



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**P.S. 097 Bronx**

**Elementary School X097**

**1375 Mace Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10469**

**Principal: Katheleen Bornkamp**

**Date of review: March 31, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Debra R. Lamb, Ed.D.**

## The School Context

P.S. 097 Bronx is an elementary school with 738 students from prekindergarten through grade five. The school population comprises 29% Black, 38% Hispanic, 15% White, 16% Asian, and 2% other students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92.7%.

## 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>Additional Findings</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</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>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

# Area of Celebration

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

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best. Teaching practices are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts, as well as by discussions at the team and school levels.

## Impact

Student work products reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

## Supporting Evidence

- Teachers defined “rigor” as, “challenging a student just before frustration,” “seeing movement and growth from where they are to where they’re going,” “going from the ‘who,’ ‘what,’ and ‘where,’ to more comprehensive questions like ‘why.’” “We teach students that it doesn’t come easy...you have to work for it,” said a teacher. “We’re focusing on students becoming thinkers, to apply themselves, and to know that there’s more than one way to solve a problem,” said another teacher.
- The learning objective of a grade 1 math lesson was, “Students will use non-standard units to measure the length of different objects and engage in accountable talk during and after the investigation.” Students were divided into high, medium, and low groups. “We’re measuring stuff to see how many inches it is,” said a student working at a table with eight other students in a “low” group. Students in this group had baggies of objects (pencils, scissors, books, tissue box, crayon box, and glue stick) to choose from and picked a nonstandard unit (connecting cubes, pencils, and markers) with which to measure four objects and document their predictions and findings. They then drew the objects they measured. A second “medium” group of students used pattern blocks to estimate and measure six objects. Teacher: “I noticed that your actual measurement was different than your prediction. Let’s talk about that.” Seated on the floor were eight students in a “high” group engaged in tracing the body of a classmate on brown paper to create a nonstandard unit of measure equal to the height of that student. They then predicted how many units it would take to cover the length of the classroom and find the actual number of units by measuring. A student said, “We’re working to see how many tracings are needed across the class. First, we estimated and then we counted how many bodies we needed to go across the classroom. One student thought 10 bodies would be needed; another predicted seven bodies, and another predicted 15 bodies.”
- The learning objective in a grade 2 classroom was “To evaluate how characters respond to events and challenges.” Twenty-two students sat in a circle for team talk and discussed the question, “Who do you think is more of a hero, Mr. Travis from “The Earth Dragon Awakes” or Eric from “Sleuth—A Real-Life Action Hero.” The teacher sat outside the circle, while students called upon each other. A small group of English language learners (ELL) students had worked together on their responses to a checklist before participating in team talk. “I think Eric is more of a hero than Mr. Travis because he helped his sister when she could not breathe,” said an ELL student. In another classroom, students read a story entitled, “Girl Fight: How Do Girls Fight? Meet Three Girls Who Were Bullied By Other Girls,” and used “Discussion Starters” to ask such questions as “Can you tell me where you saw that in the text?”

## Area of Focus

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and Common Core implementation. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused.

### Impact

The school's professional collaborations have strengthened the instructional capacity and practice of teachers, resulting in improved progress toward goals though not yet mastery for groups of students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers defined inquiry as “taking a look at how you can improve by looking at student work, noticings, trends in data, and analyzing strengths and weaknesses.” Consistent with a protocol for looking at student work, first grade team members discussed their noticings for high- and low- level work, next steps for meeting standards, and steps for unit improvement. Team members have a cadre of students that they are tracking. “There has been a huge difference in students wanting to do the work,” said a teacher.
- School teams documented their process in grade “data stories.” Kindergarten team focus was “comparing and ordering numbers from 0-5.” Kindergarten teachers wrote, “We decided to change the unit by adding more quick checks after each lesson and dedicating more time on lessons that students struggled with on the pre-test.” As a result, 85% of students received a 3 or 4 on the post-test for unit two, an increase from 71% of students the prior school year. The grade 2 team noticed that students scored poorly in the categories of focus, organization, and development on the performance-based assessment (PBA) for *ReadyGEN* Unit 1, Module A. After providing students with a graphic organizer for Module B, to help with these categories, PBA scores increased as follows: Focus: Module A: 40% met standard; Module B: 86% met standard; Organization: Module A: 17% met standard; Module B: 83% met standard; and Development: 27% met standard; Module B: 77% met standard. Mastery of specific goals for groups of students is not yet an embedded practice evident across teams’ work.
- All teachers participate in book clubs facilitated by teachers chosen by administration to promote their leadership skills. “We wanted everyone to be an expert at something so we structured vertical teams,” said the principal. All English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers are participating in a book club, currently reading *Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning* by Pauline Gibbons. Other professional collaborations comprised of teachers representing each grade and the Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and Response to Intervention (RtI) teachers are focused on the following books: *Classroom Management for Art, Music, and PE teachers* by Michael Linsin, *Teaching Social Studies Today* by Sara Shoob and Cynthia Stout, *Practices for Orchestrating Productive Mathematics Discussions* by Margaret S. Smith and Mary Kay Stein, and *The Comprehension Experience: Engaging Readers Through Effective Inquiry and Discussion* by Regie Routman. Paraprofessionals are engaged in reading *The Paraprofessional’s Essential Guide to Inclusive Education* by Peggy A. Hammekin. A teacher stated that the conversation “gets very rich in these book clubs. I’m always inspired to try something new.”

