



# Quality Review Report

## 2015-2016

**P.S. 107 John W. Kimball**

**Elementary School K107**

**1301 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11215**

**Principal: Eve Litwack**

**Date of review: December 17, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Tracie Benjamin-Van Lierop**

## The School Context

P.S. 107 John W. Kimball is an elementary school with 575 students from grade kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 7% Asian, 4% Black, 10% Hispanic, and 77% White students. The student body includes 1% English Language Learners and 11% students with disabilities. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 96.3%.

## 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>Focus</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 <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	<b>Additional Findings</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

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

### Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that systematically analyze teacher and student work and assessment data, strengthening teachers' instructional capacity and promoting the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Leadership structures are embedded.

### Impact

There is instructional coherence school-wide and ongoing improvements in teacher practice. Teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- Professional development and collaborations amongst teachers are incorporated into prep schedules, common preps, and after school sessions. The work foci are outlined in the school's professional development calendar and are facilitated by a grade or cluster leader and a leadership cabinet member. Every grade team focuses on differentiation, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Response to Intervention (RtI), and understanding Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Support for students with disabilities and students in the bottom third include setting student goals, data collection for math and reading, and assignments and roles for grade leaders and vertical team members.
- Teachers decided to implement professional book study groups to inform their next steps for growth in their instructional practice. Teams are grouped in lower level and upper level grade teams concentrating on books, *The Differentiated Classroom*, *Playful Learning*, *Conferring with Readers*, *Differentiated Math Instruction*, and *A More Beautiful Question*. Their general guiding questions and study focus includes the following questions: "What does this chapter or book make me think about instruction and the Common Core Learning Standards?", "How does it confirm or change my mind about instruction?", "How has this learning affected my own classroom instruction?", Teachers complete a reflection sheet after each reading about the conversation, ideas, and thoughts that the book generates for them. Additionally they reference the Danielson *Framework of Teaching* components 3b, 3c, or 3d, and state how they have or will apply their new learning to their practice.
- As evidenced in the grade level and vertical teacher team meetings, and meeting minutes and agendas, review of student work in alignment to standards-based expectations in the core subject areas, particularly in writing and math as they relate to the school-wide goals was the focus of all meetings. Teams discussed and determined accurate assessment levels to norm each level and together, determined next steps for students, and addressed the range of work and identified areas of coherence and discontinuity across grade levels. Inquiry teams for every grade systematically analyze data in all content areas with a special focus on middle and low achieving students. This has informed whom teachers pull for small group work and identification of students who need advanced work. Teachers attribute the increase and growing number of bottom third students who are meeting standards to this work.

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Proficient

### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, integrate the instructional shifts, and make purposeful decisions to build coherence to promote college and career readiness for all students. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data with some variation in the use of literacy data in the upper grades to inform curricula development.

### Impact

A diversity of learners, including English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities have access to curricula and tasks that promotes college and career readiness. However, curricula reflects some variation in coherence across grades and/or subjects.

### Supporting Evidence

- Curricula reflects targeted literacy supports for bottom third percentile students in grades 2 and 3 with a focus on fundamental skills derived from teachers' consultation and subsequent lesson and unit plan modifications. The literacy coach and Teachers College staff developer works closely with teachers to advise on different structures and materials included in their lesson plans such as small group work, learning styles, and modification of academic tasks. In a kindergarten unit on crafting narrative stories, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) modifications for low, middle, and high functioning groupings are included. Students in the academically lower functioning groupings are directed to check-in with the teacher after completing each one-step task, while students in the middle grouping are directed to develop a story using pictures, labels, and words and students in the high functioning grouping write a story using more detail, and correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
- A review of unit plans showed that in some plans, revisions to the curricula varied and that areas of focus for different groupings and accommodations, including extensions, were not reflected in all content areas. However, instruction observed reflected higher levels of practice than indicated in some curricula materials.
- The school uses Teachers College curricula for literacy and Exemplars to ensure alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards. Two areas of focus in math are perseverance with problem solving and justification of reasoning. To enhance their math curricula, the school purchased a site license to Dreambox, a math website aligned to the standards that allows students to work at their independent levels on specific standards.

## Additional Findings

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### 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 that are discussed at the team and school level. Teaching strategies strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports and extensions into the curricula.

