



# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**P.S./M.S. 194**

**Elementary - Middle School X194**

**2365 Waterbury Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10462**

**Principal: Rosa Sifuentes-Rosado**

**Date of review: March 3, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Debra R. Lamb, Ed.D.**

## The School Context

P.S. /M.S. 194 is an elementary – middle school with 1,384 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 8% Black, 55% Hispanic, 5% White, 31% Asian, and 2% other students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 15% 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 94.2%.

## 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>Focus</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>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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</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 strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports and extensions into the curricula.

### Impact

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. All learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWD), are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school's instructional focus statement reads, "To promote divergent thinking, increase student access the curricula, and improve student engagement, teachers will use multiple methods of presentation and provide multiple points of entry in all content areas." The school has expanded its use of learning style inventories for students. Previously, these tools were used only with students discussed by the child study team.
- Students in a grade 7 English language arts class were reading George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion*. The learning target was, "I can analyze how to find the central idea, interactions in the text, and make reasonable inferences on unknown vocabulary in a dramatic text." The teacher's lesson plan included a column entitled "Meeting Students' Needs," which had such entries as, "The SETSS (Special Education Teacher Support Services) teacher met with students to specifically offer guidance on the understanding of Act 2." The teacher was responsive when she noticed that students were not getting what she wanted, "I sense there are problems here...I planned to use Popsicle sticks to call on students, but will call on specific people who I saw had an understanding." Students felt comfortable enough to raise their hands if they were confused by the play's Victorian humor.
- It is the expectation that general education teachers will collaborate on lesson plan design with ELLs or SETSS providers. Two teachers are taking courses to enhance their instruction for ELLs. The essential question in a grade 5 mathematics English as a second language (ESL) class, was "How can you identify a relationship between two numerical patterns?" ELL students were grouped based on their prior day exit slip responses. The lesson plan addressed the needs of ELLs by pairing students who speak the same native language, including Spanish, Bengali, and Arabic. Translations of specific words and the use of highlighter pens to associate words with numbers were used as comprehension aids. Worksheets were provided for students who finished early. In a special education bridge math class, 12 students in grades 3 and 4 were focused on adding mixed numbers with common denominators without regrouping using models, pictures, and equations. Six grade 4 students worked independently on computers. Two students collaborated on an activity where one student's role was "explainer" and the other's role was "builder" of numbers. The teacher recently participated in professional development on the Concrete Representational Abstract (CRA) instructional approach to teaching math concepts through concrete to abstract using visual, tactile, and kinesthetic experiences as well as pictorial representations.

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics that are aligned with the school's curricula, however the grading of the rubrics do not offer a clear portrait of student mastery. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas, however the assessments used school wide are not disaggregated by subgroup.

### Impact

The lack of clarity in grading student work does not support actionable and meaningful feedback to students regarding their achievement. The results of all common assessments used school wide to adjust curricula and instruction do not specifically disaggregate the performance of ELLs and SWDs.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use rubrics that they have customized to the assigned task. For example, a four-point rubric for the character analysis of Eliza in the play *Pygmalion* cited the task and rated the student's discussion of Eliza's outward appearance (external characteristic), internal characteristic, and adherence to standard academic written English. The teacher placed checkmarks on the rubric to indicate the rating for each category. Although the third category received the highest rating (4), checkmarks for the first two categories were placed on the line between ratings 3 and 4. The teacher's overall rating of 3+ was accompanied by the following commentary for the student: "You chose two really different examples to show her determination. Good job. I think the 'external' paragraph could use more of your own thoughts." The teacher's feedback did not address the internal characteristic rating. Teachers mentioned that they have not had much professional development on assessment practices.
- "We've begun the process of formalizing the type of work that goes into student portfolios, beginning with math in grades 3 through 5," said the principal. Student mastery in ELA is measured school wide with American Reading Company's (ARC) *Independent Reading Level Assessment (IRLA)* framework, which enables teachers to establish a benchmark for each student through ARC's *School Pace*®, an online performance management system that provides student performance data. During monthly progress monitoring, teachers use the *IRLA* to ascertain their students' reading growth.
- The school administers ELA test simulations to give teachers an early look at student performance on assessment questions that are aligned to the Common Core. Student strengths and weaknesses reflected in the results of the most recent ELA simulation were discussed by teachers during a grade 3 common planning meeting. Teachers attributed much of the student strengths demonstrated on the test simulation to using *Expeditionary Learning* since September. They acknowledged that students have difficulty with comparisons, cause and effect, sequence, and abstract concepts. One of the school's goals is to improve the performance of ELLs and SWDs on the NYS summative assessments. Although the data reflected a comparison by grade of the 2013, 2014, and 2015 test simulation results, the data was not disaggregated by subgroup and therefore does not effectively reflect the mastery levels of ELLs and SWDs.