## Additional Findings

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

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

### Impact

There is curricular coherence across grades and subject areas that promotes college and career readiness for all students. Individual and groups of students, including the lowest- and highest-achieving students, ELLs, and students with disabilities (SWDs), have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school began implementing Pearson's *ReadyGEN* program for English language arts (ELA) late last year. However, teachers did not implement many of the units because they realized that the writing component needed more support. Teachers shared that although *ReadyGEN* is a very rigorous program, not all of their students were reading at grade level. A decision was made to implement guided reading three times each week in each grade, with the exception of 4<sup>th</sup> grade. "Fourth grade is not doing guided reading because teachers felt students were getting a lot of practice during independent reading," said the principal. "I give them that freedom." Grade 1 has modified *ReadyGEN*'s pacing to spend more time on the writing process and a unit about community workers. Recently, students interviewed an Emergency Medical Services worker as well as a U.S. Customs worker. Students are reading about and discussing these careers. Grade 2 has added a several trips to their curriculum to support experiential learning. After reading a story about an old-fashioned fire engine, students visited the New York City Fire Museum in lower Manhattan. They also visited the Lower East Side Tenement Museum. Grade 3 teachers skipped *ReadyGEN* Unit 3 since they wanted to focus on non-fiction before fiction. Grade leaders meet monthly with administration to talk about any curricular changes proposed by their grades.
- This is the school's fourth year with Pearson's *enVisions MATH™ Common Core* program. However, there was a decision to supplement the program's multiplication unit with online programs, like *TenMarks*, for deeper student learning. "The language and complexity of *enVisions* were not of the level that students would experience on the exam," said the principal. The school has also modified its science program "to be more aligned with mathematics." Many teachers use technology in units, including video clips and online sites. Backwards planning is used by teachers to chart curricular changes as a grade or cluster.
- There is an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class on every grade and two ICT classes on grade 5. Scholastic's *Read180®* program is used to support students in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade ICT classes and the 4<sup>th</sup> grade self-contained classes. Also used in the self-contained classes is *MaxScholar*, a multi-sensory reading and language program. ELLs are grouped together in one class so that the ESL teacher can work closely with the classroom teacher. Peer translators are used. "The kids are very nurturing here," said the principal. "While visiting an ICT class recently, an ELL student responded to a question and the other students clapped." To serve the instructional needs of its ELL students, teachers integrate a lot of partner work, conversation and team talk. Visuals are incorporated into lessons as scaffolds for ELLs and SWDs.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use of create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. Teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

### Impact

Actionable and meaningful feedback is provided to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students’ learning needs and students are aware of their next learning steps.

