



**Department of  
Education**

*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**The Peck Slip School**

**Elementary 02M343**

**52 Chambers Street  
Manhattan  
NY, 10007**

**Principal: Maggie Siena**

**Date of review: Nov 21, 2014  
Lead Reviewer: Dr. Buffie Simmons**

## The School Context

The Peck Slip School is an Elementary school with 123 students from K through grade 5. The school population comprises 5% Black, 13% Hispanic, 57% White, and 14% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 94%.

## 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>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>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>

**Quality Indicator:****1.1 Curriculum****Rating:****Well Developed****Findings**

All curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Higher-order skills are consistently emphasized for all learners across grades and content areas.

**Impact**

The school designs its curricula to be engaging and rigorous incorporating State standards and City-expectations, addressing individual learners' interests, strengths, and needs.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leadership and staff integrate the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) with the curricula aligned to State standards, providing students with learning experiences that emphasize a balance between content, the thinking skills necessary for success in the 21st century, and the literacy and math skills that will support them. Curriculum is designed around enduring ideas and in-depth inquiry. Students engage in two to three studies per year, such as, animals (fish, birds and primates); transportation systems (bridges, subways and boats), and cultures (Eastern Woodland Indians, New Amsterdam, Inuit). Reading and writing is integrated in the content areas.
- The school has a major emphasis on early childhood education and reading readiness. This ongoing critical review of student work guides the school's curricular approach to project-based instruction and multi-age classroom groups differentiated for each learner. In literacy, instruction focuses on making meaning. For example, unit plans for kindergartners develop solid letter –sound correspondence, phonemic awareness, sight word vocabulary and print concepts through both integration of reading and writing in the content studies and direct instruction.
- Based on the unit plans, students are engaged in inter-disciplinary and subject-focused activities. Student work is organized around problem solving, projects and big questions that require thinking deeply about significant issues. For example, Students engage in two-three studies per year, such as fish, egg to duckling, birds and primates; systems (bridges, subways and boast), cultures (Eastern Woodland Indians, New Amsterdam, Inuit.) With the teacher as a guide and resource, students were engaged in collaborative research and problem solving.
- The math curriculum is fully aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and draws from a number of resources for lessons, problem solving experiences and games. Students learn both traditional and alternative approaches to operating with numbers while mastering addition and multiplication facts.
- Social and Emotional Learning is interwoven throughout the curriculum. Teachers are trained in the Responsive Classroom curriculum, and social and emotional awareness is fostered through class conversation, collaboration, play and content study. The school carves out 45-60 minutes of unstructured time where students play independently or with classmates at activities including blocks, dramatic play, art, puzzles and games. In third grade, students engage in play to build community and to develop interpersonal relationships. For example, students may dramatize a social scenario to explore appropriate and empathetic ways to react by building models, by writing plays or by creating board games in context of a content study.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

The school's set of beliefs about how students learn best informs teacher pedagogy which results in student growth.

### Impact

Teachers use of questioning and discussion techniques engage students in learning, resulting in meaningful work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- Strong beliefs about how students learn best are consistent across classrooms, with teachers implementing an inquiry-based approach to learning that allows, students to be actively involved, follow their interests, share their "wonderings" at the start of each unit of study and make connections with their own experiences. This enables the students to set their own goals in science and social studies, to want to find out things for themselves, and to extend these inquiries outside the school. As a result, all students approach work in a multi-sensory way; feel safe; take risks, and reflect on their progress.
- Teachers effectively differentiate strategies so that all students have choice, supports and extensions for each inquiry project. Students interact with peers to analyze and synthesize information and improve higher order critical thinking skills as evidenced in projects.
- Tasks in all classrooms are tiered which lead to meaningful work products for all students. For example, in one class there was a push-in teacher who was sitting along the perimeter of the rug with maximum interaction with the student who was struggling.
- A pedagogical focus this year was on improving questioning and discussion techniques. As a result, students of varying ability levels engage in classroom conversations.

## 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' assessment practices measure student progress, inform adjustments to instruction, and lead to increased achievement.

