



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Quality Review
Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning
2013-2014**

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

J.H.S. 167 Robert F. Wagner

Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 02M167

**220 EAST 76 STREET
MANHATTAN
NY,10021**

Principal: Jennifer Rehn

**Dates of review: May 20-21, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Kristine Mustillo**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

J.H.S. 167 Robert F. Wagner is an Intermediate School with 1345 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 9% Black, 23% Hispanic, 39% White, and 29% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 96%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School teams meet regularly to strengthen Common Core aligned curricula units and tasks to meet the needs of all learners resulting in the adoption of academic and non-academic skills that support college and career readiness. (1.1)
 - School staff creates interdisciplinary units in English Language Arts Social Studies and Science. Professional development around the instructional shifts and Hess's cognitive rigor matrix, along with an Urban Advantage partnership, support teachers in collaborative planning sessions where standards and student work are reviewed along with unit plans to ensure rigorous skills and higher order thinking skills are embedded within the curriculum. Expeditionary Learning was purchased to expand teacher and student resources. Similarly in mathematics, teachers use CMP3 mathematics and in planning sessions ensure plans attend to instructional shifts. Collaborative planning sessions by discipline and houses that includes norming of understandings and task development ensure coherence. Teachers collect and review learning inventories along with student work to understand and plan for student learning needs. Teachers use Universal Design for Learning to make appropriate modifications for students while maintaining an expectation for academic rigor. Guidance and teacher specialists participate in these planning sessions resulting in "ladders up" embedded in unit plans so that all students have access to rigorous content. This may include supports through leveled and annotated text, access to a variety of math tools or attention to a student's need for breaks and redirection. Challenge activities for high performing students are included throughout unit and lesson plans. A 8th grade unit plan on World War I, asks students to examine American feelings prior to the war and during the war through the exploration of song lyrics, advertisements, and other primary source documents. The unit plan provides for strategic use of co-teaching models, discussion opportunities, technology integration and organizational supports so that all students can demonstrate their thinking as they prepare for the culminating task in which they must debate their support or opposition to the United States going to war. Collaborative planning practices, using research based standards and supports lead to all students producing high level work products that demonstrate thinking and support them on their path to college and career readiness.
- Across a vast majority of classrooms teacher pedagogy reflects attention to all students being engaged in meaningful tasks resulting in the production of meaningful work products. (1.2)
 - The school believes that all students learn best when expectations are high and students are given "ladders up" to reaching rigorous demands along with opportunities to extend their learning. In the establishment of school goals for the year, the school focused on Danielson Domain 1: Planning and Preparation along with components 3b: Questioning and Discussion and 3c: Engaging Students in Learning. Throughout the school there was thoughtful attention to the learning needs of individual and student groups in academic and non-academic areas due to the collaborations among instructional and support personnel during team planning times. Across classrooms, students worked in small groups and

grappled with complex text and tasks. Annotation, questioning, and a range of leveled materials supported students in exploring the internal and external conflicts in the Pigman and determining the consequences of deforestation on habitats and the population. Students in both these classrooms were preparing for classroom level debates and seminars. Students working with the Pigman look for language to support character struggles and prepared questions for conversations. In science, students gathered information on environmental factors and what the threat was to natural elements and life as they prepared for presentations to stop deforestation, attending to counter claims. In mathematics, students are exposed to tiered tasks along with weekly challenge problems for all students and daily challenges for students who complete class tasks. Across classrooms there were numerous opportunities for student choice in research topics and presentation formats along with opportunities for reflection and revision following peer and teacher feedback. Teacher team discussions around planning and execution, along with professional supports for this work, result in all students engaging in higher order thinking projects with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their thinking.

- School leadership makes strategic decisions around the utilization of time and personnel resources aligned to support school goals and leading to improved instruction and student engagement. (1.3)
 - The school goals are to engage all students in rigorous learning through the strengthening of teacher practice, student supports and data systems. The principal has strategically supported teachers planning for higher level questioning and embedded opportunities for student dialogue across the school. Collaborative planning structures along with a range of professional supports that include in-house coaching, network support, partnering opportunities with Urban Advantage, and inter-visitations result in a rigorous and cohesive curriculum and strong instructional practice. The creation of teacher goals along with cycles of observation and feedback tied to professional supports leads to mutual accountability as well as improved practice. While this work supports the strengthening of curriculum and teacher practice school-wide, the school also thoughtfully pilots student initiatives providing both academic support and enrichment. In 2011-2012 the school had an enrollment of 51 ESL students at the beginner and intermediate levels. The school created co-taught ESL classes as these students moved to 7th and 8th grade, providing long term professional development for the teachers. Students in these classes work on the same rigorous content as other students with strategic supports and language objectives embedded in unit plans to support students in reaching standards. Students in class were observed conducting a character analyses from *The Outsiders*, identifying the heroic qualities of their character along with supporting evidence from the text. Students then engaged in conversations with their peers regarding their analysis. This current school-year, only 11 of those students required ESL services, as 40 students attained proficiency on the NYSESLAT. The school has now established co-teaching ESL classes on all grades. Strengthening curriculum and instruction along with providing thoughtful opportunities for groups of students leads to improved student work and progress.
 - School teams meet weekly by house discipline. A house structure whereby teachers, guidance and administration loop with students builds responsibility and accountability to colleagues, students and families. The focus of these meetings is on academic expectations and planning

for students to meet those expectations by supporting their academic and non-academic needs. This time includes unit planning with attention to Common Core Learning Standards and the Instructional Shifts, lesson planning with attention to Universal Design for Learning, and student conversations to ensure the planning is appropriate for the students in the class. These structures result in all students being engaged in challenging academic tasks.

