



**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

PS/IS 266

26Q266

74-10 Commonwealth Boulevard

Queens

NY 11426

Principal: Ms. Nicole Scott

November 25, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Anita Saunders

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

PS/IS266 is an elementary/middle school with 678 students from kindergarten through grade eight. The school population comprises 11% Black, 16% Hispanic, 27% White, and 45% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. 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 leaders and staff share a very clear set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by a research-based framework and leads to growth in student progress. (1.2)
 - Students at P.S/ I.S 266 learn best when they have ownership of their learning and can make connections to the real world. Teachers make an emphasis of this belief in their teacher team meetings by customizing the curriculum to address this focus. Across the vast majority of classrooms these beliefs were evident. For example: One child stated, “I love having conversations in my Spanish class. In this class students were leading discussions by describing their paper bag puppets using domain specific vocabulary. In a Science class students discussed water through a tiered activity and lesson. Similarly, the student led group work observed in the vast majority of classrooms involved many tiered activities and customized learning, supporting the schools belief in and integration of the instructional shifts. Teachers were observed allowing students to struggle with mathematical concepts, explain rationale of solving math problems to the class and lead discussions. These practices, supported by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, helped to ensure a through-line of teaching philosophies and school wide beliefs.
 - Classroom instruction reflects scaffolding work with enrichment and acceleration, questioning, and routines that provide multiple entry points into the curriculum. Depth of Knowledge (DOK) higher level questioning and a variety of thinking maps are used in every classroom to provide students with depth and complexity of critical thinking to organize thoughts in reading, writing and speaking. For example: an English as a Second Language (ESL) class was using a circle map to describe Thanksgiving, a grade 6 social studies class was working on early civilizations in six stations, each group with a different task .based on interest and ability. One group was doing a map study of the Tigris Euphrates River Valley using a Venn diagram to identify rivers and land, another used an I-pad app “Barefoot Atlas” to research information; and still another group sketched a chart based on pictures and information from a text book on characteristics of a farming community. These instructional strategies yield student work products indicative of real learning and academic growth.
- The principal makes informed and data based organizational decisions across all aspects of the school and allocates resources to support student growth (1.3)
 - The principal has had some register growth that enabled the hiring of a new English language arts coach. The use of the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) allocation was used to provide summer training for the new core curriculum, and create ‘per session’ for staff involved in Academic Personal Behavior Ethics Code (APEC) rubric development and the School Wide Inquiry Vertical Team. Additionally, due to organizational staffing, grade level teacher teams

meet several times a month: once with the literacy coach, once with the math coach, once with their grade members and twice monthly with the principal. Cluster teachers meet as a department once a week with extended day teacher team meetings and once a month as a department. These organizational decisions have fostered the sharing of instructional strategies and resulted in improved student achievement and a greater quality of work products.

- The principal has hired five new teachers, two brand new for math in grades 5 and 7, to close the achievement gap. Staff members were part of the hiring committee to observe the lesson demonstrations to ensure the hiring of the best candidates. New hiring alongside of existing practices have enabled English language learner students to receive push in and pull out services and Students with Disabilities (SWD) to be placed in each grade level Integrated Co Teaching (ICT) class to ensure instruction and curriculum coherence. The special and general education teachers additionally plan and implement lessons that provide multiple entry points with flexible student groupings to meet the needs of all students thereby promoting student growth and access to college and career. Due to hiring practices grade level teachers are enabled to meet to revise and make curriculum and instructional modifications as well as develop action plans to meet student needs, resulting in groups of instructional staff members holding themselves accountable for student success.
- School leaders and faculty systematically collect and analyze a wide range of data that successfully identifies the needs of students resulting in strategic instructional adjustments to improve student progress and performance. (2.2)
 - The schools assessments are Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) aligned and collected by classroom teachers and school leaders. Assessments administered and analyzed include: pre and post assessments, performance based assessments for Ready Gen, Go Math, Code X, Teachers College reading and writing baseline assessments, and formative performance baseline assessments for middle school math, science and social studies. In addition to these formalized assessments exit slips are used in grades 1-8, and entry slips are also used to review or pre assess mastery as well as set student goals in the beginning of a unit. All students, including English language learners and Students with Disabilities reflect upon their goals with student checklists and receive feedback with next steps written on student work resulting in a clear portrait of student mastery.
 - The school has developed a new system to analyze data for all content areas, Data Driven Instruction (DDI). The data from this system is collected and tracked quarterly to monitor individual student progress towards mastery. The data analyzed from this system revealed that there was a large subgroup of students in the lowest third in English language arts and math. Teacher teams use this data to plan and adjust curriculum and teaching strategies for small group and individual lessons to specifically target the skills needed to improve student performance. For example: the third grade teacher team have implemented a template for backward design in English language arts to ensure appropriate time on lessons and scaffolding sections of the

rubric for English language arts and Students with Disabilities in response to the data. Students consistently self-assess their learning by using graphic organizers and checklists that instructors use to assist them in providing next steps and action plans to guide their learning. These practices have resulted in an increase of level 4 English language arts scores by 10% in grade 4, 16% in grade 5, 21% in grade 6 and 23% in grade 8. These tremendous gains are a result of the instructional decisions and school-wide data analysis systems evident in the school.