### Impact

Classroom instruction across the school reflects coherence in academic tasks that require learning through collaboration and communication of thinking. All learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in their work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- The faculty believes that students learn best when they are engaged in thoughtful conversations that require deep thinking. The school-wide focus is on the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* component 3c, student engagement. Teachers employ the use of structures that support student thinking such as the use of essential questions, and purposeful homogeneous and heterogeneous pairings to promote students' higher-order thinking in explaining concepts in shared discussions.
- The use of leveled materials such as higher-level books and math manipulatives, and conferring with individual and small groups of students are common practice. Additionally, teachers use station teaching and learning centers so that small groups of students are engaged in a variety of activities that are organized to extend, reinforce, and re-teach concepts.
- In an upper grade math class, students reviewed strategies for comparing fractions, including using fraction and percent equivalents. Students completed their own percent equivalent strip and reviewed it with their partner, later comparing it to the completed teacher's strip. Student pairings shared their various strategies for comparing fractions five-sixths versus seven eighths including finding the common denominator, converting to percentage, and reasoning regarding the magnitude of the missing piece. Extension activities included students ordering improper fraction cards and considering what fractions could fit in between other fractions on the ordered line.
- In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classroom, students used prior knowledge of multiplication combinations to determine the product of more difficult combinations. Teachers used the station teaching model to support the different learners in the classroom. Students at one station used a problem solving procedure to solve equations in a two-part number story writing explanations of how they arrived at their answers. Students at another station were involved in a teacher-led activity focused on discussing the patterns between counting by the numbers three and six. Students at the independent station, worked on Dreambox activities on the SMARTboard preparing to share strategies with the class for multiplying more challenging multiplication equations.

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

### Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or 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

Teachers and students have actionable and meaningful feedback regarding student achievement. Teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs and students and faculty are aware of their next steps.

### Supporting Evidence

- On-demand pre- and post-assessments, incorporated into curricula maps, are administered in reading and writing units to assess comprehension and interpretation of specific genres. Teachers use running records and whole book assessments at regular intervals in grades kindergarten through grade 5 to ensure students are on the correct book level. All teachers, grades K-5, administer benchmark math assessments in December, February, and May, as well as pre-, mid-, and post-assessments from TERC Investigations to identify gaps in student learning.
- Teachers use the turn and talk strategy, exit slips, student rubrics, questioning, checklists, verbal and/or written feedback, and peer assessment to monitor student understanding and goal setting and make adjustments during the course of their lessons. For example, in an ICT math class, the teacher asked students to explain the meaning of the word "multiple" and when one student was unable to respond, the teacher changed the student group she had planned to work with to work with that student's group to provide additional support.
- A kindergarten writing checklist, assessed students on their use of spelling, capitalization, use of the word wall, and detailed descriptions. All students were able to articulate their writing goals and explain why they were working on specific goals to become better writers. In a grade 4 class, feedback to students on a non-fiction reading response essay included both teacher and peer responses. In grades 2-5, students explained the narrative reading learning progression and how they are expected to support their thinking with text evidence. A grade 3 student stated, "I can expect to receive a lower grade if I don't include evidence from my text or make changes that were recommended to me from my classmates or teachers."
- Students have portfolios that travel with them from grade to grade and inform next steps for their work and for their current and future teachers as well. All work from previous grades remain in the folders throughout the students' time at the school. A portfolio checklist includes literacy and math data including mastered reading level, reading logs, on-demand writing pieces, and the latest math benchmark with an Exemplar scoring rubric.

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

### Findings

School leaders consistently and effectively communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training. School leaders and staff successfully partner with families and effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness.

### Impact

There is a culture of mutual accountability for high expectations for student achievement and families are supported in understanding their child's progress toward those expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are observed by supervisors and their colleagues. Also, observation buddies in a peer-to-peer structure allow teachers who are rated effective or highly effective to share best practices and learn from each other. The buddy system has promoted trust, greater collegiality, and collaboration across grades as reported by school administration and teachers. The system is evaluated for effectiveness during mid-year and end-of-year teacher conferences. Teachers agreed that their practice has improved because of the peer-to-peer observations, specifically in providing extension activities and structures to build student independence across subjects and grades.
- Persistent attention has been directed to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* in Domain 3 Instruction during feedback conversations and written observations. In preparation for feedback conferences, teachers review the *Advance* document, "Student Outcomes at the Lesson Level." Additional time has been allotted to feedback conversations during the first cycle of observations in order to ensure a deeper understanding and in-depth levels of discussion throughout all cycles.
- Families are involved at every level in the school including the middle school articulation process. The school designed a parent survey to assess how to better support families throughout the articulation process and determine next steps for students who have not as yet been matched to a middle school. Families are partners in the Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) family meetings, where issues are discussed and strategies shared for parents to use at home with their children. In an effort to engage families with the expectations of the New York State English Language Arts and math tests, the principal, assistant principal, and teachers from grades 3-5 presented a workshop on how to support children at home as they prepare for the exam.
- Reciprocal communication is encouraged and expected at the school. Parents state the principal engages all of their concerns and has an open door policy which has contributed to them having a deeper understanding of where their children are performing at their respective grade levels and the expectations for next level work. This partnership has led to family workshops such as The ABC's of Education, a kindergarten tour assisted by student council, and literacy workshops for grades 1, 2, 3, and 5. Also, parents stated that the student portfolio, which follows students throughout the grades, provides them with a "wealth of knowledge" on what grade expectations are and the progress that their children have made throughout their time at the school.