



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

J.H.S. 52 Inwood

Middle School M052

**650 Academy Street
Manhattan
NY 10034**

Principal: Lupe Leon

**Date of review: February 27, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Manuel Ramirez**

The School Context

J.H.S. 52, Inwood, is a middle school with 533 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 4% Black, 95% Hispanic, 0% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 32% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 93.0%.

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	Proficient
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	Developing
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	Proficient
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	Proficient
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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings:

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff in alignment to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Families are provided with information about expectations for their children and supported in learning how to help their children succeed in meeting the expectations.

Impact:

Structures and systems that support a culture of high expectations and collaboration among staff and families ensure their understanding of and accountability for expectations linked to the Common Core Learning Standards.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for teachers through professional development activities and monthly meetings designed to support teachers in obtaining a shared understanding of the school's values and beliefs about best teaching practices. At these meetings, teachers examine instructional expectations, school policies and procedures.
- School leaders provide the staff with an action plan delineating expectations for data meetings, planning and designing lesson plans, inter-visitations, evaluating and adjusting the curricula, and developing student leadership activities to support students' in gaining skills for college and career readiness.
- The school provides all staff with a professional development plan that highlights the school's instructional focus for the year and the three key areas of focus for high quality classroom instruction (Higher Order Questioning and Discussion, Student Engagement and Collaboration, Using Assessment in Instruction). The plan is written in alignment with the Quality Review Indicators and illustrates targeted components of the Danielson Framework. It also delineates topics, time frames, participants and the expected outcomes of each professional development activity.
- Parents reported that the school has an open door policy and that they receive a lot of communication regarding their children's progress and expectations for the grade, through monthly meetings with the principal and ongoing meetings with teachers. In addition, parents shared that the principal facilitates workshops for parents on the Common Core Learning Standards and the new state assessments, and provide them with a syllabus and handbook that further communicate the school's high expectations for their children.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings:

Across classrooms, teaching strategies do not consistently provide different entry points into the curricula, and students' work product and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact:

There are limited opportunities for all students to engage in academic tasks and participate in student to student discussions that reflect higher order thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- During a 7th grade math Integrated Co-Teaching class, students were asked to solve a real-life problem on percentages, involving tax and tip. The students had to pretend that they were at a restaurant and order four different items from the menu. Students worked in pairs to solve the problem. Most of the students struggled with the selection of the items from the menu; specifically, the menu on Thai Food. There was no evidence of scaffolds or strategies to provide different entry points for students in the class, including English language learners and students with disabilities, some of whom were not fully engaged in the activity.
- In all classrooms visited, a few students participated in discussions by responding to teacher generated questions or teacher led discussions. For example in one math class visited, one student modeled how to solve a problem while the rest of the class observed and the teacher mediated the work modeled by the student. The majority of the students were passive learners who did not demonstrate high levels of participation and engagement in the lesson.

Although the leadership stated that teachers scaffold instruction, assign close reading tasks, promote group work with assigned roles and push critical thinking through the use of higher order thinking questions across classrooms, in classrooms visited there was uneven evidence of teachers using these strategies to intellectually engage all learners in the content. For example, across classrooms, students worked collaboratively but not all students were prompted to actively engage in the discussion. This prevented some students from making their thinking visible and from engaging in intellectual discussions, as was the case in a sixth grade reading class. The students discussed themes and characters in a text but only a few participated in the discussion, and the teacher called on volunteers only. Students were not asked to justify answers or explain their thinking.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings:

Administrators and staff align the curricula to Common Core Learning Standards and academic tasks are refined and planned using student work.

