

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**The Bellaire School**

**Elementary School Q135**

**207-11 89<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11427**

**Principal: Diana Lagnese**

**Date of Review: May 12, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Beverly Mitchell**

## The School Context

PS 135 is an elementary school with 1006 students from grade kindergarten through grade five. The school population comprises 31% Black, 19% Hispanic, 4% White, and 46% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. 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>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

School leaders message high expectations consistently to staff through the Danielson framework for Teaching in trainings and various other modes of communication. Workshops and updates on performance keep families apprised of student progress towards college and career readiness.

### Impact

Structures that support the school's high expectations build buy-in and accountability among staff, students and their families. This approach provides a clear path towards student achievement and college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- Monthly parent newsletters, frequent parent workshops on relevant topics such as the Common Core Learning Standards and parent links to school's online data promote clear communication to families on school expectations and a path to college and career readiness. Parents also receive communication via e-mail, phone relays, notes home, flyers and personal appointments.
- The school leaders conduct frequent formal and informal classroom observations and provide individualized feedback to teachers using the Danielson Framework. Classroom inter-visitations, peer coaching, professional development on Mondays and informal faculty conversations hold staff accountable for meeting expectations.
- Parents expressed high satisfaction with the emphasis the new principal places on post-secondary preparation and college and career readiness. Students receive regular assemblies on college and career options and culminating in college day and career day. Community members return to school to provide encouraging words on the importance of early preparation and the development of life skills.
- The guidance counselor provides at-risk counseling and the cluster teachers deliver explicit lessons on collaboration and character development. They used materials from Cloud Nine and Positive Behavior Intervention Support to nurture qualities like honesty, perseverance, tolerance, compassion and acceptance.

## Area of Focus

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

While teaching practices provide instructional supports, including questioning and discussion techniques, the use of strategic and thoughtful entry points and extensions that foster deep learning in student work product varies across the school.

### Impact

Across classrooms, extensions to curricula support students to produce meaningful work products, yet there are missed opportunities for all learners (including English language learners and Special education students) to take ownership of their learning and consistently gain curriculum access.

### Supporting Evidence

- In all classes visited teachers used a modified workshop model in which they began with a mini-lesson, did a basic demonstration and sent students off to independent practice. Students turned and talked to each other even though sustained classroom discussion was not generated.
- A review of student portfolios in the vast majority of classes visited revealed student writing of uneven quality. In some classes there was student work in argumentative writing with claims based on text evidence. In others, there was work based purely on the students' opinion. Much of the writing was based on student understanding of the essential question and comprehension skills.
- In a fourth grade class, students discussed a lesson on using money. This included topics like investments, stock market, piggy banks and regular banks. Students received a great deal of knowledge yet tasks did not allow students to make a deeper connection between the concepts and real world application.
- Conversations with students indicated that student groupings were small, flexible and fluid. Small group instruction consumed approximately half of the class period. Some extensions for ELLs and special education students included more careful reading analysis, teacher think aloud, and coaching on drawing conclusions from evidence.

## Additional Findings

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

The school's curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. Performance tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills consistently across grades and subjects for all learners.

### Impact

The curricula decisions of the school build coherence while promoting college and career readiness for all learners. Curricula and academic tasks extend student thinking across grades and subjects.

### Supporting Evidence

- Curricula maps are written conceptually as teachers fill in the details on each grade. They include Ready Gen, Go Math and instructional materials adapted from Engage NY, the New York City Department of Education Common Core Library, and the NYC science and social studies scope and sequence. Content-based non-fiction texts and trade books were the primary source of non-fiction independent reading for students.
- Reading, writing and subject-area units of study integrate the CCLS instructional shifts across content areas. For example: Selected strategies that are used across classrooms include tiered-academic vocabulary with word walls, math and reading fluency, multiple methods for solving word problems, argumentative writing and text-based responses. The Ready Gen fourth unit on "Drawing Conclusions" is an example of integration. The related anchor text is titled "Using Money."
- Lesson plans across subject areas were available in all visited classrooms. They included some higher-order thinking questions, anchor text, standard addressed, the lesson objective and the reading objective. The reading objective detailed the close reading strategies, key words and details contained in the text.

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

Although the school uses common assessments in reading, writing and math and tracks student progress, the checks for understanding and student self-assessment are inconsistent across the school.

### **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. These adjustments are sporadic and do not always meet students' learning needs.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The school uses common assessments in reading, writing and math. They use Fountas & Pinnell plus Teacher's College running records to determine reading levels and to identify students for academic intervention services. They use the unit tests from Ready Gen and Go Math to determine student progress toward goals. The Measures of Student Learning tests are administered using the NYC performance assessments.
- Across most classrooms teachers use exit slips, double entry journals, checklists, rubrics and some peer assessments. During classroom visits, checks for understanding were infrequent and inconsistent. Teacher adjustments during the lesson delivery were sporadic. For example, sometimes regrouping was observed and at other times the concepts were re-taught.
- The teachers use small group guided reading and strategy lessons as formative assessments of English language learners and special education students. The progress of these students is monitored over eight week periods and adjustments are made to student groups. The ELL students are graded beginning, intermediate and advanced. The special education students are measured against the demands of their Individualized Educational Plans (IEP).

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

Teacher teams consistently examine data and student work within inquiry-based teams. The school provides leadership structures to facilitate teacher input on key decisions about curricula and teaching practices.

**Impact**

The work of teacher teams has resulted in improved pedagogy and increased student progress on assessments. The shared leadership structures expand the school’s capacity to accelerate student learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams meet four times a week on their common prep period. They use the Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, Decisional (ORID) protocol to look at student work. The teachers use student work to revise lessons within the unit and to create more effective scaffolds for their students. The analysis of student data is intended to identify trends and to pro-actively address learning issues.
- Teacher leaders, who represent each grade, meet weekly with the instructional cabinet to discuss professional development and teacher-driven priorities. This process was expanded two months ago with the arrival of the new principal. The professional development on Mondays has been created and sustained by teacher leaders. They are focusing on the eight major tenets of the Danielson Framework.
- Teachers express high levels of satisfaction as a result of the empowerment provided to them by the new principal. They have substantial input on decisions affecting the selection and refinement of curricula resources, the placement and grouping of students and the selection of new teachers.