



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# **Quality Review**

## **Report**

### **2014-2015**

**Salome Urena de Henriquez**

**Middle School M218**

**4600 Broadway  
New York  
NY, 10040**

**Principal: June Barnett**

**Date of review: March 17, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Claudette Essor**

## The School Context

Salome Urena de Henriquez is an intermediate school with 241 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 3% Black, 94% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 50% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 88.0%.

## 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>Additional Findings</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>Developing</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>Developing</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>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

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

The principal effectively communicates high expectations to staff and families, providing multiple forms of support to foster their progress towards meeting expectations successfully.

### Impact

A culture of high expectations promotes staff accountability for ongoing teaching and learning and results in families understanding students' progress towards meeting expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- Interviews of selected teachers indicate that the principal ensures that all staff members are fully informed about expectations related to instruction, professional development, and other areas of school operations, through team discussions at faculty conferences, one-to-one meetings, bulletins, memos, and a staff manual. This includes emphasis on differentiation of instruction, use of strategies that promote high levels of student engagement and varied ways of assessing learning each day. The principal uses the Danielson Framework for Teaching to reinforce some of those expectations, with all teachers receiving on-site professional development support to improve their pedagogy. Additionally, some teachers receive professional development at lab sites that feature training in specific domains of the Danielson Framework.
- The principal reviews conference notes, unit and lesson plans, and analyzes student work to hold all staff accountable for the school's high expectations. For example, observation reports show explicit next steps and recommendations for re-teaching content and skills not yet mastered by students. In addition, teachers reported that the principal visits their classroom regularly to follow up on the recommendations and offer additional support and feedback. One teacher noted that she received specific feedback about and support for improving her questioning techniques. The principal also indicated that she sometimes models teaching strategies for particular teachers based on classroom observations.
- Communication tools such as an electronic hallway message board, the Salome Newsletter, letters sent home, flyers, and postings on the school's own website, keep families up-to-date on school events and expectations. In addition, during the parent meeting, parents praised the school for high expectations and added that they are kept abreast of their children's progress toward those expectations, via progress reports, report cards, phone calls and emails from some teachers, as well as at weekly conferences on Tuesdays, open house, and Breakfast with the Principal meetings. They added that they get resources to work with their children at workshops and have access to data regarding their children's performance via Skedula, an online data portal that fosters parents' communication with teachers about their children's progress and expectations to be met. Some parents raved about the parent coordinator who calls and speaks to them in English or Spanish to ensure that they stay informed about school activities and expectations for their children.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

Across classrooms, lessons do not consistently include multiple entry points and questioning strategies that lead to high quality student work products and high levels of peer-to-peer discussions.

### Impact

Teaching practices do not consistently provide opportunities for all students to engage in high level thinking and participate in peer-to-peer discussions that maximize learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- In some classrooms, teachers assigned rigorous Common Core aligned tasks that evoked discussions as students quoted evidence from texts to support claims or validate responses to questions. For example, in a sixth grade social studies class the teacher asked students to cite evidence from a text to support their arguments about “the beliefs of Confucius”. This led to peer-to-peer discussion among groups of students. However, other lessons observed, including an eighth grade social studies lesson for students with disabilities, did not show active participation of all learners in discussions and students were not routinely invited to comment on responses given by their peers during teacher led discussions.
- For the most part, observed lessons were teacher dominated, with students quietly listening to the teacher or to responses from a few peers who were called upon. In a few classrooms, lessons had limited reading, writing, and speaking opportunities for students, including English language learners and students with disabilities. This was evident in a seventh grade English language arts class where students remained silent for an extended period of time as they worked to answer short response questions in a workbook with an excerpt about “Water for South Sudan, Inc.”. Similarly, eighth grade students in an English as a Second Language classroom sat listening to the teacher who read a poem in Spanish and then spent most of the observed period explaining literary elements of the poem to them. Further, in most classrooms visited there was no additional task for students who completed the task long before their peers.
- While some lessons challenged students to respond to varied tasks using academic vocabulary, other lessons did not engage all students in critical thinking tasks. For example an eighth grade science teacher facilitated small group work that required students to use science vocabulary to describe hands-on investigations with a microscope and share their findings with the class. Similarly, an eighth grade math teacher engaged students in hands-on work at stations where they used calculators to figure out and graph solutions to a system of equations. By contrast, in another eighth grade classroom where four adults each worked with a small group of students, including students with disabilities and second language learners, students only listened to the teacher or offered brief answers to teacher generated questions when prompted. Further, students’ work products viewed in classrooms and in some student work folders consisted of collections of worksheets and few samples of in-depth writing across genres and content areas.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

All staff work collaboratively to align curricula to Common Core and other relevant standards across content areas, using student work and data to inform the design of tasks for all learners.

### Impact

The school's use of student work and data to modify curricula, results in Common Core aligned units of study that offer students access to varied learning experiences that target college and career readiness goals.

