



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

PS 176 Cambria Heights

Elementary School Q176

**120-45 235th Street
Queens
NY 11411**

Principal: Arlene Bartlett

**Date of review: April 1, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Beverly Mitchell**

The School Context

PS 176 Queens is an elementary school with 726 students from grade kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 91% Black, 3% Hispanic, 1% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 2% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 96.0%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
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	Additional Findings	Proficient
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	Focus	Proficient
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	Celebration	Well Developed
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Additional Findings	Proficient
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The school uses common assessments, rubrics and grading policies across all classrooms that provide actionable feedback to students and teachers and are aligned to their curricula. Common assessments provide a clear picture of student progress including ELLs (English language learners) and SWDs.

Impact

The continuous use of data analysis allows teachers to provide meaningful feedback to their students and to make adjustments during instruction to meet their learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The vast majority of teachers utilize common assessments in all content areas to provide continuous information on student performance and progress. These include DRA 2, pre and post unit assessments, MOSL baseline and benchmark assessments and mock English language arts and math standardized tests. Grade one students initially struggled to write one page and with explicit instruction wrote across three pages four months later.
- The school employs grade level rubrics for writing, speaking and performance tasks. These rubrics include the writing-on-demand checklist, the discussion rubric and essay four-point scale. Teacher teams revise and refine these rubrics to increase their accessibility and make them more student-friendly. For example, the grade three rubrics explained the difference between performance level three and four as the difference between small revisions and no revisions when writing an essay. Students could not previously explain the difference. Students are therefore able to discuss their current level of performance and their next steps for improvement.
- English language learners are continuously assessed at all levels of language mastery. The 1.65 percent ELLs in the building move steadily from beginning to intermediate to advanced levels with support from the ESL teacher. The ESL teacher pushes in to classrooms to support language acquisition. Special education students are continuously measured against their Individualized Education Plans. Teachers explain to them how to improve their text-based evidence by paraphrasing their texts.
- Teachers use a Monitor for Student Learning checklist to track student progress and adjust curricula and instructional decisions during class time. Teachers use questioning to ask students to elaborate and deepen their conversations. Then they adjust their teaching based on information they receive from student dialogue. Teachers create and modify questions together and support each other with planning. This is particularly effective in assisting ELLs and SWDs to demonstrate increased mastery.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

While teaching practices provide instructional supports, including questioning and discussion protocols, the use of multiple entry points and extensions that encourage deep reasoning in student work products varies across the school.

Impact

Across classrooms, teachers engage students in appropriately challenging tasks that demonstrate critical thinking skills and creativity. Yet there are quiet students who are passive in their participation. This creates missed opportunities for all learners, including student sub-groups, to take ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- In each classroom, ESL teachers push into literacy and math lessons at certain times to support English language learners. This approach supplements pull-out or small group sessions that focus on the development of academic vocabulary and its integration into academic tasks.
- During a grade 4 integrated co-teaching class, teachers assigned students to groups based on their strengths in the topic under discussion and not on their sub-group classification. Students used fraction pieces to clarify their thinking and drew diagrams to demonstrate their conclusions. The teachers modeled the process for the class and 25 percent of the students required further clarification. The teachers re-taught the technique to those students who needed to master it.
- Student notebooks in the majority of classrooms visited contained evidence of an increased volume of student writing from the beginning of the school year up to this point. Student work products showed an emphasis on the use of text-based evidence to justify all articulated positions. For example, in a second grade class students were required to justify why they labeled the main character with particular traits.
- In the classrooms visited, teachers utilized a modified workshop model of teaching in which students turned and talked to their partners at selected points in the lesson. At other times students raised their hands to answer teacher questions. Students were not observed asking their own higher-order questions of either their teachers or their peers.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

All curricula at the school are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. The leaders and faculty emphasize rigor and higher-order skills in their curricula and academic tasks including those for ELLs and SWDs.

Impact

The school's decisions about curricula promote college and career readiness for all learners while building coherence across grades and subjects. Academic tasks challenge student thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- The school refines and develops rigorous academic tasks through the resources from Engage NY, NYC DOE Common Core Library, the New York City social studies scope and sequence, ReadyGEN, non-fiction library texts and Go Math. Teacher teams make decisions about the careful selection of material for daily lessons.
- The content area units of study integrate the Common Core Learning Standards instructional shifts while including technology and the arts. Teachers employ thoughtful strategies that promote the mastery of academic vocabulary, fluency and multi-step problem solving. Teachers explicitly coach into college and career readiness skills such as note-taking strategies, accountable talk and discussion techniques, research skills and text-based writing.
- In a first grade class parents were invited to participate with their children in a research-based project on rainforests. The students and parents read leveled books, used Smart Board technology, wrote informational essays and prepared for group presentations. The teacher focused on higher-order skills and critical questioning. Instead of simply asking where the rainforests are located she inquired about the conditions needed for their sustenance.
- Lesson plans were available in the classrooms visited. They each included critical thinking and essential questions and selected strategies for supporting English language learners, special education students and struggling readers. Some of the strategies suggested include the use of transitional phrases, sentence starters, cause and effect cues and a variety of discussion prompts.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	------------------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations to staff through the Danielson Framework for Teaching with job-embedded training and other modes of messaging. Families receive updates on student progress towards college and career readiness through workshops and performance reports.

Impact

The structures that facilitate the school’s high expectations build accountability and collaboration among the staff, students and their families. This provides a clear path towards student achievement and college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The parent handbook “The A-Z Book”, weekly teacher newsletters, Facebook updates, Twitter feeds and the regularly updated school website reinforce school-wide expectations for teaching and a culture of communication.
- School leaders utilize frequent formal and informal classroom observations, peer inter-visitations, individualized feedback from classroom visits and the daily bulletin to hold staff accountable for meeting expectations.
- Parents reported that they are highly satisfied with the gifted and talented program of the school and its emphasis on college and career readiness. Parent workshops unpack information on the Common Core Learning Standards, the social studies scope and sequence and preparation for middle school responsibilities.
- On Tuesday afternoons teachers offer guidance and support to parents and families. At other times they send updates on students’ progress via monthly reports, report cards, phone, web and e-mail outreach.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	---	----------------	-------------------

Findings

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

Impact

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

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams review the results from recent pre and post unit assessments and writing-on-demand samples to observe trends, make instructional decisions and incubate ideas. They include high, medium and low student performance tasks to adjust teaching practices and develop strategies. For example, during a team meeting observed, teachers explained that they release responsibility for deep discussions to the students by giving them turns in the facilitator role.
- Teacher leaders, who represent each grade, and include the STEM specialist, meet weekly among themselves to refine professional development and disseminate suggestions for teacher practices. Teachers decided to use the scientific method to explain how ideas move from hypotheses to theories in science classes across grades and levels. The STEM specialist assisted with the lesson planning.
- Teachers said that they felt empowered because they have continuous input on all decisions involving curricular materials and instructional resources across subject areas and grades. Teachers decided to include Expeditionary Learning as a supplement to Ready GEN to support the emphasis on writing to explain.