



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Quality Review
Office of School Quality
Division of Academics, Performance, and Support
2013-2014**

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

The Middle Village School

Elementary/Middle School Q087

67-54 80th Street

Queens

NY 11379

Principal: Caryn Michaeli

Dates of review: December 5-6, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Madelene Chan

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

PS/IS 87 is an elementary/middle school with 607 students from Pre-K through grade 8. The school population comprises 1% Black, 47% Hispanic, 43% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 24% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 92.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school aligns curricula to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and offers meaningful learning experiences that promote rigor to improve student outcomes. (1.1)
 - Pacing calendars and unit tasks reflect both vertical and horizontal alignment of understandings and competencies with purposeful access to the school wide instructional focus highlighting relevant information in text. The instructional focus was based on end-of-year data representing further work in students' being able to extract relevant and irrelevant information from their reading of text. Interdisciplinary unit tasks emphasize rigorous habits as evidenced in students' reflections and writing results in grades seven and eight. Baseline assessments showed that upper school students are proficient or above in answering questions that help push deeper engagement with texts, promoting college and career readiness.
 - During classroom visits, tasks and texts across classrooms were rigorous and emphasized critical thinking skills, making no distinction between the work that is given to students with disabilities (SWDs) or students who are above level. All students are part of the workshop model in reading, writing and math where a skill is taught in succinct mini-lessons which consist of direct instruction, guided instruction and independent practice. Flexible small groups follow modeling techniques shared by teachers in order to engage students in higher order thinking through challenging tasks. Furthermore, teachers plan lessons based on students' learning styles, assessment results and conference notes. As a result, the pre-kindergarten teacher posits that through their artist study unit, students engage in a risk free environment where they can freely express themselves. Moreover, student writing at this young age is demonstrating greater stamina through academic vocabulary development and exposure to multiple artists and their styles, promoting higher order thinking.
- Teaching practices across the school reflect a common belief about how students learn best and provide purposeful supports to meet varied student needs. (1.2)
 - Pedagogical practices reflect the school's core belief system on how children learn which is best supported by the research and work of David Sousa on how the brain processes and intakes information allowing students to learn. Teaching practices are closely aligned to CCLS driven curriculum emphasizing students' functional and instructional levels. Specific elements of the Danielson framework like grouping students by their cognitive development levels identified as "high", "medium" and "low" is an example of how students are grouped by need. Based on these levers fifteen students were decertified to less restrictive environments last year with a number of students being assessed for similar modifications this year.
 - Teachers are using various strategies like chunking the text in order to get the main idea and teaching students how to draw evidence from texts to inform and explain their point of view. English language learners (ELLs) are provided with texts based on student choice and interest. Teachers have

seen growth in students' stamina, confidence and motivation making students more accountable for their reading progress. In addition, an "I do, we do, you do" model affords students in technology class the ability to create their own movie by incorporating full motion video, adding titles, animations and music, then publishing and proofing their finished products. This project based assessment is data driven and enables small groups to receive individualized technology skills in a timely manner. As a result, students are able to incorporate reading skills like summarizing pertinent information and extracting text for meaning, which improves their ability to answer high-level questions and participate in rich discussions.

- School leaders and staff have a clear, ongoing understanding of the performance and progress of all learners which effectively informs instructional practices at the team and classroom level. (2.2)
 - Individual teachers and teacher teams demonstrate an understanding of each student's academic needs as evidenced by their strong rationale behind grouping students. This is done after careful assessment of a wide variety of data including results from New York State tests in English language arts (ELA) and math, end-of-unit tasks, and Fountas and Pinnell reading level assessments. Additionally teacher created rubrics aligned with the Depth of Knowledge rubric for each grade is used to assess students' mastery of the standards and the content relative to skill development. These documents are used across the grades to promote higher order thinking in students' work products. This practice has been very successful as evidenced in students' reading and writing achievements showing more than 50% of upper school students able to analyze a character's actions and relate to their motives supported by evidence from the text, as seen in their on-demand writing assessments. In addition, students agree that when teachers' post next steps on their work it carries over to future writing strategies. Furthermore, according to the latest Fountas and Pinnell records, 75% of first graders are on grade level or above in reading.
 - Teacher team work focuses on effective adjustments to instructional practices and the need to modify areas based on an analysis of student need. Teachers are able to explain why students are in a small group for each lesson, and support the rationale with the data that was diagnosed according to the standards aligned to their decisions. Teachers consistently make use of strategies like turn and talk, student/peer assessments and student reflection documents to elicit information regarding individual student understanding and trends. As a result of these procedures, 45% of third and fourth graders have shown progress in math based on work determining productive struggle and math fluency.
- The principal and staff work as a unified team to create a unique culture that promotes student voice and learning enhancing students' personal growth. (1.4)
 - PS/IS 87 is a very unique school, as most students are in attendance for ten years, therefore the school plays a major role in their developmental process. One of the school's mantras is to "treat others the way you want to be treated" and all students are aware and act towards this philosophy. There is a very strong "extended-family" bond between administration, staff, students and parents. Parents are grateful that the principal can be contacted seven days a week if communication is needed. Additionally, a

