



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 177Q

75Q177

**56-37 188th Street
Fresh Meadows
NY 11365**

Principal: Kathleen Posa

Date of review: December 2-3, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Robin Cohen

The School Context

P.S. 177Q is an elementary-high school with 507 students from grade K through grade 12+. The school population comprises 34% Black, 23% Hispanic, 25% White, and 16% Asian students. The student body includes 19% English language learners and 99% special education students. Boys account for 77% of the students enrolled and girls account for 23%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90.0%.

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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Additional Findings	Proficient
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	Well Developed
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:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

All curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), and tactically integrate the instructional shifts. The school continues to deepen, expand and refine their curriculum maps and units of study to ensure a range of learning experiences, cognitively appropriate and challenging, engaging all students in academics and life skills.

Impact

The school's curricula decisions build coherence and promote student independence, academic achievement and career readiness skills for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The school makes purposeful choices about curricula based on student performance and periodic assessments such as Students Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI). In reading, 62% of students showed a 10 point increase and in math, approximately 50% showed a 10 point increase.
- Planning and refining is evident in the revised curricula maps organized by grade bands, academic content area and social skills development. The map provides evidence that the school develops rigorous tasks through the adaptation of instructional programs from Attainment Math and English Language Arts, Unique Curriculum for Social Studies and Science and New York State Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) to promote college and career readiness skills.
- During a reading/history lesson for middle school students with autism (6:1:1), students read about the first human heart transplant operation in South Africa. The teacher modified the lesson by rewriting the article using symbolic text. This permitted students the ability to read to each other, locate answers and cite evidence from the text.
- Throughout all classrooms visited, emphasis was noted in making content relevant to real life situation, such as filling out job applications as well as knowing what appropriate dressing for work is. The school provides pre-vocational training from school based worksites such as the School Store, the Culinary Institute, and Custodial training.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Teaching practices reflect the school's core belief system that students learn best when engaged in lessons that are functional, pragmatic, hands-on and experiential and when lessons are differentiated with multiple entry points.

Impact

Across classrooms, teaching practices support students to produce cognitively appropriate work products, yet there are missed opportunities for some learners to take ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teaching practices are closely aligned to the CCLS driven curriculum emphasizing students' functional and instructional levels. Specific elements of the Danielson Framework, such as grouping students by their cognitive levels, as well as their behavioral levels, are examples of how students are grouped by need.
- Lesson plans in all content areas emphasize a targeted focus on speaking and listening because a large percentage of students are non-verbal or minimally verbal. In a health class for middle school students with autism, students pointed to picture symbols, used I-Pads and the SMARTboard and were given Augmentative Alternative Communication devices (AAC), to afford multiple entry points thereby engaging all students.
- Classroom teachers collaborate with speech teachers developing more cognitively challenging questioning techniques. Students were asked "Can you predict what will happen next?", "What would you do in that situation?" "Describe how you think he feels"? However, this is not yet the case across the vast majority of classrooms. In a few classrooms visited, students participated in class discussions by responding to only teacher-generated questions or yes-no questions.
- In all of the classrooms visited, opportunities were provided for students to engage in peer to peer interactions. Students were prompted to "ask their partner" a question about the story. Teachers stated the instructional focus is to increase student-initiated communication with classmates and others, leading to increasing independence and promoting college and career readiness skills.
- The English as a second language (ESL) teachers work classroom and content area teachers using a planning template to ensure a common understanding of the curricular focus and to increase communication among the English language learners (ELL) and their monolingual peers.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school uses common assessments and rubrics aligned to the curricula, providing actionable feedback and consistently checks for understanding.

Impact

School leaders and staff have an ongoing understanding of the performance and progress of all learners which effectively informs instructional practices at the team and classroom level.

