



# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**P.S./I.S. 217 Roosevelt Island**

**Elementary-Middle School M217**

**645 Main Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10044**

**Principal: Mandana Beckman**

**Date of review: May 7, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Sandra Litrico**

## The School Context

Roosevelt Island is an elementary/middle school with 546 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 18% Black, 16% Hispanic, 34% White, and 24% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.0%.

## 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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</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>Focus</b>	<b>Well Developed</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>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>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

The school has a rigorous and clearly articulated approach to interdisciplinary curriculum design across grades and subject areas, which aligns to Common Core Standards and strategically incorporates the instructional shifts. Higher order thinking skills are emphasized in curricula so that all learners including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs) must demonstrate their thinking.

### Impact

There is curricula coherence across grades and subject areas that promotes college and career readiness. All students have a range of opportunities to both build skill as well as dig deeply into important topics. The curriculum ensures that all students are engaged in challenging tasks that require them to think, reflect and problem solve.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal and staff ensure that the curriculum is aligned to the Common Core standards, instructional shifts and Tri-State Equip Rubric. The English language arts (ELA) units were revised to include complex texts including the classics. Grade 2 Reading ELA Traditional Tales Unit immerses students in folktales, fairytales and fables. The unit begins with a baseline assessment and includes a formative and summative, assessment as well. Students are expected to read and analyze traditional tales, identify the characteristics of the different tales, determine the central message and describe character traits with evidence from the text.
- All curriculum units include essential questions, understandings, a scope and sequence with lesson objectives, lesson activities, supports, assessments and resources. The Understanding by Design format is utilized to ensure coherence and attainment of desired results based on learning objectives. Teachers write a model for students to use as a mentor text and teach students how to plan and write each section of the piece including structure and craft.
- Math units involve real world application and high -level problem solving. The K to 5 math journal tasks are open-ended, which are rigorous. Enrichment programs and class trips are an integral part of teaching and learning at the school. Students are exposed to the arts, service learning, and environmental sustainability. Students' garden (Idig2learn, A Living Library, and Grow NYC) develop, present projects, and visit cultural institutions.
- Lesson plans strategically provide opportunities for deliberate practice and instructional supports like exemplars, modeling, graphic organizers, outlines, rubrics and checklists so that all learners can demonstrate their thinking. Plans delineate small flexible group instruction that is based on assessment data. Challenging tasks and activities build metacognition, persistence, peer-to-peer feedback and self-assessment.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

A variety of assessment tools are used to create clear portraits of students' strengths and challenges that supports the processes of individualizing instruction to meet student needs. Teachers regularly use data to group students and provide just the right amount of support and challenge. However, there were a few missed opportunities for lessons to reflect varied use of on-going checks for understanding.

### Impact

The schools use of common assessments, data analysis and feedback allows teachers to make purposeful instructional adjustments at the classroom and grade levels to improve students' outcomes. Assessments provide teachers with a portrait of student progress towards goals and inform decision in adjusting curricula and giving meaningful feedback to students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Assessments are aligned to the curricula and data is used to adjust instruction. Teachers use baseline writing assessments, math pretests and entrance/exit tickets to plan or revise lessons. Teachers also use observations and conference notes from independent reading to set next steps for guided reading groups. Data is also used to determine Tier 1 or 2 interventions. Rubrics and checklists are a tangible representation of the unit's goals as they are tied to the unit summative assessments and student self-monitoring. While reviewing students' work, there was clear actionable feedback provided to students from teachers aligned to content specific rubrics. In addition, students also expressed that they use rubrics to guide and support them in completing tasks and/or projects.
- The school values empowering students in maintaining ownership over their learning. Students are part of the rubric development through reflection of "I can" statements. The school believes that this ownership is necessary to foster a growth-mindset and high sense of self-efficacy in every learner.
- Data is used to revise, monitor and evaluate goals. It is part of every conversation the principal has with her staff or teams because it drives their instructional focus. Teachers unpack a variety of data collected and determine next steps for students.
- Teachers use baseline assessments, pretests and entrance/exit tickets to plan or revise lessons. The use of ongoing checks for understanding questioning and student self-assessment is evident in most classrooms. However, teacher's assessment practices do not consistently reflect the use of daily formative checks for understanding to make immediate instructional adjustments.
- Data is used to inform selection of students who need Response to Intervention (RTI) support. The data revealed that 50% of targeted 6<sup>th</sup> grade students are now at/or above grade level as a result of the interventions, which include guided reading, increased time for independent reading, and push in SETTS model of teaching. In 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, data revealed that 67% of students are at/or above grade level due to the implementation of the Fountas and Pinnell Literacy Intervention kit.

## Additional Findings

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

There is a culture of mutual accountability where school leaders consistently communicate high expectations to all stakeholders and the entire staff is committed to rigorous instruction as well as high expectations for all students.