Round Table program enables students to have a strong voice in the school, as they are included in decisions about after school programs and curriculum choices. Based on the powerful unity upheld by this school, the Department of Education granted the school a new extension to their existing building. A new gymnasium is now the place where over 100 students gather at 7:05 am each morning to play European handball, basketball and volleyball, resulting in students feeling physically fit and better prepared to start the instructional day motivated with renewed energy. Middle school students agreed that their averages in math and science and their abilities to concentrate have increased based on the exercise they are able to engage in before school.

- Students agree that teachers are very aware of their personalities and are teaching towards their learning styles. One eighth grader said it will be difficult to graduate in June because his teachers care about his success, as well as his own family. The school implements a daily “Words of Wisdom” program where students self-select a song that is played over the loud speaker after the pledge of allegiance. Following the song a student will reflect on the meaning of the words and how those are “words to live by. Some of the messages have been to “not let anyone stand in your way” and “never let anyone bring you down”. Students agree that they recall these messages when they are in precarious situations and the messages help them make better choices. In addition, as a result of a community councilwoman’s contribution to the school, the program Inside Broadway supports students in acting endeavors and musical enrichment. As a result of the school’s efforts towards student advocacy, attendance is consistently above 93% and behavior driven occurrence reports are less than 5% annually.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend the practice of providing quality feedback to teachers, tracking their progress to promote improved instructional practices aligned to student work and data, while advancing professional growth and reflection. (4.1)
 - School leaders provide faculty with ongoing feedback designed to target specific teaching actions and behaviors that promote student learning. Written feedback includes clear connections to assignments, tasks and student goals. Furthermore, the feedback is cyclical and shows that next steps are achieved in subsequent observations. Although teachers are strengthening their practice based on the feedback, there is no strategic connection to student work at this time, thus making it difficult to determine if students are improving based on the instructional feedback that is offered to teachers.
 - Over the past three years, teachers have been exposed to components of the Danielson Framework and the staff has received professional development on the Danielson rubric. Teachers have a shared understanding of how the rubric is used for evaluation. At this time professional development (PD) is offered, but a gap exists between the PD support and the development and execution of teachers’ professional goals. Since professional development is not tightly linked to teachers’ needs, the ability to track and measure progress toward the achievement of professional goals is hindered.

- Design a uniform protocol to evaluate and monitor school-wide systems in order to make needed revisions, build coherence and accelerate student learning. (5.1)
 - Teacher teams meet regularly to analyze student data and review the work that is aligned to the assessment results. Some teams have adjusted curricular and instructional practices as a result of the analysis. For example, when lower school teachers realized that students were challenged by adding and subtraction tasks they modified their instruction to increase the use of manipulatives for tactile learners and included math strategies like using ten frames and the part, part whole method approach as a scaffold for instruction, however there were no measures of assurance or checkpoints to monitor the effectiveness of these strategies since the school is developing a process to evaluate the methods of instructional adjustment.
 - All teachers have received professional development in understanding the Danielson Framework and creating tasks to meet the needs of students. At this time the school is creating a plan to determine which workshops have been most effective in alignment with the CCLS and student work. Furthermore, organizational resources and teacher team work is also being reviewed for effectiveness. The lack of a process for evaluating and adjusting the aforementioned systems has limited the support of student mastery of the CCLS.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The Middle Village School	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