### Impact

The school's systems to monitor progress through data analysis as well as during instruction are used regularly to guide adjustments in units and lessons to meet students' learning needs.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers collect a range of data including, running records, checklists and conference notes that is used to determine differentiated groups for classroom instruction and student progress toward learning goals. Teachers also analyze student work to make adjustments to their own teaching practice. Teachers provide feedback to students both verbally and in writing.
- Grading policies are aligned during team meetings and then the principal reviews the plan to ensure coherency. There is a school wide system for measuring behavioral progress. The teacher explains what behavior is needed to participate in tasks. For example: In a kindergarten class while during choice time in Lego lab, a discussion ensued on how each group worked on taking turns staying focused, taking care of materials, and participating in conversations.
- Students were self-assessing, deciding if they earned an opportunity to participate in their choice activity while the teacher was charting the assessment and facilitating the discussion.
- Assessment data are compiled and utilized to inform small group instruction. Students performing far below grade expectations in reading are in Response to Intervention groups. Teachers indicated during the meeting that they are able to adjust their instruction as a result of the assessments.

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

The school has established a culture for learning. Everyone conveys high expectations to students and families and provides supports to ensure every student is successfully prepared for the next level.

### Impact

Systems of communication, feedback and accountability support the school's high expectations for all members of the learning community, thus providing a path towards student achievement.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school's expectation of professionalism, communication and high levels of instruction are conveyed to the staff through the frequent conferences, professional development days, and one-on-one meetings with the principal. Teachers are trained in the Danielson framework through videos, self-reflection and discussions in team meetings. The curricula expectations are engrained in their practice, and they speak a common language related to instruction and student expectations. Teachers state they are very well supported by the administration and that "there is an open door policy" allowing them to consult on student achievement and instructional decisions. In turn, teachers are respected in making curricula decisions that will best meet their students' needs and ensure engagement in challenging tasks.
- The school's mission is to educate students to be passionate about learning, curious about others and the world, and committed to community engagement. This 'Theory of Action' frames all conversations about learners, focuses on students' strengths, and engages in problem solving to address their challenges. Thus, the goal is to create a more tolerant, inclusive, and positive learning environment where all can succeed.
- Dozens of parents attended the parent meeting during this review, providing countless examples of how the school has helped each of them personally and helped their children to become successful, academically, emotionally and socially. Several parents referenced the value of the portfolio processes whereby students are expected to select and present their best work. Many parents described the ways in which behaviors developed in school – for example, around nutritional or environmental choices – resulted in changed behavior of the whole family at home.
- The school leader includes families in the decision-making processes that impact the school community. At the start of the school year, the school hosts an off-site retreat where parents, faculty and school leadership collaborate to review the school's policies and procedures. Parents are able to reach out to their child's teacher at anytime to continue a conversation about their child's progress. Parents participate in a variety of workshops and informational sessions, such as Common Core Learning Standards, so that they are well able to partner with the school towards reaching high expectations set for students.

<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 professional collaborations that build their capacity to make decisions relating to curriculum development and to analyze student work. This collaboration results in improved student learning.

### Impact

Inquiry based teacher collaborations align with school goals and promote distributive leadership, resulting in increased instructional capacity and a greater teacher voice in key decision-making.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school has always had a collegial environment, and now the school has moved towards the true collaboration that has been responsible for many positive changes. Some teams are responsible for the ongoing adjustments to curriculum and pedagogical practice, including the ways to ensure access for the special needs students who are now fully integrated into general education settings. For example, teacher teams have helped colleagues become more adept at best practices such as station teaching.
- Other teams engage in protocols that look very closely at student work, with each teacher around the table bringing his or her unique perspective on the student to the examination of the work. During one such meeting, for example, a second grade student with special needs was the subject of an in-depth analysis to determine the root cause of lack of progress in reading and writing.
- The professional collaborations are the forum to track and monitor progress towards the school goals for coherence across the grades, to increase reading achievement of all students with particular attention on the lowest third, and to utilize the Danielson framework to improve student academic and behavioral performance.
- Teachers state that they feel empowered to have input on school-wide curricula as well as on instructional decisions for their class or grade. They affirm that the administration is open to their ideas and their voice is respected