



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Public School 360

10X360

**2880 Kingsbridge Terrace
Bronx, NY 10463**

Principal: Iris Aldea - Pollack

**Date of review: January 7, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Melodie Mashel**

The School Context

P.S. 360 is an elementary school with 501 students from grade pre-k through grade 5. The school population comprises 11% Black, 85% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92.0%.

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	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	Additional Findings	Developing
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	Focus	Developing
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:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The school has adopted a Common Core aligned curricula across all subjects. Challenging academic tasks are embedded in the school's curriculum.

Impact

Across grades and subjects the school's coherent curriculum engages students in rigorous tasks that promotes student thinking and prepares students for college and career.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have selected Core Knowledge for grades K-2 and Expeditionary Learning for grades 3-5 as the curricula resources for English language arts. The school's English language arts curriculum is supplemented with the use of Word Generation, a program designed to amplify student vocabulary. Math in Focus and the NYCDOE scope and sequence in social studies and science serve as the school's core aligned curricula for these subjects.
- To further align the school's curriculum to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and instructional shifts, students are expected to write across disciplines. For example, students in second grade wrote opinion pieces about which mode of transportation were the best for a particular community. The writing experience was aligned to a social studies unit about different communities.
- Reading and writing units of study engage students in demanding tasks. For example, students from a fifth grade class stated that they read a variety of texts about student cell phone usage in schools, stated a claim and cited supporting evidence from the texts in their persuasive writing pieces.
- Units of study and lesson plans embed domain specific vocabulary. For example, students in a kindergarten English as a second language class were required to use words such as seedling and roots in speaking when referring to a picture presented on the SMARTboard.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Developing

Findings

The school's use of a grading policy aligned to curricula, checks for understanding and the use of rubrics to assess student progress toward the Common Core Learning Standards is an emerging practice at the school.

Impact

Across the school grading policies are inconsistent and the use of rubrics for students to self-assess is not yet well embedded practice, thus limiting students from understanding the criteria for attaining standard levels of achievement and being able to identify their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses a variety of assessments including Developmental Reading Assessment II, end of unit tests, student baselines, mid lines and end lines to assess student work. In some classrooms, data informed adjustments to meet the needs of all learners is evident.
- A review of student work reveals teacher actionable feedback focuses on addressing student conventions. For example, teacher feedback on student work in writing, addresses punctuation and spelling. However, feedback that addresses other key traits of good writing was limited.
- Teachers use a variety of rubrics to assess student work. Students expressed that they knew their work was good because they were a level three on a five point rubric and their teacher told them it was good. In some classes on the same grade, students used a three point rubric and also expressed level three reflected the criteria for the standard. The use of standard criteria to assess student work through the use of rubrics is not consistent across the school.
- In two of seven classes visited teachers checked for student understanding of lessons and concepts taught and made midcourse adjustments. In one second grade classroom visited the teacher requested students use hand signals if they understood, in another second grade class, students used color coded flip charts to demonstrate their level of understanding.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Teacher use of higher level questions that extends student thinking is an emerging practice. Deep student group discussion and engaging tasks that leads to the production of high level student work are surfacing.

Impact

Across classrooms teacher questioning that extends student thinking is inconsistent and student discussions that engage students in an exchange of ideas are limited, thus student work products demonstrate uneven levels of student thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- In some classrooms visited teachers posed high level questions. For example, in an early childhood classroom, the teacher posed the question, “why do you think it takes a tree longer to grow than a sunflower to grow?” requiring students to extend their thinking to respond. However, in a visit to a special education class, the teacher posed questions that required the students to recall facts about the life cycle of a frog.
- In some classes visited students engaged in discussions about their work. For example, in a first grade English as a second language class students were expected to turn and talk about what they would see or do if they lived in the period related to their topic, referring to the Core Knowledge unit of study on Mesopotamia. Students turned and talked about their powers as gods if they lived in that period.
- Students are required to write persuasive essays and support their written claims by citing text evidence and in some classrooms students engaged in turn and talk to discuss their work. However, opportunities for students to produce meaningful written work across a variety of genres, participate in group discussions and exchange of thoughts and ideas are not yet fully evident.
- A review of student work folders and notebooks reveals uneven levels of student volume and quality of work. For example, second grade students wrote in notebooks responded to text based questions in an organized paragraph, while students in a first grade class, there was limited evidence of student entries in their writing notebooks and writing was limited to writing in workbooks.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The schools high expectations are conveyed to staff through the use of Danielson's Framework for Teaching and to families through a variety of systems and structures.

Impact

Structures for communicating the school's high expectations ensure all stakeholders are accountable and prepare students for a college and career path.

Supporting Evidence

- Classroom observations, weekly professional development sessions and grade meetings serve to emphasize the expectations for elevating the level of teacher instructional practice.
- Assemblies honoring student positive behaviors and lessons on character education highlight the expectations for students and families.
- Monthly newsletters, parent breakfast with the principal and workshops keep parents informed of the CCLS expectations. Monthly school guidance advisement sessions keep parents abreast of strategies to use to support student achievement. For example, to promote student learning, parents are encouraged to read to their children in their native language and a list of places to visit and things to do are provided to families.
- Parents expressed that they are kept informed of student progress on Tuesdays when teachers and parents connect during conferences or via phone conferences. The school's use of DoJo, a phone application that keeps parents informed of student progress was a favorite communication form for parents.

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

Teachers engage in weekly professional collaborations to look at student work and assessments. Teachers share in curricular and instructional decisions.

Impact

Teachers regularly participate in structured collaborations that builds teachers' instructional and leadership capabilities, thus leading to stronger student learning outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet to analyze student work looking at rubric criteria and make curricular adjustments. For example, second grade teachers examined student work and determined that an additional culminating task should be embedded into their unit of study. The team designed a mini project that required students to create either an oral or written presentation about New York City landmarks.
- The school's horizontal teacher teams meet weekly to further align their writing units to the CCLS. For example, to provide students with additional writing opportunities, teachers and school leaders embedded additional writing units into their English language arts curriculum.
- Teachers attend network professional development sessions on a regular basis and turnkey the content of workshops to staff. Teachers implement what they have learned and share with colleagues the effectiveness of the implementation of what they learned. As part of this collaboration teachers schedule inter-visitations and witness the practice in action.
- Teacher facilitated professional development sessions provide the venue for teachers to exchange best instructional practices that support student achievement. For example, a review of the school's Professional Development Plan reveals teachers conduct workshops on a variety of topics.