



Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 146

Elementary School K146

**610 Henry Street
Brooklyn
NY 11231**

Principal: Anna Allanbrook

**Date of review: April 1, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Maribel Hulla**

The School Context

P.S. 146 is an elementary school with 664 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school's population comprises 23% Black, 22% Hispanic, 42% White, 6% Asian, 6% multiracial, and 1% other students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 31% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled, and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the 2013-2014 school year was 95.00%.

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	Focus	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	Additional Findings	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	Celebration	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:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for instruction and create opportunities for professional learning and support to staff. The school coordinates ongoing events to partner with families and to effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability supports school-wide coherence in efforts to meet set high expectations. Furthermore, successful partnerships with families have led to responsive approaches that result in parents having a heightened awareness of their role in supporting their children's progress towards meeting the school's high expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The instructional leaders consistently track progress of pedagogy using the Danielson Framework for Teaching to build a common understanding of the quality of teaching points, and questions and discussion techniques that encourage students to extend and enrich discussions. Actionable feedback and professional development is provided based on this tracking. For example feedback to a fourth grade teacher stated she needed additional support with multiple entry points. While the teacher had students in groups the lesson did not incorporate a variety of tasks to meet all learners. This teacher received direct support from an instructional coach and was provided the time to do an inter-visitation and plan with her colleagues. Additionally, school leaders write explicit narratives for each teacher on instructional practices and monitor those practices, assuming mutual accountability with teachers for pedagogical expectations and next steps.
- Teachers shared that school leaders design professional learning that focuses on high expectations for all students through modeling, inter-visitations, and ongoing feedback, allowing them to meet the school's rigorous set of expectations for teaching and learning. One teacher team articulated how school leaders collaboratively participate in the development of professional growth by meeting with teachers on a one-to-one basis once a month, and by participating in walkthroughs and analysis of student data and work. Another teacher team shared their excitement about being a Progressive Redesign Opportunity School for Excellence (PROSE) school, which they stated gives them a real voice in collaborative decision-making in school improvement efforts.
- Parents reported that teachers share work samples and narrative progress reports three times per year. Clearly articulated learning goals based on the Common Core Learning Standards are individualized for each student to ensure that families are aware of the next learning steps toward mastery of learning standards. Parents shared that learning goals are in-depth, student-specific, and name clear next steps that can be implemented at home. Leaders and teachers shared samples of these extensive reports, which included a narrative about the whole child in each content area. Also, parents stated that the principal sends out a weekly newsletter about upcoming events such as parent workshops on college and career readiness, upcoming events, and celebrations.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect a coherent articulated set of beliefs about how students learn that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and instructional shifts. Across the vast majority of classrooms, strategic provision of multiple entry points supports students' engagement in high-level activities and discussions.

Impact

The school's strong belief system shapes school-wide coherence in pedagogy that provides strategic supports so that all students demonstrate critical thinking and ownership of their learning. Yet, the school is aware that provision of strategic extensions for advanced learners merits more attention and continues to work to improve pedagogy in this area.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers regularly re-examine their belief system that students learn best when they are involved in small group inquiry and project-based learning. Leaders and teachers conduct instructional rounds, developing a shared understanding of student engagement, informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and ongoing discussions with various teams. Throughout classroom visits students were engaged in small group inquiry learning highlighting the schools belief system in action. Also, across classrooms advanced students, when finished with tasks, assisted their peers. While this student-to student support is appropriate, the school, nonetheless, is examining its current extensions for its most advanced learners to further improve learning opportunities.
- Learning centers and small group instruction are some of the instructional practices used to ensure student participation and access. Across the vast majority of classrooms, students were engaged in appropriately challenging tasks in reading and writing tasks in small groups. In a first grade class teaching strategies included scaffolds to support all learners. Students were divided into six groups during a literacy block. An adult supported three of the six groups. The classroom teacher and the educational assistant focused on a guided reading lesson with their groups, as the other groups collaborated about their task. Students were able to demonstrate understanding in a variety of ways by articulating the purpose of the center and how to access information to support their learning.
- During a fourth grade math lesson, students worked in groups analyzing varied representations that they drew to depict place value composition of numbers. One group used a place value chart to show how they added and another group discussed the process of writing numbers to make a number sentence true using relevant vocabulary assisted by teacher prompts and modeling. The third group explained how they strategically solved the problem in their head and solved a word problem by displaying the outcome utilizing a place value chart.
- In addition to school beliefs, goals, and philosophy, teachers and leaders share clearly defined expectations for planning lessons, specifically with strategies for engaging students in higher-order thinking and discussions in rigorous tasks. Teachers articulated that student-centered instruction is supported by knowledge of students that teachers acquire through the on-going use of assessments, daily observations, and conferencing.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Curricula, aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards embed the instructional shifts strategically. Curricula and academic tasks are refined using student work and data.