### Supporting Evidence

- During a collaborative team meeting, five first-grade teachers engaged in analyzing student trends from a recent performance-based assessment (PBA) for an informational unit on frogs. Teachers shared a “data story,” in which they described using assessment to make decisions about their teaching and student learning. Teachers analyzed data from a *ReadyGEN* PBA as well as results of a recent administration of the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their students. “We noticed that students significantly lacked writing and retelling skills. We decided to implement an informational unit we created to see if it would strengthen student writing. Across classes, student writing drastically improved with PBA results increasing from 48% proficiency to 72% of students showing proficiency. The data collected during this PBA administration would be used to plan the next unit, including creating tasks, rubrics, and assessments.
- Teachers use a variety of quick checks for understanding, including thumbs up/down, the spotlight method, and “before you go, show what you know.” Through the use of *Edmodo*—an online communication app, teachers share content, assignments, and progress with students, parents, and colleagues. Also, *Edmodo* has a suite of assessment tools that teachers use to measure progress towards meeting standards. “*Edmodo* tells you exactly where students are struggling,” said one teacher. Parents stated that they receive progress reports three times per year. Teacher feedback to students on their work includes comments about student strengths and areas for improvement. For example, “I like that you have four details that support the main idea. Next time remember to begin a new paragraph for each part of the essay.”
- Students said they use rubrics while they complete assignments. Posted in classrooms is the following scoring guide: “A check with two plus signs (✓<sup>++</sup>) means ‘Exceeds levels of understanding or explanation of work’; a check with one plus sign (✓<sup>+</sup>) means ‘Adequate understanding’; a check only means (✓) means ‘Some understanding’; and a check with a minus (✓<sup>-</sup>) means ‘Struggles to understand or explain work.’” One student stated, “My teacher hands out compliments if we’re doing good, and sometimes candy.” Another student talked about an essay she wrote entitled, “Me and my Best Friend.” “I received a “✓<sup>+++</sup>” on this essay because I gave three reasons why it’s my favorite character, included details and used capital letters. I’m proud because my teacher didn’t write anything I have to fix.” Across the school, students actively use self- and peer-assessment to improve the quality of their work. For example, on one assessment sheet there are three feedback categories: “My friend says...; My teacher says...; and I say....” The scoring options on an associated five-point rubric were: “Perfect, Great, Good effort, OK, and Better next time.”

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

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students and provide clear, focused, and effective feedback and guidance supports.

### Impact

A culture of mutual accountability for high expectations exists at this school. Students, including high-need subgroups, own their educational experiences and are prepared for the next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet twice per year with the grade above and the grade below their own grade to discuss skills and strategies. Teachers also engage in intervisitations to promote both the school’s instructional focus and Danielson-related skills. These intervisitations were purposefully designed by the principal to match teachers with colleagues of different grades, such as 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers visiting 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers.
- Asked whether school work is hard or easy, one student responded, “Easy. I just learned about frogs...how they do stuff and hibernate. Math is really easy too because it doesn’t take that many hours to do it.” Another student said, “The easy thing to do is reading. We read a chapter book about earthquakes and we learned about the old days.” A third student said, “Some kids think it’s hard and some think it’s easy. I think it’s in the middle. Essays are hard.” Students discussed their future career aspirations, which included being a doctor “to administer flu shots,” a doctor “to help people in a nursing home,” a policeman “to keep people safe from robbers”, a lawyer “because my mother says they make a lot of money,” and a teacher “to help kids to have a brighter future.”
- “We’re a mini United Nations,” said the principal. “Children need to know how to work and talk with each other.” “Shining Star” students are those who have received awards for good citizenship. “Piggybacking on student awards celebrations,” has increased parent involvement. Students serve as trained peer mediators and use a mediation step model with a script to resolve disputes using a process involving talking and active listening. “I helped a student during team talk because she was having trouble in math,” said a student. “My daughter has been on the honor roll since she got here,” said a parent. Another parent shared, “My daughter arrived at the school from her former school in September with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and began services right away. By November, the school said she only needed five hours of support services a week rather than the 10 hours recommended by her former school. Now the school is talking about the possibility of decertification.” Other parent comments included: “This school doesn’t wait until the parent-teacher conference to tell you if something is happening”; “The teachers that my son had 13 years ago...they still remember his name. Think about it, they’ve got 25 or 30 kids each year yet they still remember his name. That means a lot to me”; “My first language is Arabic and I have triplets on first grade. The school has never had a problem communicating with me”; “Teachers give you their email addresses and include information in the newsletter about what they’re doing”; “My daughter is a transfer student. She had some issues at her old school, but her transition here has been easy. I’ve seen positive self-esteem and personality changes in my daughter.”