



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**PS 189**

**Elementary School M189**

**2580 Amsterdam Avenue  
Manhattan  
NY 10040**

**Principal: Theresa Luger**

**Date of review: December 11, 2014  
Lead Reviewer: Cheryl McClendon**

## The School Context

PS 189 is an elementary school with 1123 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 98% Hispanic and 1% White students. The student body includes 34% 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

<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>Celebration</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Focus</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</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

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that the Common Core-aligned curricula are coherent, integrate the instructional shifts and promote college and career readiness for all students. Rigorous habits and higher order skills are emphasized throughout the curriculum and academic tasks across grades and subjects for all learners including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

### Impact

The implementation of Common Core-aligned curricula, standardized practices and the use of engaging teaching strategies ensure the coherence and quality of instructional planning. Providing multiple entry points to the curricula supports the academic progress of all learners including English language learners and students with disabilities.

### Supporting Evidence

- As a result of analysis of data from Advance, the New York City Department of Education system of teacher evaluation and development, the school determined to prioritize “using assessment in instruction” and “providing feedback to students” as their 2014-2015 instructional focus. In addition, the principal states the school is also focused on “explicit teaching”.
- The school is implementing the Common Core-aligned curricula GO Math! in kindergarten through grade 5, ReadyGEN in kindergarten through grade 2 and Expeditionary Learning in grades 3 through 5. Curricular modifications as evidenced in unit and lesson plans reflect integration of the instructional shifts such as emphasis on close reading, providing text-based evidence and the use of academic vocabulary throughout the grades.
- The school’s focus in math this year is “developing student’s conceptual understandings to support application and automaticity.” Students engage in math problem solving through the use of varied manipulatives and representational structures such as “bar models”. In addition, across the grades students are taught to use a step by step process for math problem-solving which entails the following steps: solve the problem, outline the options, limit and apply the solution, verify the solution, explain the results (the SOLVE method).
- Teachers plan and include high-order questions within their lesson plans. In addition, a school-wide discussion protocol is posted throughout classrooms to guide student discussions.
- A daily intervention period is embedded in teachers’ programs and schedules to allow for the planning and implementation of Tier 1, 2 and 3 academic intervention services for struggling learners and students with disabilities. The Reading Recovery program is being implemented by two teachers to students who struggle with emergent reading skills. English as a second language strategies are also implemented with English language learners during this time.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

Across classrooms, the school's articulated beliefs about how students learn best, informed by the Danielson Framework and the Common Core instructional shifts, are reflected in the curricula and teaching practices. While these practices were present in many classrooms, they were not yet present in a vast majority of classrooms.

### Impact

The use of "explicit learning targets" promotes explicit teaching, wherein students are made aware of what is being taught and what they are expected to learn within a lesson. Inconsistent checks for understanding and absence of differentiation rationale limit the ability to support all learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- Observed within classrooms was explicit learning targets written in the form of "I can" statements are posted for each lesson. Some examples of learning targets are: "I can find division patterns with decimals" and "I can make inferences about colonial times, based on illustrations and explicit details from the text."
- Across classrooms students used the SOLVE method; a five step process for tackling math problems. Also observed was the use of concrete manipulatives and representational models.
- Student discussion and turn-and-talks were observed. Teachers circulated to listen in and provide feedback. Student discussion was guided by a school-wide discussion checklist, which was posted in all classrooms. In some classrooms students were observed using the discussion checklist to assess the quality of their discussion.
- Guided and independent group work was observed across classrooms in math and literacy, and assessment-based differentiated instruction and tasks were observed in some classrooms. However, in other classes, neither instruction nor tasks were differentiated for the various class groups. For example, upon observation of a personal narrative lesson in a lower-grade Integrated Co-Teaching classroom, there were two groups of students, each guided by a teacher. As noted by the principal during the debriefing, there was no differentiation of instruction or task.

## Additional Findings

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

Across classrooms, teachers' use of assessments, rubrics and standardized grading policies are aligned with the curricula and facilitate actionable feedback to students. Common assessments are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

### Impact

The administration of common assessments facilitates progress-monitoring, informs curricula and instructional modifications, and enables the staff to use a common language and lens as teachers analyze data and discuss student progress. Ongoing progress-monitoring informs instructional modifications which support student progress.

### Supporting Evidence

- Common assessments are administered and analyzed for instructional implications. They include: ReadyGEN and GO Math! unit assessments, Expeditionary Learning performance-based assessments, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), and Fountas and Pinnell running records.
- Teachers report that as a result of on-going progress-monitoring and the implementation of instructional modifications they have seen an increase in student proficiency level as reflected by performance-based assessment data. For example, test item analyses of the summative and formative math assessments have revealed a deficit in operations and algebraic thinking. School leaders and teacher teams incorporated math investigations periods wherein students are engaged in hands-on math activities designed to deepen conceptual understandings in math.
- Conferencing in all subject areas is mandated by the administration. Teachers confer with students and maintain a conference binder through which students' strengths and deficits are analyzed by teachers weekly and by school leaders on a monthly basis.
- As reported by the principal, Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) assessments were scored by teacher teams and they are in the process of analyzing the outcome to prioritize learning targets within the respective curricular areas.
- Teacher-team developed rubrics are introduced to students at the beginning of each unit and used by students for self-assessment as they are doing their work. These rubrics are then used by teachers to assess student work products and provide feedback for students.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

High expectations are consistently communicated by school leaders to the entire staff accompanied by training and a system of accountability to enable staff to meet those expectations. Families are also supported in understanding student progress through constant communication of the school’s expectations, ongoing feedback and help in understanding the expectations of the school.

**Impact**

The principal’s daily communication to the faculty provides a common focus and school-wide behavioral programs provide high expectations for behavior. Through regular communication from the school, parents feel well informed and supported.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The principal posts a daily “morning message” to provide teachers with focal daily information as well as anchor readers to the school’s key instructional beliefs and expectations.
- The school implements the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program school wide. This program provides and supports school-wide behavioral expectations.
- Parents and students have access to the Engrade system which houses student progress data in all subject areas and, in particular, the home/school folder that facilitates communication between parents and staff. Parents check the home/school folder in their child’s back-pack daily to receive communication from teachers, counselors, coaches, the school nurse and the administration.
- Parents report that they are introduced to the Common Core-aligned curricula through their participation in four Family Curriculum Nights. The school also provides a family booklet that details the Common Core Learning Standards.

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

Instructional planning and curricular modification are facilitated through teacher team collaborations and meeting structures allow for distributed leadership school-wide.

**Impact**

Teachers analyze student work and assessment data in teams to improve teacher practice and academic progress for targeted groups of students. Distributed leadership allows teachers a voice in key instructional decision-making while developing teacher capacity.

**Supporting Evidence**

- During a teacher team meeting, teachers were observed analyzing and describing trends that they saw in a performance-based assessment for Expeditionary Learning Module 1.
- During a teacher team meeting, one teacher presented a sample of student writing. She presented her analysis stating, “The student should have combined the first two sentences for the topic sentence.” She also share with her colleagues that, based upon her analysis, she intends to give more instructional focus to “vocabulary” and “including relevant details.”
- Teacher team members stated that teacher team collaborations have facilitated the modification of the Expeditionary Learning modules by integrating more opportunities for writing.