### Supporting Evidence

- Minutes of meetings show that at the start of the school year, teacher teams conducted data analysis of student baseline assessments and reviewed student work samples to determine adjustments needed for alignment of instruction to Common Core Learning Standards. For example, based on analysis of student work and data, teachers have incorporated additional writing tasks in lessons from Expeditionary Learning to deepen coverage of content and skills deemed essential for student mastery of Common Core Standards and instructional shifts.
- Lesson plans show teacher use of Common Core aligned units, with tasks derived from revisions of past units and modification of lessons from Engage NY, as part of targeted focus on the infusion of additional writing tasks across content areas. Impact Math is used to improve access to math curricula, particularly for the most struggling learners and New York City scope and sequence resources guide instruction in social studies. A project-based inquiry science program drives science instruction for sixth and seventh grade students, while science curricula for eighth grade students is aligned to content standards identified by the New York State. This includes coverage of content and skills for the New York State Living Environment assessment, which some eighth grade students take.
- The school's curricula include units of instruction with cross-discipline links to writing, reading, listening, and speaking activities across grades as part of the school's focus on integrating the instructional shifts in all content areas. For example, there are tasks that require regular use of academic vocabulary, text-based responses in all content areas and close reading of texts to support writing activities, and unit plans in math show emphasis on fluency and application. Additionally, tasks for social studies classes are designed around Common Core standards for literacy, with argument writing as a priority across grades.
- Curricula also incorporate specific instructional materials for English language learners and students with disabilities. These include manipulatives, Smart board activities, and the use of Waggle, a web based intervention program in math and literacy that provides practice activities for targeted skills, based on identified gaps in student learning. The school also uses the Wilson program to improve student proficiency in skill areas such as decoding, spelling, vocabulary, and dictation, while a Word Generation program is used to foster student use of academic vocabulary across content areas. In addition, teachers incorporate a language objective along with a content objective in lesson plans to improve access to curricula by second language learners.

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

Assessment practices do not consistently yield actionable feedback that is shared among staff and students to inform understanding of students' progress in learning. Use of data from ongoing real time assessments to adjust curriculum and instruction based on students' learning needs is not yet evident across classrooms.

### Impact

Students do not regularly receive feedback that helps them to improve their performance and teachers do not make timely and effective adjustments that address students' learning needs across content areas.

### Supporting Evidence

- School documents show that the school administered assessments, including a baseline assessment in English language arts and math to all students. Periodic assessments in math, English language arts and English as a Second Language are also administered as part of ongoing assessment of content and skills mastered or not yet mastered by students. Common Core aligned assessments linked to the Expeditionary Learning curriculum and weekly Common Core aligned math assessments also contribute data about student progress in literacy and math. The Waggle online program yields additional data that supports ongoing assessment of learning and skills building for targeted content areas.
- Within some lessons viewed, teachers used assessment tools such as questioning, journal entries, and exit tickets to assess students' progress on learning tasks. Some teachers also used index cards for Do-Nows that provide data to inform instruction. However, checks for understanding leading to adjustments during the teaching period were not consistently evident in classrooms. Most teachers who walked around the room monitoring students did not use their observations to drive follow-up questioning or reinforce teaching points during the period of observation. A review of teacher team meeting records also did not show examples of regular adjustments to lessons or units based on students' learning needs as determined by data from cycles of assessments.
- Assessments and tasks within some content areas result in the sharing of feedback about students' performance in skill areas measured by the assessments. For example the principal used a spreadsheet with assessment data, including item skills analysis in math and literacy, to show proficiency levels of all students for each skill area assessed. In addition, a few classrooms showed postings of data on student performance on skills measured by assessments in the given content area. However, there was no data that highlighted gaps in student learning across all content areas and grades.
- The format, quality, and quantity of teacher feedback on formal and informal assessments varied across disciplines and classrooms. For example, while a bulletin board with science work from grade 8 students showed comparative data across several assessments and samples of the students' work with teacher feedback including next steps, English language arts work samples from some grade 7 students showed only a check mark and a brief comment such as "Great!" Further, while a few work samples in some rooms showed rubric-based scores and comments on post-its, other samples of student work contained a number grade or check mark only. Some of the students interviewed also stated that they do not regularly use rubrics to engage in peer and self-assessment of their performance on tasks.

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

All teachers are engaged in professional collaborations across grades and subjects, with a focus on refining curricula and improving instruction across the school. Distributed leadership structures support the development of teacher leadership and teachers have a voice in decisions that affect learning across the school.

### Impact

Collaborative analysis of teaching practices, along with teacher input in school level decision-making support improvement of teacher practice and growth in student progress towards learning goals.

### Supporting Evidence

- Led by grade leaders, teams of teachers meet on Monday and Tuesday afternoons, focusing on data analysis and review of curricula for all grades and content areas. Teachers also have weekly content meeting time, which is used for collaborative planning for Common Core aligned instruction, in keeping with school goals. At team meetings, such as the one observed during the Quality Review, teachers engage in inquiry based work, using a protocol to examine student work, assess student skills, and analyze gaps in learning to determine next steps for follow-up with the student. For example, one teacher stated that after each end of unit or chapter assessment, the grade team examines the results to determine next steps for students who do not meet the mastery target aligned to the Common Core Standards and instructional shifts related to the assessment. Another teacher reflected on teamwork to deepen alignment of curricula to Common Core Standards and instructional shifts that resulted in the adding of more tasks that require in-depth writing and offering students additional exposure to word problems in math.
- Team meetings include cluster teachers who cited growth in their learning, as team members share instructional practices that peers adopt and implement to improve their practice. For example, one teacher presented before and after lesson plans and student work from English language learners to demonstrate how strategies (such as the inclusion of a graphic organizer and use of sentence starters to model each component of an argumentative essay) elicited from peers at a team meeting informed her re-teaching of argumentative essay writing, leading to improvement in her delivery of subsequent lessons on that topic and the quality of the students' essays. The principal also noted that due to teamwork most teachers have already shown improvement in their performance rating on targeted components (questioning and student engagement) of the Danielson Framework.
- Teachers interviewed reported that they have regular input in school decisions. One teacher added that they help to create the school-wide professional development calendar of topics, are empowered to set the agenda for the weekly team meetings, and recommend instructional resources for use across the school. Those identified for high levels of expertise or recognized as instructional leaders by the principal or peers, serve as grade leaders, peer mentors, and/or members of a data team. Along with the data specialist, these teacher leaders help to strengthen teacher capacity in relation to analysis of data, targeted elements of the Danielson Framework and teacher voice in school level decision-making.