Supporting Evidence

- In all classrooms visited, portfolios that include monthly collection of work samples, assessment data (academic as well as social/behavior), and Level1 vocational data, are maintained to provide evidence of student mastery of their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals. In addition, Unique Learning Profile is used to determine career interests and readiness skills.
- During the small group student meeting, students stated they did not want teacher feedback placed on their work in the form of “post-it” notes. This has led to students conferring with their teachers regarding their performance.
- The administrative team and teaching staff collaborated to develop a quarterly school-wide report card that is aligned to students’ IEP goals.
- In classes visited, students self-assess using checklists and rubrics developed for each population within the school. In addition, paraprofessionals are integral participants in data collection during instruction. This data along with student self-assessment are used to guide instructional practices and determine student grouping.
- Ongoing checks for understanding include pre-planned questions for paraprofessional use during small group instruction, rubrics to meet the cognitive level of students, picture symbols and assistive technology devices.
- A review of teachers’ instructional plans and conference notes lead to adjustments such as additional guided group practice, use of additional audio-visual aids and re-teaching concepts such as sequencing.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

High expectations are evident throughout the school organization via the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, producing a culture of mutual accountability. The school has established systematic structures within a culture of positive attitudes that engages and informs all stakeholders.

Impact

Structures that support the school's high expectations results in effective academic and personal growth of students and adults.

Supporting Evidence

- The emphasis on communication and high expectations is exhibited and expressed through the weekly "Posa's Points" a digital newsletter via ARIS, "Words of the Week", daily communication notebooks from teachers to families, faculty meetings, meaningful and pertinent workshops requested by staff such as "understanding the complexity of autism" and "creating tasks to demonstrate higher order thinking skills".
- School leaders and staff work as a team in study groups, developing the school website and planning professional development workshops. Feedback from professional development workshops is collected from the staff and used to inform future professional development activities.
- The current Learning Environment Survey feedback indicates an increased rating from both teachers and parents regarding communication and curriculum implementation.
- Parent stated there is continuous outreach and support by the transition coordinator, the parent coordinator, teachers, related service providers and administrators. Parents stated they receive ongoing training in topics such as: Medicaid Services, Future Planning and Guardianship and Developing Independent Skills.
- Worksite stipends are provided to students. Parental involvement and communication is an integral part of this opportunity. The school works with parents to teach their children how to be responsible for their earnings including budgeting and savings.
- The transition program has grown from placing only six children five years ago to 35 children this year into work-sites out in the community, providing a path towards increased student independence and the opportunity for gainful employment.

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

Teachers are regularly engaged in inquiry-based collaborations focused on increasing student achievement and contribute to school-wide decisions.

Impact

As a result, professional collaborations continuously strengthen teacher practices ensuring a shared commitment to attaining school goals and increasing student progress and teacher growth.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers are active members of collaborative teams, meeting twice per week, both within and across sites. Teachers are grouped according to student populations (6:1:1, 8:1:1, 12:1:1) and student ages. Teacher teams examine student data and work samples and focus on the rigor of the task, the level of questioning, and how lessons are differentiated to include all students.
- Student work samples presented from the end of a math unit demonstrate the use of key vocabulary in content areas and improved teacher practice. For example, a teacher incorporated the suggestions from a previous team meeting in how to have students understand and explain the concept of division and its application to real life situations. The teacher modeled a problem, “I have 18 cookies – how many do each of you get”? She then had students create their own problems and explain the solution.
- Based on assessment data and teacher input, the school-wide goal is to increase communication skills. During a collaborative team meeting, teachers stated that the focus on speaking and listening has resulted in increased student-to-student interaction and the quality of student discussion with staff using assistive technology.
- Teachers identify a problem of practice and discuss instructional strategies and scaffolds that address the problem. For example, a teacher stated she had been unable to teach one of her students the conceptual meaning of “more or less”. The teacher provided the team with samples of student work. After reviewing the samples, the team suggested she try a more kinesthetic approach using manipulatives of the student’s choosing.
- Members of the curriculum review committee stated they felt empowered and valued in their role in selecting the curriculum for the entire organization. Members from this committee participate in collaborative teams in adapting, modifying and creating lessons to further enhance the curriculum.