### Impact

The school's deeply embedded, holistic approach to supporting students and its commitment to perpetuating a democratic community results in a high degree of efficacy among students and staff.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school provides many experiences and tools students will need to succeed in college and career. Students are learning and making connections to the real world through the reading of feature articles, research projects and Interdisciplinary units. Students work on collaborative projects in collaborative partnerships. Teachers discuss with students what it means to work together and be responsible to one another.
- Middle school students monitor their grades and class assignments on Engrade Pro, an online grading system, to evaluate their progress. Students receive feedback on their work via rubrics and conferences; students reflect and respond to the information given.
- Staff receives the Staff Expectations Guide, which outlines policies, practices and expectations for planning, teaching and learning. Teachers participate in professional development activities aligned to their goals and turnkey to staff. Proactive Professional Learning is a school wide initiative in which teachers become “experts” in a chosen area like Kindergarten chat with the principal, curriculum night and parent teacher conference; all are opportunities for parents to understand the work the school is doing in partners, the importance of that work, and the high expectations.
- Students participate in community service and act as role models for the lower grade elementary school students. They have one on one discussions on conflict resolution, bullying and being trustworthy. Teachers prioritize time and set up systems, which promote organization such as students’ agendas, student folders and portfolios.
- Administrators consistently communicate high expectations that include planning, professionalism and instruction. The principal and assistant principal have a one to one debrief after every observation and provides written feedback based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching to improve teacher pedagogy.

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

Teacher teams engage in structured collaborative practice using the inquiry approach to improve curricular, teaching and learning. Teams systemically analyze elements of teacher and student work, including classroom practice and assessment data.

### Impact

Strong professional collaborations drive ongoing curricula refinements, resulting in school-wide instructional coherence, increased teacher practice and improved student progress.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet and engage in professional learning that is proactive to support school wide goals and pedagogical practices related to their instructional focus of productive struggle. They follow a protocol that begins with professional learning that sets a goal, involves a learner-centered problem to investigate or begins with a theory of action, which leads to research and data driven decision making to improve practice. The final round of inquiry teams is working in five vertical groups to set goals; research and action plan five school wide areas: family engagement, homework, community service, sustainability, and school culture through the continuation of the Positive Behavior Intervention System.
- Teachers participate in a variety of teams including professional learning teams, grade teams, department teams, mentor team, new teacher team, gifted and talented (G&T) team, K-2 ELA Curriculum team, RTI team and a departmentalized grade 4 and 5 team. The impact of teacher teamwork is evident school wide. For example, the Academic Vocabulary inquiry team taught staff the various levels of vocabulary, provided a tiered vocabulary list, taught best practices for instruction from Marzano's vocabulary strategies and provided staff with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) resources.
- Vertical teams, grade teams and department teams utilize the Equip rubric to evaluate and revise curriculum to highlight the instructional shifts. Professional learning communities (PLCs) addressed close reading strategies for complex text. The Math inquiry team work has focused on fluency, application and deep understanding through work in Early Childhood Assessments in Mathematics (ECAM), screener centers, journal tasks and group structures for guided math.
- The grade 1 and 2 bridge team utilized the Atlas protocol for writing as they analyzed a middle/high 2<sup>nd</sup> grade baseline assessment for the personal narrative unit. They discussed what trends they noticed that would impact their instructional goals and would target the needs of higher-level writers in their class. They brainstormed strategies they could use to push targeted students to meet a level 4 and how this targeted instruction could help them in their next steps. This included developing the main point through the use of adjectives and verbs as well as inner voice.

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

Teacher pedagogy reflects the use of strategic entry points and student engagement. Every classroom demonstrates meaningful ways in which different students could access complex ideas or concepts.

### Impact

Student work products reflect high levels of student thinking, participation and ownership of learning. As a result, the full range of student needs are being met consistently throughout the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers strategically provide opportunities for deliberate practice and instructional supports that aim at building students metacognition, persistence and self-awareness through new or challenging tasks. In a 6th grade English language arts classroom, students were asked to analyze human and animal interactions as they read *The Call of the Wild*. They annotated as they read and used close reading protocols to identify unknown words and clarify meaning. Students had additional sources including an article on how humans and dogs communicate. They also answered questions using text evidence including “What evidence supports the idea that humans and dogs experience a bond with each other?” Students engaged in collaborative discussions building on each other’s ideas. Students used a color- coded Depth of Knowledge (DOK) chart to guide discussions.
- Teaching practices include strategies that support the instructional focus of productive struggle. For example, Teachers regularly use individual student data to group students and provide the right amount of support and/or challenge. For example, during the math lesson on line segments, the teacher asked students to categorize shapes based upon their attributes. Differentiation was based on data and three groups, Falcons, Dolphins and Cheetahs were formed. The lower group had scaffolds showing several examples of parallel and intersecting lines. The higher group demonstrated how to measure a line segment and why it is important to do so when identifying particular line segments from one another. The lesson also included independent/partner work, which asked students to use 2 rubber bands and their geoboard to find as many different ways as they can to make two line segments that touch exactly seven pegs on a geoboard; students had to copy it on dot paper and then label each pair of line segments as parallel.
- Teachers refined their pedagogical practices to include ongoing on demand assessments and instruction in small flexible groups. This was evident in classroom visits. Teachers develop student independence with supports as they facilitate learning, engage students in discussions and conduct small group instruction. Guided reading leveled groups are based on Degree of Reading Power and include mixed grades. Teachers work on different reading strategies based on student assessments. The second grade math class had five strategic math groups with different tasks and supports.
- Students have an active voice and engage in deep discussions. Productive struggle was evident through math station teaching, literacy centers, Guided reading, book clubs, literature circles, and reciprocal teaching.