



# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Don Pedro Albizu Campos**

**Elementary – Middle School 161**

**499 West 133 Street  
New York  
NY 10027**

**Principal: Pamela Price Haynes**

**Date of review: April 1, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Gale Reeves**

## The School Context

The Pedro Albizu Campos School is a K-8 school with 924 students from grade kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 17% Black, 79% Hispanic, 3% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 30% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 89.0%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

Administrators consistently communicate high expectations to teachers through utilization of the Danielson Framework for Teaching to provide actionable feedback and support professional growth. Effective verbal and written communications to parents foster successful partnerships.

### Impact

Parents and staff have a shared and common understanding of the high expectations for the academic, social and personal behaviors associated with college and career readiness, resulting in a system of mutual accountability in which all stakeholders are prepared to support students' success.

### Supporting Evidence

- Tools such as instructional memoranda and the principal's weekly newsletters to staff specify high expectations for teaching and learning, while the 'day book' keeps staff apprised of schedule changes. Supervisors established the school's Google drive where all teachers have access to the faculty handbook and are supported in sharing best practices for instruction, planning, and professional learning. This ensures that all teachers have access to team learning and findings, resulting in mutual ownership for their own growth and students' success. Established norms assist with setting higher standards for teaching and learning throughout the building.
- Parents participate in workshops, curriculum and family days and nights, and other activities to learn the expectations of the grade and the school. Family events inform parents of the expectations of the Common Core and include classroom visits along with course materials and student work products. Parents receive report cards, progress reports, emails, text messages, and phone calls on a daily and weekly basis between marking periods so that they stay updated on student performance and progress.
- In addition to the system required Tuesday afternoons, staff members make themselves accessible to parents every day of the week. There is reciprocal communication between teachers and parents. Parents say that the staff is always accessible to them and the school knows each child well in regards to academic and social emotional needs.
- Teachers, along with administration, design individual and unique profiles entitled Teacher Profiles, which contain Glows and Grows about teacher performance based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Each profile contains goals and a detailed action plan based on the observation calendar and coaching cycle for each teacher.
- The school, in collaboration with input from parents, orchestrates varied events and activities to support families, which include, but are not limited to the following: parent workshops based on the Common Core, activities held both during the school day and Family Night curricula events which are co-facilitated by students, and extra-curricular activities like Zumba and the debate team. Parents are familiar and knowledgeable about the curricula and academic expectations for their children, thereby successfully strengthening the home-school connection.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

The school has adopted curricula aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards and is in the process of integrating the instructional shifts to create social studies and science curricula and academic tasks which emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills. Academic tasks across content areas are not consistently rigorous.

### Impact

Teachers have Common Core aligned learning targets however all learners do not consistently have access to coherently sequenced units of study. As such all learners are not consistently challenged across all subjects.

### Supporting Evidence

- While the use of Google drive is used to plan Teachers College Reading Writing Project (TCRWP), Go Math and CMP3 Math activities, the unit plans are not continuously modified and planned to incorporate higher order thinking tasks and activities. The principal provides teachers access to professional learning videos, memos, and research articles to support planning for curricular expectations. Teachers have begun using resources from various sources to supplement the math and English language arts (ELA) curricula that provide core problem solving opportunities and higher order thinking academic tasks for students.
- Lesson plans vary between the lower grades and upper grades and make attempts to address math and English language arts Common Core Standards and multiple differentiated learning opportunities. However, overall, plans lack the incorporation of the school's instructional focus of writing across grades and subjects. Additionally, at the lower grade level, teachers inconsistently plan lessons to explicitly address science and social studies standards. Across grades, assigned tasks in both content areas do not demonstrate rigorous expectations and alignment to state standards. For example, in one upper grade class, student work products revealed that the science task required students to label parts of cells, while at the lower grade level, the social studies task required students to discuss a time in their lives when they were courageous. As such, these tasks do not reflect alignment to the curricula maps or to content standards.
- Curriculum planning begins with teams over the summer for all subject areas and grades. Teacher teams look at pacing, essential questions and alignment to Common Core Learning Standards using Google drive to allow access across the school. Curricula maps are inconsistent, in that maps for middle school curricula demonstrate thoughtful planning and revisions across content areas. However the same planning is not reflected in all maps across all grades. Consequently, core subject areas are not coherently sequenced across grades so that students meet with increasing levels of challenge.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Teacher pedagogy center around a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching. Students across classrooms are engaged in high level discussions.

### Impact

Teaching practices immerse students in productive struggles and support instruction for students through small group, and differentiated activities. Students produce meaningful work products demonstrating higher-order thinking and participation skills.