- Teachers benefit from an observation process that is grounded in the Danielson framework and allows for the implementation of effective instructional techniques that promotes professional growth. (4.1)
 - The principal believes adults have different needs and professional development must be differentiated. All teachers have met individually with the principal and identified three goals for the year – instructional, pedagogical and building culture. The principal tiers these goals so that new teachers receive the most support and are sent to specific Danielson training sessions. Thus far, the principal and assistant principal have conducted the first round of informal unannounced mini observations and provided written feedback with next steps, along with individual face to face discussions. The principal has also conducted several formal observations, including pre and post observation meetings. All feedback and next steps are provided using the Danielson rubric to ensure individual goals are met.
 - Several patterns and trends have been revealed during the principal and assistant principal observations: teachers need additional work in planning and preparation in order to appropriately meet student needs identified by DDI and there is a need to increase in the use of DOK high level questions by staff and students. Due to this need additional training and modeling for students to increase DOK high level questions during their discussions with peers are in progress. Additionally, staff is encouraged to attend professional conferences and integrate their learning into the 266 team. Due to these needs two teachers have been chosen to participate in the NYCDOE “Academic Personal Behavior” pilot program which includes monthly professional development on feedback practices and coaching from the New York City Mentoring Program. Furthermore, rising teachers and teacher leaders are identified in the administration succession planning process. Teachers are encouraged to pursue administrative degrees and participate in Department of Education pilots sponsored by the school to prepare them for positions that may arise. These trends and professional development opportunities lead to improved instruction and student work products as noted in gains evidenced.
- The school has integrated the CCLS and the instructional shifts into curricula offering rigorous and meaningful learning experiences to improve student achievement, and foster college and career readiness, for all students. (1.1)
 - The elementary and middle school grades have adopted CCLS aligned new reading and writing programs, Ready Gen and Code X,

and the Go Math elementary program, recommended by the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE). Curriculum and pacing calendars have been adjusted to ensure content and instruction meet students' identified needs with remediation and acceleration to increase achievement and growth in all content areas. The focus for English language arts is on argumentative/opinion writing and to construct viable arguments in math. Every classroom has a display of thinking maps to increase the level of thinking and organization in reading and writing. School wide displays of CCLS tasks with rubrics, identified standards and next steps, beginning in kindergarten, build upon the previous year's learning objectives resulting in vertical and horizontal alignment. The instructional and curricular coherence as well as the integration of the instructional shifts observed promotes college readiness for all students.

- Teacher teams continue to use the DDI to analyze student work, to plan and challenge all students thinking. Classroom activities reflect multiple entry points to allow students to work in small groups and demonstrate various ways of solving a problem. For example: In a grade 7 Spanish class the curriculum plans detailed students being engaged in three different group activities for creating informational text using domain specific vocabulary to inform an audience about physical descriptions and characteristics for a family member, friend, or an article of clothing. The plan then explained that the student will design a paper bag puppet according to the description and do a presentation. In a science class group work was differentiated in the plans according to high, medium and low permitting all students to engage in an appropriate hands on task related to water cycles. This activity not only resulted in the planning of student access but ensures that students would be actively engaged in meaningful assignments that promote thinking and reasoning necessary for future success.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue the goal setting, action planning and data analysis, resulting from the Data Driven Instruction (DDI) to improve teacher practice and close the achievement gap. (3.1)
 - The schools theory of action results in a belief that all student academic and social emotional needs must be met. Hence, the school has a developed a Real Heroes Program emphasizing values and an Academic Personal Behavior Ethics Code (APEC) with a rubric for middle school students, now being worked on by elementary teachers for their grades. The school also believes that children must have ownership of their learning and therefore teachers create lessons that have real life connections. To support instructional practices teachers develop student goals and action plans on each grade and department level and reveal its success in the next DDI cycle of data. Although student social emotional growth systems are in place and teachers and staff members promote the goal developing efforts of the school, teacher practices have not yet resulted in the closing of instructional achievement gaps throughout all grades and subjects.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: PS/IS 266	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