## 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. Rigorous habits and higher order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks are embedded in a coherent way.

### Impact

Coherence across grades and subject areas promotes college and career readiness in this school. All learners, including ELLs and SWDs, must demonstrate their thinking.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school selected *Expeditionary Learning* for its middle grades and initially selected *ReadyGEN™* for its elementary grades. However, following one year of *ReadyGEN™* implementation, the school made a decision to use *Expeditionary Learning* in grades 3 through 5 in addition to middle school. The school continues to use *ReadyGEN™* in grades K through 2. They have continued to use ARC's *ACTION 100* for writing in grades K through 2. In addition, teachers infuse curricula modules from the state's EngageNY website. For mathematics, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's *GO Math!™* program is used school wide, together with access to the program's *ThinkCentral* website. The teacher of a special education bridge class received a grant to implement the *Reflex® Math Fact Fluency* program to help grade 3 and 4 students with disabilities to develop fluency with their basic facts in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. To support the growth of academic vocabulary, teachers use *Wordly Wise 3000®* by EPS Literacy and Intervention.
- The school has increased the amount of informational text a student reads throughout the day. For example, teachers said that they incorporate a lot of news articles. Teachers identified text-based questioning and the use of academic vocabulary in speaking and writing have been identified as priority instructional shifts. For example, a unit focused on the play *Pygmalion* required students to find the central idea, analyze the interactions in the text, and make reasonable inferences on unknown vocabulary in this dramatic text. Teachers talked about increasing the use of high-frequency (Tier 2) words and content-specific (Tier 3) words, and the use of context clues to help students understand unfamiliar words through constant exposure and embedding of the words in realistic scenarios.
- "Rigor is when I see that students have been exposed to the curriculum at a level that would challenge them and they're pushing themselves to understand," said the principal. The learning objective of a *ReadyGEN™* lesson in Unit 3 Module A was "Students will be able to ask a classmate questions about his or her life and write the answers." The module included discussion prompts about conducting interviews. There were two versions of the lesson plan, one with and one without ESL interventions. Teachers across grades and subjects collaboratively integrated a variety of higher-order skills within each content area. For example, teachers refined a lower grade *ReadyGEN™* unit on different countries to include art projects such as making windmills and rain sticks and integrated cultural music within the lessons. Art lessons in grades 3 through 5 have been aligned to curricular units students were learning in science, like ecosystems and rainforests. Grade 7 math and science teachers worked closely with the history teacher to create storyboards related to the changes in the state of matter. Grade 2 teachers of ELA and social studies worked together to combine a unit addressing decision making and a unit focused on rights, rules, and responsibilities.

<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. Expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness are effectively communicated by school leaders and staff.