### Supporting Evidence

- Most teachers prioritize clear learning objectives and teach lessons to support objectives to whole and small groups of students. For example, in an eighth grade physics classroom, students were asked to understand the concept of density and its relation to atomic structure of candy bars. Students had to create a hypothesis, create data sets, construct graphs, analyze and evaluate their hypothesis while working in pairs and triads to draw conclusions to support their work.
- Teachers across classrooms use technology tools such as smart boards, document cameras, manipulatives, and laptops to provide visual aids and supports for students to present content in various forms.
- Students in a seventh grade math class were asked to evaluate various statements about probability while working within their math groups. Students examined probability statements and had to construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of their peers using academic language to provide supporting evidence to each other as they worked through scenarios. Students productively struggled, questioned each other and used real world examples to help them understand specific concepts. The teacher facilitated student learning by circulating through the room and asked probing questions to allow students to engage in table discussions which enabled them to think deeper and justify their responses.
- Teachers model strategies for students and then allowed students to utilize the strategy on their own to find key details using chunking strategies. Students in a third grade classroom were asked to determine key ideas and details by recounting stories, describing characters, and figuring out the central message of a story and then write an open response using a student friendly checklist.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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## Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress towards goals across grades and most subject areas.

## Impact

Assessment data provide actionable feedback to students and teachers and inform instruction. Teachers utilize assessment data to identify next steps for students, adjust pacing and plan re-teaching.

## Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use information from quarterly administered running records to track reading progress school-wide. Reading levels and conference notes are used to plan small group instruction and identify students who are not making progress for intervention services. In addition, teacher created assessments and curriculum assessment tools are also utilized to monitor understanding across other subject areas. For example, the school disaggregates data from summative assessments by question, standard, targeted skills and implications for teaching for each subject area. Tools used across the school include, but are not limited to on-demand writing assessments, MOSL performance tasks, periodic assessments, math exemplar tasks, and the Early Childhood Assessment in Mathematics (ECAM).
- The school has an assessment plan to help monitor the use of various data and a system to monitor student performance and progress. Teachers are using formative and summative assessment data to provide students feedback on their progress on activities and assignments. Students across classrooms are using rubrics, self and peer-reflection checklists to understand the expectations of tasks, where they were successful and what their next steps are in learning. For example, in one math class visited, students used rubrics to monitor their use of mathematical practices and teachers use this information to group students, move the lesson forward, or re-teach when needed.
- The school uses common assessments such as Teachers College reading assessments. Fountas and Pinnell running records are given in November, January, March, April and June while on demand writing assessments are given at the end of each unit of study. School administrators and staff review results to note trends and make adaptations. For example in November teachers noted that students struggled with unfamiliar words. This has informed a focus on vocabulary development across the school.
- Rubrics and checklists are used across classrooms and subject areas. Students understand the use of these tools to inform their learning and next steps. For example, a writing rubric in a sixth grade class shows the continuum of performance and the difference between fifth and seventh grade writing expectations.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations around teaching practice that promote achievement of school goals and increased student learning. Teacher teams play a key role in school-wide decision making.

### Impact

Teacher teams are engaged in conversations that are strengthening their instructional capacity and positively impacting student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams noted that students struggle with extended writing pieces that include relevant information and show deeper understanding. As a result, teachers have plans for increased structured discussion opportunities, which will help to build student engagement around complex topics, allowing students to explore ideas through conversation prior to writing. Teachers created a rubric from different sources to help them monitor student participation in classroom discussions as well as a checklist tool for student self-assessment.
- Teacher teams, led by a teacher leader or instructional coach, meet several times per week in different configurations (grade, content, and department) and for various purposes. Teachers work in six-week cycles that involve planning, analyze assessment data elements, and discuss instructional strategies that can be utilized to meet the needs of learners. The work being done is building vertical coherence and developing an understanding of instructional strategies from grade to grade.
- Teachers are allowed to make instructional decisions in their own classes and are allowed to orchestrate professional learning opportunities, which best suits their needs and strengths. Teachers can choose curricula supports to support class activities based on students they service. For example, teachers can incorporate JiJi technology to inform Math instruction, NY Ready, and Engage NY to support Common Core instruction.
- Teachers demonstrate their leadership skills when they facilitate weekly grade/department meetings. Identified leaders attend external conferences and share notes from these meetings on Google drive so that all staff members have access. One grade 5 teacher volunteered to provide early morning math tutorials, the librarian coordinated the school's successful application for an Apple grant, while others serve as the track and student government coaches. Additionally, the school's coherency team is comprised of one grade representative across the school. This team facilitates classroom visits to norm coherent practices throughout the school. This school year, master teachers met with consultants from Teachers College and recommended that reading notebooks should be normed and consistent across the school. Teachers developed a notebook rubric which teachers across grades now use to assess the quality of students' work.