades.
- Teachers in grade 5 are emphasizing the skill of providing evidence to support a claim in their lesson plans. The teachers use the RACE protocol (restate question, answer completely, cite evidence and explain) in literacy plans and the STAR protocol in math (search, translate, answer and review). Students referenced these strategies in discussions about their work.
- Lesson plans are generally structured with modeling by the teacher (I do) and guided practice (we do), followed by independent practice (you do), although not all lesson plans explicitly planned for this sequence of instruction. In order to increase coherence across grades, the school leader provided guidance on structuring lessons in all grades that includes suggestions such as planning for 30 minutes of independent math work after a short mini-lesson.
- Lesson plans identify strategies for addressing the needs of English language learners and students with disabilities, although these modifications are often general, such as noting that students will have leveled texts, but not including the specific texts that will be provided. While tasks are differentiated to provide multiple entry points, not all tasks explicitly support such students in demonstrating their thinking.

## Additional Findings

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points and challenging tasks for students in all grades.

### Impact

Students are engaged in activities that require higher-order thinking skills and student discourse reflects sophisticated levels of student thinking and participation.

### Supporting Evidence

- Every week, students in all grades rotate in groups to participate in a unison reading book club in their English language arts classes. On alternate weeks, the students are in whole group or small reading groups. During the unison reading time, students meet in reading clubs according to a posted schedule. The teacher confers with one group of students while the others are in their assigned groups. Students keep reading logs in their class folders.
- Students express themselves confidently and are comfortable talking with each other and with unfamiliar adults in their school. One fifth grade student explained that he had been doing a lot of reading about Christopher Columbus and he was not completely sure that he was “a nice guy” because he had brought diseases from Europe to North America. A third grade student eagerly related that the first or last sentence of a paragraph is often a key to the main idea of the text. Another student stated that he wanted to learn more about Martin Luther King, Jr. after reading his *I Have a Dream* speech. Students explained that if they need help they can ask a teacher, but that they often ask a fellow student first. One student proudly stated that he is often asked to explain or provide assistance to other students in his class.
- Instruction is often differentiated for student need. For example, in a grade 1 Integrated Co-Teaching class, groups of students were engaged in several activities supported by teachers and paraprofessionals. One group was tapping out letter sounds using magnetic boards, another group was identifying base words and suffixes using a turn-and-talk strategy, and one child was receiving one-on-one support in writing the letter “f.”
- Many lessons included strategies to encourage high level discussion such as requiring students to outline their reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with each other. In one class students discussed the definition of wealth and how it would be displayed through clothing and jewelry in different cultures around the world and in another they were predicting how an unfamiliar story might end.
- In 2014, school performance was in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile or better in both English language arts (ELA) and math as measured by the adjusted growth percentile citywide. This represents an improvement from the previous year when they were in the 53<sup>rd</sup> percentile in ELA and the 42<sup>nd</sup> percentile in math.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Teachers across grades and content areas create common grade-wide assessments and rubrics and use a grade-level grading policy to measure student progress.

### Impact

Analysis of assessment data is used to make adjustments to curricula and teachers provide actionable feedback to students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Students complete performance-based assessments (PBAs) that become part of their portfolio that cumulates from year to year. PBAs are developed by the grade teams and are common across the grade. In addition, teachers create pre-and post-assessments, such as a math interim assessment that was administered in December, to help them gauge the effectiveness of the lessons that have been taught and to determine what re-teaching strategies might be needed.
- The data specialist enters data about the common assessments into the online data system. Teachers review the data for their students in order to form instructional groups. Together, in teams, they look at data across the grade, identifying trends in order to inform revisions to units and lessons. For example, one team analyzed assessment data and identified that multi-digit rounding was a struggle for many students. They developed strategies to address this need during subsequent review lessons.
- In September, a kindergarten student only knew eight capital and four lower case letters as measured by the Teachers College Letter Identification Assessment. The teachers then provided this student with daily small group instruction and by December, he was able to recognize 25 capital letters, 24 lower case letters and 22 sounds.
- Teachers provide actionable feedback to students using rubrics. Feedback to a first grade student using an informational writing task rubric indicated that the report included at least three facts about the subject, but that some words were spelled incorrectly. In addition, many students assess their own work using the rubrics provided with the task. Some students shared work that had been reviewed by a peer using an opinion writing checklist. Students stated that the feedback they receive from their teachers and peers help them improve their writing.
- Each grade level inquiry team creates grading policies which are reviewed by the principal and the SLT to ensure they reflect the alignment of the instruction to the Common Core. Common grade level rubrics are created or revised to align with the local Measures of Student Learning assessments.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

Teachers engage in structured professional collaborations focused on aligning practice with the Common Core Learning Standards and analyzing assessment data and student work.

**Impact**

Improved teacher practices are strengthened and student achievement improves.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams meet regularly, at least once a week, in structured teams with planned agendas. Team members bring samples of student work to discuss with their colleagues. They use a protocol to guide their discussion on what has been working well, what challenges they are facing, and to brainstorm next steps in anticipation of issues that might arise. For example, in one team meeting, the teachers discussed the effectiveness of displaying charts in their classrooms (in both English and Spanish) that listed strategies which students could use to problem solve in math. They also noted that having students compete in math games helped to increase the level of fluency with math facts as well as increasing their level of interest and engagement.
- Teachers write data stories to illustrate the accomplishments of targeted students. For example, one data story about a first grade student illustrated the effectiveness of using graphic organizers to help students add more details to their writing. This student improved from an overall level 2 on an informational writing task in November to an overall level 3 in December, with a level 4 for the specific element of adding details.
- In addition to the work that teachers conduct in teams at their school, some of them also collaborate in professional learning communities with three other district schools. They share what they learn in their inter-school groups with their colleagues when they return.
- Teachers lead professional development sessions on Mondays to share best practices and to develop their own leadership skills. Teachers have choices about what professional development sessions they can attend and are encouraged to attend sessions that will help them improve their practice as measured by their observation results.