



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**The Highbridge Green School**

**09X361**

**Principal: Kyle Brillante**

**Date of review: November 24, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Leticia Rodriguez-Rosario**

## The School Context

The Highbridge Green School MS 361 is a middle school with 269 students from grades six through grade eight. The school population comprises 24% Black, 74% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 24% 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 94%.

## 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>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>Celebration</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### **Findings:**

There are a variety of assessments across classrooms, a school-wide grading policy aligned to the curricula and relevant standardized assessments, as part of a unified process for providing students with actionable feedback.

### **Impact:**

Teachers have accurate data to make effective adjustments to lessons and provide actionable and meaningful feedback that meets the needs of the varied learners in the classroom.

### **Supporting Evidence:**

- The school community tracks and uses a vast majority of data sources, including New York state exams, Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) assessments, Fountas and Pinnell running records, Measures of Student Learning (MOSL), SchoolNet and other common content assessments which measure progress towards intended outcomes.
- A standards based grading system called “Jumprope” is used to track students’ progress towards unit outcomes, holding teachers accountable for student learning. This data is also used to coordinate and inform tiered interventions for teaching and learning.
- As evidenced by bulletin boards, students’ work folders and discussions with students, teachers consistently use rubrics to provide students with actionable feedback and advise them of their next steps as well as to encourage self and peer assessment.
- Classroom visits consistently illustrated checks for understanding as teachers used tools such as exit tickets, cold calling, conference notes, questioning and discussion to assess students’ progress towards learning outcomes, with adjustments to lessons as needed during instruction.
- Students’ leadership of parent teacher conferences illustrated the students’ ability to verbalize their progress towards the Common Core Learning Standards as well as next steps for improving their performance.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### **Findings:**

Although, teachers across classrooms provided multiple access points to learning and engaged students in rigorous tasks, the flow of the lesson at times limited students' opportunities to further deepen their learning via sustained engagement in peer to peer discussions.

### **Impact:**

There are missed opportunities to utilize strategic supports and extensions to curricula to further immerse all students in tasks and discussions that maximize their ownership of learning.

### **Supporting Evidence:**

- Across classrooms there was evidence of consistent supports such as graphic organizers, group work, visuals, questioning strategies as well as consistent checks for understanding. For example, in one social studies room students were asked to address one of two questions. Students were then asked to discuss their responses in groups before writing an opinion piece to support their view.
- The school has created time in the schedule for teachers to work in targeted reading classes where students, including students with disabilities and English language learners, receive additional time for instruction in literacy. In one such class students were exposed to pre-reading questions before reading a text they had chosen.
- Some teachers engaged students in reciprocal teaching. For example, during a science lesson there were student led discussions around science questions developed by students.
- In a few classrooms, the pacing of the lesson limited opportunities for all students to delve deeply into discussions in which they were highly engaged. For example, during an English language arts class where students were just beginning to discuss a topic in depth, the teacher moved on, interrupting the flow of the discussion among students.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings:

The school's curricula is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and other content standards, with tasks that reflect the instructional shifts and offer all learners access to cognitively demanding learning experiences.

### Impact:

Across grades and subjects curricula includes opportunities for all students to participate in demanding and engaging learning experiences that foster college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school uses the Common Core aligned materials from Engage NY, *Expeditionary Learning* and *Connected Math* for literacy and math instruction. Teachers also utilize the New York State Scope and Sequence for science and social studies instruction.
- Teacher teams reported that they adjusted the curriculum, using the Universal by Design unit template for specific reference to each core skill and to establish a standard expectation for argumentative writing by all students.
- Units plans across content areas showed that the school prioritized three essential literacy skills - reading to infer, constructing a compelling argument and evaluating for precision and accuracy.
- Observation of teacher teams and a review of meeting agendas revealed that teams of teachers review data and use student work to modify curriculum to meet the needs of all learners. For example, one teacher noted that students were provided time for multiple readings of complex text, involving use of different modalities and explicit instruction in close reading techniques such as annotating for the gist, marking up for unfamiliar vocabulary, and questioning.

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

School leaders and staff consistently message high expectations to all stakeholders and implement varied structures and supports for them to meet the expectations.

**Impact:**

The school's consistent emphasis on high expectations has resulted in the entire staff sharing mutual accountability for learning by all members of the school community and strong home school partnerships that support students in meeting expectations for their success as learners.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school leader communicates and models key behaviors expected of all members of the school community, through his attendance and involvement in professional development sessions, teacher team meetings, parent meetings, the New York City Department of Education's Showcase Initiative and through tools such as newsletters and memos.
- School leadership sets high expectations for teachers, as evidenced by feedback provided using the Danielson Framework during observation cycles which reflect the connection between feedback and school goals. This is also reflected in teachers' responses on the 2014 New York City School Survey and in meeting agendas.
- All parents at the parent meeting reported that school staff members communicate regularly with them, keeping them informed about their children's progress in meeting the school's high expectations and sharing tips for them to use in helping to strengthen their children's academic and social emotional development. In addition, parents of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students receive a home visit, during which 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers discuss the school's investment in their children's "hopes and dreams" and highlight the parents' role as partners in their children's learning.
- As communicated during parent meetings, students' leadership of parent conferences strengthens parents' understanding of the school's high expectations for their children and the children's progress in meeting the expectations, as during those conferences students illustrate their work and discuss their success in meeting expectations for their current and future grade.

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

Teacher teams analyze student work and data and use their findings to make targeted revisions to curricula and instruction.

**Impact:**

Teacher collaborations contribute to improved teaching practices and promote teacher voice in decisions that enhance student learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- As evidenced by teachers' schedules, the school leader has designated time during the school day for interdisciplinary teacher team meetings where all teachers are engaged in inquiry based collaborations.
- There are appointed teacher leaders to facilitate teacher team meetings. These lead teachers use specific protocols from the Middle School Quality Initiative Toolkit and norms to guide the work.
- Inquiry team sheets document each teacher team's focus, process, rationale and next steps. For example, a sixth grade English language arts teacher team reported that based on their analysis of state data, they chose to focus their work on character analysis, deepening students' capacity to make inferences by modifying Unit 1 of the curriculum to incorporate more time for students to practice making inferences about characters.
- In both the teacher team meetings observed, teachers stated that they have a strong say in decision making and that the principal values their input. For example, on November 6, 2014 teachers were provided with a survey to reflect on the work of teacher teams and their input was used by administrators to determine next steps.