Impact

All students including English language learners and special education students have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged. Curricula coherence across the grades and subjects has increased cognitive engagement, as well as capacity for independent thinking and ownership that position students' readiness for college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricula and academic tasks in all grades emphasize the following shifts to prepare students to be successful at the next level: writing from sources, balancing informational and literary texts, building academic vocabulary in literacy and across content areas, and deep understanding of real-world applications in mathematics. Teachers strategically plan their lessons so that the final product reflects a true understanding through project-based learning. For example, the fifth grade student project on the Mayan civilization included a museum trip to support researching all aspects of the culture, the creation of an extensive writing piece, and a project of student choice. One student chose to create a tool that Mayans used and games.
- Instructional leaders and teachers meet on a weekly basis to make decisions around pacing and to ensure that lesson plans are aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. The school's math curriculum maps reflect content from Engage NY and Context for Learning and Investigations, and contain Standards of Mathematical Practices such as problem solving, communication, reasoning, and representations. Additionally, all math lessons include key student learning objectives and a sequence of learning activities and assessments.
- The whole school is engaged in interdisciplinary and inquiry-based learning in all content areas, as evident in the school's curriculum maps. The curriculum includes questions for students to reflect on theories presented and explorations for students to make their own discoveries. For example the third grade curriculum reflects rigorous evidence-based conversation about text, using evidence from a variety of sources and building transferable vocabulary needed to access grade-level complex texts. In a unit on Africa, students were expected to discuss and produce evidence explaining, "*How do people use their environment for food, shelter, and clothing in Africa?*" and then relate their information to their community. In addition, lesson plans included targeted small group instruction and modified or differentiated assignments, so all learners are suitably challenged, cognitively engaged and work towards meeting grade level-specific expectations.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across all grades and subject areas, teachers use curricula-aligned rubrics, and assessments that offer a wide assortment of pertinent data that depict a clear representation of student mastery. Teachers consistently check for understanding and provide students with self-assessment opportunities.

Impact

Teachers and students in all grades are well informed about students' learning progress. Teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs so that students have taken ownership of their educational experience and modify their own learning strategies, which have led to an increase in positive student academic outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers' ongoing practice of checking for understanding through conferencing to gauge student learning to inform, monitor, and adjust instruction is pervasive throughout the school. For example, teachers consistently use formative note taking during individual and small group conferences. In addition, students are surveyed as learners then are grouped. Students worked collaboratively based on their social, emotional, and academic needs. Systems, such as one-to-one support from teachers, educational assistants, interns and/or peers is provided to all learners. Students understand their roles as learners and how to support one another to make adjustments to their work based on customized rubrics and checklists developed by teachers across the grades.
- Teachers collaboratively work on very detailed narrative progress reports for all students and their parents, based on constant evaluation of rubric-based work and benchmark analysis. These progress reports reflect on the whole child and assist students and their parents in having a deep understanding of student progress, strengths, and goals for next steps in reading, writing and math. During interviews with teachers, students, and parents, all stakeholders shared that they understand the learning and the next steps, based on conferencing, checklists, and benchmark assessments.
- Classroom visits revealed that data is used for grouping during instruction. Teachers carefully track the progress of students and make grade-level or cross-grade instructional decisions based on results from outcome assessments, such as unit tests, running records, and writing products. For example, during a writing lesson, two teachers wrote notes, as the students worked on their task and checked on several students multiple times. Throughout the lesson, the teacher conferenced with a student in regard to what he wanted to write about and how his work could improve through use of vivid words to describe his character. The teacher complimented the student for specifically applying descriptive language to describe the setting, a strategy from a mini-lesson taught previously.

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

Teachers collaborate often and at length at grade-level, cross-grade level, disciplinary, and cross-disciplinary meetings. They form collegial relationships, reflecting on curricula, pedagogical practices and student learning, and have made dynamic contributions to curricula.

Impact

Effective collaboration has resulted in school-wide instructional coherence, collective knowledge of student learning outcomes, and improved pedagogical practice school-wide. Teacher leadership structures play an essential role in key decision-making that result in improved student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- All grade-level teacher teams collaborate twice a week. During their time together, teachers analyze student work, reflect on instructional practices, and make modifications to lesson and curriculum plans. For example, during the fourth grade teacher team meeting, teachers followed a practice called “descriptive work” where teachers presented specific students work habits, strategies students used during a math lesson, and discussed other observations made. Teachers then gave suggestions on how they would further push students’ thinking and group work during math. One teacher stated, “What if we gave the students an algorithm with the solution and have students pick apart the algorithm by interpreting and describing possible mathematical strategies used to solve the algorithm.”
- As a PROSE school, leaders have established grade inter-visitations with a focus on the school wide goal, “increasing social-emotional education and learning”. Teachers self-reflect on their instructional practices and give each other feedback to further pedagogy to increase student achievement. During the PROSE teacher team meeting, teachers presented student work that highlighted growth over time. Specifically teachers shared how conferencing with students during guided reading and writing, using checklists, and modeling has successfully helped students. Teachers also discussed the purpose of their inter-visitations and described the instructional practices they have applied to their teaching methods such as teaching students how to use specific graphic organizers to structure their thoughts during reading and writing. Additionally, the work of this vertical team has influenced social studies curricula across grades, so that all units now have research, field trips, and writing tasks embedded.
- During both teacher team meetings observed, teachers articulated that school leaders promote an environment whereby teacher team decisions assist in driving the work of school improvement efforts. Through attending professional learning on refining unit plans to meet the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts teacher have made adjustments to their project-based curricula on each grade. Specifically, teachers adjusted final projects to include text based answers and writing from a variety of sources.