



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

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2014-2015**

**PS/IS 268**

**Elementary-Middle School Q268**

**92-07 175<sup>th</sup> Street  
Queens  
NY 11433**

**Principal: Lissa Grant Stewart**

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

## The School Context

PS/MS 268 is a K-8 school with 586 students from grade kindergarten through grade eight. The school population comprises 37% Black, 26% Hispanic, 2% White, and 23% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.7%.

## 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>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>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>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

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

All curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. Critical thinking and higher-order skills are emphasized for all students across grades and content areas

### Impact

The school's structures and systems for aligning curricula build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students. Across grades and content areas academic tasks promote rigorous student thinking for all learners including English language learners and students with disabilities.

### Supporting Evidence

- A review of Lesson plans revealed higher -order essential questions and intentional strategies for supporting English language learners, special education students and struggling readers. For example, in a third grade math class, the essential question was "How can you describe angles in plane shapes?" was at the center of the lesson. In a second grade class the essential question targeted "How do you use tally charts, picture graphs, and bar graphs to help you solve problems?"
- Teachers adjust unit plans and include rigorous academic tasks with various entry points for all students. For example, all classrooms in K-2 use the 3-T model (Text, talk & task). This model supports critical thinking and discussion by building on the background knowledge of all students enabling students to demonstrate understanding of complex text.
- Reading, writing, and content area units of study are aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Academic vocabulary word walls, fluency, multi-step problem solving and argumentative writing based on textual evidence are consistently focused upon. An entire class period is dedicated to building mathematical fluency each day.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

While teaching practices provide instructional supports, including questioning and discussion techniques, the multiple entry points that support all learners including ELLs and SWDs show degrees of variability in rigor across grades and subjects.

### Impact

Across classrooms, extensions in curricula enable students to produce meaningful work products, yet there are missed opportunities for all students including English language learners and students with disabilities to take ownership and extend their learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- During a fifth grade math lesson, students collected and graphed data on a coordinate grid following a simple experiment. The teacher modeled the task using visuals and graphics. Students worked in pairs with one student assuming the role of recorder and the other of observer. Additionally, the teacher used small group instruction, the interactive smart board and various materials as needed.

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In most classes visited students were engaged in class discussion in direct response to questions posed by the teacher. In a third grade class students assumed the active role of facilitator for the entire group. Students utilized “turn and talk” as a major way of communicating with each other.

- While conversations with students in pairs and triads indicated that groups were flexible, the extensions to the lessons did not fully challenge all learners including English language learners and students with disabilities. For example, in one class there was evidence that students in one of the groups were fully able to accomplish all assigned tasks with little effort. Yet, in a third grade class students were able to relate area to the operations of multiplication and division and use tiling to show that the area of a rectangle with whole number side lengths can be solved algebraically.
- In the vast majority of classrooms student portfolios revealed consistent evidence of work in argumentative writing with a claim, counterclaim and text-based evidence. Some students were able to analyze readings in greater depth than their peers.

## Additional Findings

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

The school creates and uses common assessments, rubrics and grading policies to track student progress across grades and subject areas aligned with the school's curricula.

### Impact

The school uses common assessments to provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Data is used to make adjustments in curricula and daily instruction resulting in improved student achievement.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school utilizes common assessments in all content areas such as the Common Core performance tasks, pre and post unit assessments, benchmark assessments, Teacher's College running records and MOSL check-ins. Teachers use the data from the assessments to make effective adjustments to lessons to meet students' learning needs. For example, regrouping students or re-teaching concepts are based on assessment analysis. .
- English language learners are assessed at the beginning, intermediate and advanced levels of their language mastery. The school's intensive approach includes listening centers, visual cues, technology for background information, graphic organizers and thinking maps. Special education students receive these benefits as well. In addition, they are continuously measured against their Individualized Educational Plan criteria. As a result, more than eighty percent of special education students meet their IEP goals.
- Across English language arts and math classrooms, teachers use exit slips, checklists for peer feedback, self-assessment checklists for reflection and task-specific rubrics for student use. Teachers utilize this data to provide actionable feedback for student improvement. Feedback is written directly into students' notebooks or on their completed assignments.
- Assessment data is used to determine student progress toward individual and group goals. For example, the school has a goal for raising the standard of expository writing across grades and subjects. Student work is used to monitor progress biweekly. This has led to improved student work products as measured by the grade level rubric.

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

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff through the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Workshops and performance updates help to keep families informed of student progress towards college and career readiness.

### **Impact**

The school has structures that support these high expectations and build accountability among the various constituencies of staff, students and their families. This provides a clear path for facilitating increased student achievement and college and career readiness.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The school leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and use the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the rubric that defines accountability in classroom practice. Teachers receive individualized feedback and ongoing professional development on professionalism, pedagogy and communication during Monday sessions. The school supports peer inter-visitations with coaching provided by administrators and network personnel.
- The Parent Coordinator provides training and workshops for parents connected to the Common Core Learning Standards, post-secondary preparation and future steps to college and career readiness. Common Core workshops were held for ELA and math separately and parents were encouraged to ask questions. The school partners with Urban Advantage for STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) activities.
- Parents indicated that teachers and faculty provide updated guidance on their children's progress through progress reports during the marking period, parent teacher conferences on Tuesdays, Skedula, phone and e-mail communication. Parents have responded enthusiastically to Skedula because of its accessibility.
- The school leaders and faculty provide monthly newsletters to families explaining the high expectations and standards for students to emulate. Assemblies and school-wide activities such as yoga, family game night and awards celebrations maintain the home-school connection.

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

The majority of teachers engage in inquiry-based professional collaborations. The work of teacher teams focuses on major aspects of teaching, including classroom practice, promotion of the Common Core Learning standards, common assessments and student work products.

**Impact**

Teacher collaborations result in increased instructional capacity and more coherent implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards including the instructional shifts. The improvements in teacher practice enhance student progress towards individual and group goals.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams meet weekly to discuss professional development and pedagogy. They meet informally on an almost daily basis. These discussions bring the work of the teacher team into classrooms. The professional development committee uses the Monday afternoon sessions to provide teachers with strategies that are refined during teacher team meetings.
- At team meetings teachers review results from formative assessments, student work products and unit planning. They speak to the consistent implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards in daily lessons. ESL and special education teachers are actively integrated into the teams. The teams hold each other accountable without formal directives from the administration.
- School leaders and teachers are continuously building a culture of professional collaboration. Teacher teams dive deeply into assessment data. For example, the school is working towards improving writing across all grades and subject areas. Teachers utilize an interdisciplinary approach to ensure that their plans reflect writing as a focus. As they monitor progress towards school goals each teacher brings student work to the meeting to improve their own practice and share with their peers.