Impact:

The school curricula are engaging and coherent and the refinement of academic tasks promotes engagement and college and career readiness across grades and subjects for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Unit plans in all content areas integrate the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. For example, a sixth grade English language arts unit plan entitled “The Impact of Experiences”, requires students to identify literary elements within a text, cite evidence to develop their own ideas with examples, compare and contrast themes within and across texts and state a position and support it with evidence. Five anchor texts drive the unit, providing choice for students at different independent reading levels.
- The school leader and teachers explained how curricula and tasks are purposely planned and refined using students’ work. For example, the English as a Second Language Foundation Unit is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. Using student work and data, the English as Second Language teachers developed it with support from a consultant, to build background knowledge for English Language Learners, prior to engaging them in the first English language arts unit of study.
- Teachers use the Engage NY modules as resources to ensure that units of study are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and applicable content standards. According to the principal, teachers have been working for the past five years in refining and adjusting the existing curricula to build coherence and incorporate modifications, to ensure access for all students and to promote college and career readiness. For example, a seventh grade science unit on energy and matter showed the standards addressed in science and literacy, targeted skills, domain specific vocabulary and informational texts to support instruction at different complexity levels. The unit culminates in a written essay and there is a rubric to assess the rigor of the task.

The school’s use of the Engage NY modules as resources to modify curricula and performance tasks for students supports coherence across grades and content areas. For example, some teachers work with the Common Core Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Fellows to infuse technology into the curricula.

Findings:

The school creates and uses common assessments in all content areas and across classrooms. Teachers consistently check for students' understanding of the content and make instructional adjustments based on their findings.

Impact:

The school's assessment practices generate data that provides feedback on students' progress and results in revisions and adjustments to the curricula to meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school designed units of study that include performance tasks developed by teachers who used resources from Engage N.Y. For example, a performance task in social studies required students to use evidence and resources provided throughout the unit, as well as their knowledge of the current society, to argue whether the benefits of exploration and expansion outweigh the consequences. This task showed evidence of the students' mastery of citing text evidence, use of multiple resources to support a claim and ability to follow the conventions of Standard English, including capitalization, punctuation and spelling.
- Teachers developed learning targets for students after analysis of baseline data, in order to address the learning needs of the students. Data meetings are held three times per year with teachers and an administrator to discuss and monitor ongoing progress of the students. Students also self-assess using task specific rubrics presented by teachers.
- Teachers use Item Skills Analysis tools to check students' attainment of the content and use information gathered from this analysis to make adjustments to the curricula. For example based on analysis of assessment data in science and social studies, teachers decided to re-adjust the rubric to make the language student friendly. They found that students were struggling in understanding the expectations of the task so the rubric was modified to support the needs of all students. The eighth grade team made adjustments to the reading unit for students who are chronically absent, by developing a unit with a different text to support them with the work when they come to school and ensure that they work towards meeting their learning targets.
- The school uses rubrics aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards to assess students' performance on content area tasks. A review of portfolios during classroom visits and conversation with students showed evidence of the use of rubrics and feedback given to student to advance learning. Bulletin boards outside of the classrooms also evidenced Common Core aligned tasks, rubrics and feedback given to students. The written feedback on the student work was aligned to the rubric.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings:

Teachers participate in structured inquiry based professional development activities focused on the school's instructional goals. Team collaborations provide a vehicle for teachers to have input on key decisions about curricula and teaching practices.

Impact:

The work of teacher teams has resulted in school-wide efforts to achieve school goals, including the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, and contribute to improved teacher pedagogy and student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams promote the implementation of Common Core Standards and the instructional shifts. Teachers are provided with opportunities to meet vertically and horizontally two (2) times per week by grade and by content area for 90 minutes. During a team meeting teachers were observed in their respective content area, working in pairs to make adjustments to units. For example science teachers reviewed a science unit and revised the rubric used for science investigation activities.
- Teacher leaders plan and facilitate professional development sessions; they establish agenda and keep track of minutes. During the teacher team interview, some teachers reported that they have leadership roles within the teams. This allows them to share expertise with the staff and take ownership of their professional development.
- During both teacher team meetings, teachers articulated that the school provides them with opportunities for distributed leadership. For example, teachers in this school are part of the Department of Education's Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) Program. This affords the school the opportunity to have three (3) peer instructional coaches and four (4) demonstration teachers who help to strengthen teacher capacity to deliver effective instruction. Teachers noted that they make decisions in regard to the adjustment and revision of curricula and in the selection of instructional resources for use across grades.