### Impact

A culture of mutual accountability for high expectations exists in this school. Successful partnerships with families support student progress towards those expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use the Danielson Framework for Teaching while participating in inter-visitations with each other in triads. Teachers choose their own triads and their own administrative schedule, and engage in colleague-to-colleague feedback. Teachers were surveyed regarding professional learning interests. The majority of teachers were interested in professional development on the use of technology, using questioning and discussion techniques (Danielson 3b), and differentiated instruction. Professional relations are discussed within the school's staff handbook, which outlines expectations for cooperation, collegiality, and collaboration in team interactions with each other on teams, study groups, professional organizations, and triads.
- Parents report receiving progress reports and updates every other month. "My son is very laid back so his teacher sends notes home every week to let me know how he's doing," said one parent. "I work with my granddaughter daily and speak with her teacher often," said a grandmother. "The Tuesday engagement time has been very useful for frequent face-to-face interactions with parents, enabling parents and teachers to have deeper discussions about students," said the principal. Parents mentioned that the planner students received is a "very good addition this year." Given the large Bengali community, parents help each other with translations. Parents said they are still involved with the school-funded Learning Leaders program. Homework help is available at the school every Tuesday through Thursday at 7 am. One way that grade 3 teachers keep parents informed of various learning objectives and activities is through their newsletter. First grade teachers wrote a letter in February inviting parents/guardians to see culminating presentations on countries around the world by their child's class. An early grade teacher shared a document sent home asking parents to study skip counting skills by twos, fives, and tens at home with their children as this skill would be reviewed daily. In the upper grades, students serve as ambassadors to other students and share knowledge with their peers. "It's another voice in the classroom and another way students are learning from each other," said the principal.
- "Our teachers are promoting a vision of college and career readiness by talking about it," said the principal. Outside every classroom door is a sign that communicates the institution of higher education attended by the teacher and his or her major. When asked whether he was prepared for high school, an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student responded, "I'm in a Regents class." Grade 2 students discussed how to ask and answer interview questions. As students responded to questions, a "talking chip" was passed to another student, who then answered the next question. Teacher: "Why is it important to have interviews?" Student: "It's important to interview for a job." Teacher: "Where else would you conduct interviews?" Student: "To get into middle school and college."

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity and promoted the implementation of the Common Core. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused.

### Impact

Teacher teams have strengthened the instructional capacity of teachers. There is improved teacher practice and progress towards goals for groups of students.

### Supporting Evidence

- The grade 3 teacher team meets formally on Thursdays and informally every day. During a team meeting, teachers shared resources with each other. One teacher distributed three types of task cards that she uses with lower-level students in her class, including task cards that target the following specific skills: cause and effect, compare and contrast, and sequencing. Another teacher shared scaffolds for ARC's *100 Book Challenge*® independent reading program. Another team member shared a Cause and Effect Concentration Game for students to practice matching a picture that represents a cause with a picture that represents the effect. The team then engaged in a standards-based discussion on data from their recent ELA test simulation, including the strengths (what students already do well), the challenges (what students still need to learn), and the next steps on how teachers will bridge the gap. A comparison of average *IRLA* growth from February 2014 (0.47) and February 2015 (0.69), reflected an increase in the percentage of students on target (from 11% to 19%).
- The grade 3 team attributed student strengths in specific standards to successful implementation since September of reading informational text and literature in *Expeditionary Learning*. The challenges identified by the team based on student performance on an ELA simulation test included students being able to describe the relationship between two texts using cause & effect, sequence, etc., determine the meaning of domain specific words, and describe the logical connection between a particular sentence and a paragraph in a text. In order to bridge the identified gaps, team members discussed providing scaffolds to help students understand the relationship between texts, domain specific vocabulary, and the logical connection between a particular sense and a paragraph. They also discussed using sentence starters for ELL students and highlighting signal words in red (similarities) and green (differences).
- Teachers of various subjects engage in vertical planning to collaboratively create curricula that integrates a variety of activities within each content area. For example, teachers collaboratively refined a lower grade *ReadyGEN*™ unit on different countries to include art projects such as making windmills and rain sticks, and integrated cultural music within the lessons. Art lessons in grades 3 through 5 are aligned to the curricular units that students were learning in science, like ecosystems and rainforests. Grade 7 math and science teachers worked closely with the history teacher to create storyboards related to the changes in the state of matter. Grade 2 teachers of ELA and social studies worked together to combine a unit addressing decision making and a unit focused on rights, rules, and responsibilities.