- School leaders have established a professional learning community that supports student and teacher growth through collaborative relationships that result in mutual accountability in achieving expectations. (3.4)
 - School leaders convey high expectations to staff through the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Thoughtful cycles of observation and feedback tied to professional supports and linked to student outcomes ensure a whole school commitment to student achievement. Teachers have opportunities to watch videos for norming purposes, participate in professional learning walks, and collaborate with peers around planning, assessment and student engagement. Teachers state that having these opportunities as well as opportunities for professional reflection and sharing practices leads to improved instruction and student performance. Administration meets regularly with teachers individually and in groups, around practice, student outcomes and their professional learning goals. Teachers feel supported in the achievement of their professional goals and empowered to impact student performance through these structures.
 - A house structure where teachers, administration and guidance loop with students results in strengthened relationships among staff, students and families. Students are tracked and families regularly communicated with around student progress towards expectations and opportunities for support and enrichment. House teams have meetings with parents to provide a comprehensive understanding of student academic and social emotional growth. The school works with parents to ensure students are well prepared for next steps. Upon entry to the school guidance works closely with students and families to ensure they are aware of advanced placement classes where they can earn high school credits. The school holds parent workshops and high school visits so that families are aware of the requirements for their desired school and supports keeping students on that path. 72% of 8th graders take accelerated classes. 64% of students leave Wagner having earned high school credits. 98% of student who take the mathematics regents pass and 96% pass the science regents. Students who are struggling also receive intensive supports. In the fall, the school identified 140 students who were in jeopardy of failing course, some in danger of failing four courses. The school held parent meeting where intervention plans were created to support students in academics and executive functioning. Parents reinforced this work at home and were continually kept in the loop regarding student progress. By mid-year the number of students at-risk of failing had dropped to 75. By the end of the year, the number of students in danger of failing a course had dropped to 30 and there were zero four subject failures.
- School leaders have a professional development plan in place that includes cycles of observation and feedback linked to professional learning plans for individual teachers resulting in improved teacher practice. (4.1)
 - School administration conducts regular cycles of observation which are scheduled, tracked and discussed at weekly instructional cabinet

meetings. The school established three focus areas for school-wide instructional practice; Planning and Preparation, Questioning and Discussion and Engaging Students in Learning. The school also identified student learning outcomes expected from the strengthening of pedagogical practice. Following initial professional development opportunities to set expectations and create normed understandings, teacher selected professional goals linked to school goals with qualitative and quantitative measures of success. The school instructional team creates long term professional development plans and set benchmarks to assess teacher improvement and student growth. The administrative team conducts regular cycles of observation and feedback and meets weekly as an instructional cabinet to align individualized supports, giving teachers opportunities to lead professional development in identified best practices and creating individual support plans for teachers who are new or struggling that includes one-to-one mentoring. School administration strategically aligns supports and has created a professional tool kit that includes external and internal professional learning opportunities for teachers. Co-planning with teacher specialists and guidance is a school-wide practice to strengthen students' academic and non-academic needs. All teachers participate in inter-visitations and all teachers have the opportunity to join self-selected student groups based on interest. A plan for a struggling teacher in the area of student engagement included participation in one-to-one co-planning sessions with a coach and/or consultant, professional development in Universal Design for Learning and peer inter-visitation. A goal setting, action planning document for a highly effective teacher included providing for opportunities to lead a professional study group and demonstrate lessons for new teachers. These numerous opportunities for teacher growth and reflection results in 75% of teachers becoming effective/highly effective in Domains 1 and 3 along with improved rigor of tasks based on the analysis of student work products in teacher teams.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen assessment practices in order to create clear portraits of student mastery across all subject areas to result in consistent progress for all student groups. (2.2)
 - Teachers utilize common assessments along with rubrics to provide students with clear expectations and actionable feedback. Students have regular opportunities for self and peer reflection along with opportunities to revise and edit their work to demonstrate mastery. Students spoke consistently about being aware of the feedback in their portfolios and knowing where they were in terms of performance and progress. One student identified his need to improve the organization of his paragraphs and the relevant information to support his claims and articulated how teacher feedback and organizational supports helped him to improve on a following task. While these practices were evident in a large number of core classes, they were not evident consistently in all classes hindering the development of a more comprehensive student profile and improved growth plans for students around their achievement.
 - Teachers review student work and assessment data to plan for student learning needs and make adjustments to unit and lesson plans. Teacher teams, while reviewing task data, noted a need for a group of students to be able to differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information and the need for another group of students to identify counter claims. Follow

up lessons were then modified to address the needs of these groups of students. Additionally, mathematics teachers made adjustments to pacing and assessments based on student performance data. While teachers use assessment data to make instructional decisions across grade and content, the school is working to extend this work, creating school-wide systems to more effectively track and create growth plans for student groups, so that all students including English language learners and special education students demonstrate increased mastery.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: J.H.S. 167 Robert F. Wagner	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score				X			
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
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?				X			
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?				X			
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?			X				
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations?				X			
Systems for Improvement							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products?				X			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?				X			
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?				X			
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed