



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2015-2016

**P.S. 160 William T. Sampson**

**Elementary School K160**

**5105 Fort Hamilton Parkway  
Brooklyn  
NY 11219**

**Principal: Margaret Russo**

**Date of review: November 10, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Claudette Essor**

## The School Context

P.S. 160 William T. Sampson is an elementary school with 1,394 students from grade kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 85% Asian, 1% Black, 10% Hispanic, and 4% White students. The student body includes 66% English Language Learners and 8% students with disabilities. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 97.4%.

## 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 <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>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>Additional Findings</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>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>
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### Findings

Teams of teachers meet regularly to systematically analyze their instructional practices and develop strategies that improve staff and student achievement. Distributive leadership structures facilitate effective teacher collaboration with school leaders.

### Impact

Through extensive teamwork and teacher leadership structures, teachers improve their pedagogy and play an integral role in key decisions that improve teaching and learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- All teachers are programmed for weekly team meetings on Mondays, where they engage in common planning and inquiry work with peers, including English as a New Language (ENL) teachers, Academic Intervention Services (AIS) providers and bilingual program staff. Teacher teams also meet for a full day every six weeks for extended planning and inquiry activities for targeted students. They work on further aligning units of study to reflect attention to student needs identified in data from reading and writing assessments. The math coach and grade leaders revised the math pacing calendar, outlining tasks in the *GO Math!* curriculum for deeper coverage of content linked to the standardized assessments. The principal credits teacher teamwork for an increase of 3% in general education students, 3.2% for students with disabilities and a 6.1% increase in ENL students achieving a Level 3 or 4 on the 2015 New York State math assessment.
- Teamwork drives ongoing integration of Common Core Standards and instructional shifts in curriculum units with tasks that require students to engage in close reading, navigate complex texts, and explore academic vocabulary in discussions and writing activities, across all grades and content areas. Units for all grades are literacy based with tasks across disciplines incorporating use of informational texts to engage students in text based discussions and writing. Teachers scaffold unit tasks to help all students, including ENL students and students with disabilities, access the common text being used across the grade. ENL, bilingual and AIS staff, who are members of grade teams, help to modify curricula content and tasks for ENL students by adding language supports into units. One team reported that they rewrote *Charlotte's Web* as part of their work to make the content and vocabulary more accessible to ENL students.
- The school utilizes teacher leaders, representing all content areas, to facilitate inquiry-based activities within weekly teacher team meetings. In addition to working directly with peers to develop curricula, plan and facilitate professional learning, and implement instructional initiatives, they meet regularly with administrators to provide input in decisions about curricula, instruction and assessment. The principal noted that team activities contributed to increased student achievement on the 2015 New York State English Language Arts assessment which showed a 5% increase in the number of general education students receiving a Level 3 or 4, a 5% increase in students with disabilities scoring at Level 3 or 4, and a 9.5% increase in ENL students achieving a Level 3 or 4. The principal has added six new teacher leader positions this year, further building all teachers' capacity to improve teaching and learning across the school.

## Area of Focus

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

Across classrooms students engage in discussions and complete intellectually demanding tasks. While teaching practices consistently demonstrate applications of multiple entry points, extensions of tasks for all learners were not evident across classrooms.

### Impact

Through consistent application of scaffolds and multiple entry points to learning, all students participate in discussions and produce high quality work products across all grades and content areas. However, there are missed opportunities to further deepen thinking and foster ownership of learning by all students, especially advanced learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders place emphasis on providing students with multiple opportunities to participate in high level discussions that allow them to express diverse points of view, justify their thinking and challenge each other's thinking. In all classrooms visited, teachers provided guiding questions that required students to cite evidence to justify answers during discussions. In a grade 2 math class with students with disabilities, the students challenged each other's thinking in determining how to "use the ten strategy" to find the sum of varied combinations of one-digit numbers. The students used blocks and counters to create combinations of numbers that add up to 10 and were able to justify their thinking to one another and to the class. The teacher posed questions to help the group complete the task, using academic vocabulary such as sum, addition and doubles. In some of the other classrooms visited, discussions emerged mainly through brief turn and talks.
- The use of differentiated tasks to deepen student engagement in challenging work was evident in several classrooms. In a grade 5 social studies class groups of students worked with peers to use a map and a text to identify places where European explorers traveled in search of new routes for trading goods. The students used a highlighter to point out evidence in the text that led to their identification of specific places on a map posted at the front of the room. With support from a second adult in the room, bilingual students worked on a related task, using online resources. Similarly, in a grade 4 Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) writing class, students worked on differentiated tasks about an animal of their choice. Several adults in the room provided differentiated support for the most struggling learners in the room. These practices were not evident in a few other classes where all students worked on the same task, with no extensions for advanced learners.
- In the classrooms visited, teachers provided visual supports and scaffolds for all students to be engaged in learning. In a grade 4 science class about the food chain, the teacher engaged students in observing the behavior of animals such as frogs, crickets and lizards to distinguish between producers, decomposers and predators. The teacher used a white board to display related vocabulary words and their meanings, provided guiding questions to direct students' work at stations around the room, and distributed flashlights and magnifying lens for hands-on learning by the "scientists" in the room. Some of these types of supports were also noted in a grade 1 literacy class where teachers displayed different fruits in a basket and asked students to give details about each fruit. The teachers then introduced chapter headings on an interactive white board, photos of a mother and baby elephant, a graphic organizer and a read aloud to support students in identifying main ideas and details as they followed along in their copy of the text, *Elephants and their Calves*.

## Additional Findings

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

All curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and illustrate strategic integration of instructional shifts. Teachers constantly collaborate to refine curricula and tasks to provide increasingly more demanding curricula for all learners across grades and content areas.

### Impact

A schoolwide commitment to continuously aligning curricula to relevant standards results in coherently sequenced Common Core-aligned units of study with rigorous academic tasks that promote college and career readiness for all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Driven by a school wide instructional focus on building oral language skills and deepening students' proficiency in citing evidence to support responses, teachers create curriculum maps and unit plans that illustrate tasks designed to support these goals. Curriculum maps illustrate sample tasks that require students to engage in activities such as composing explanations of inferences from texts, preparing summaries of reading selections, and writing on topics across content areas. For all learners, including ENL students and students with disabilities, the use of visuals, sentence frames, manipulatives, and technology-based supports is embedded in lesson plans and units. Units also show that teachers incorporate tiered vocabulary, skills and unit goals tied to differentiated learning tasks. Each unit includes a culminating performance task and a Common Core-aligned rubric for assessing levels of student mastery of content and skills taught.
- All units of study reflect alignment to Common Core Standards and instructional shifts and highlight topics, focus questions, texts, essential understandings, embedded assessments, target vocabulary, skills, and strategies for guided and independent practice. Modules sequenced by topics and grades provide teachers with content from the *ReadyGen* curriculum, which is used to support the infusion of literacy-based tasks across all content areas. Math curricula include the Common Core-aligned *GO Math!* program and units of study linked to *EngageNY* resources, which allow for additional focus on math instructional shifts and word problems. A math pacing calendar outlines standards by grade and contains sample tasks for solving complex math problems. Pacing calendars aligned to the New York City scope and sequence, guide instruction in social studies and science and *Full Option Science System* (FOSS) resources are used to support exploration of science content and skills.
- In addition to units of instruction for core content, curricula include topics and skills for project-based learning driven by art and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) components that are being explored for inclusion in curricula across content areas. Bulletin boards and student work folders show samples projects done by students and lesson plans reflect tasks that involve students in oral language activities, such as asking and answering questions in discussions and presentations. *MyOn*, *Raz-Kids*, *Mind Play* and *Brain Pop* are additional resources for some classes. Curricula for arts programs and partnerships with organizations, including Arts Connection, round out curricula offerings spread out across the school day and beyond; exposure to violin, chess, dance, drama, and music are among the many activities that extend curricula and provide all students with varied opportunities to explore college and career readiness skills.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

Across classrooms teachers implement cycles of assessments aligned to curricula, and use the data to provide staff and students with actionable feedback about student achievement. Using data from common assessments, staff members monitor student progress on assessment tasks.

### **Impact**

Feedback contributes to an understanding of areas of student progress towards learning goals and informs adjustments to curricula and instruction to increase achievement by all learners.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Assessments include *ReadyGen* unit assessments, from which teachers cull data and make adjustments to instruction. Literacy assessments include Fountas and Pinnell in reading, on-demand writing tasks at the end of each module, end of unit assessments and teacher-created assessments on a common text used in each module of study. Questions on teacher created assessments are aligned to the format of the Common Core Learning Standards and the *ReadyGen* unit assessments. Additional forms of assessment include the use of checklists to monitor class participation, oral language and use of text evidence in discussions and written work. A common grading policy drives conversations amongst staff and with students about students' performance on tasks.
- Using a variety of tools and charts, teachers outline students' strengths and needs by grade levels, skills, standards and content areas. Teachers have analyzed data from assessment tasks, including item analysis data from the 2015 New York State English Language Arts and math assessments and New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test. They have identified standards that students have not yet mastered and are implementing adjustments such as re-teaching strategies or adding tasks for additional practice on those standards and skills. For example, due to a finding that students across the school struggle in navigating academic vocabulary, a schoolwide instructional focus is for students to improve their oral language skills and use of text evidence in class discussions and written work. Analysis of more recent assessment data is ongoing.
- School leaders and teachers also use data from assessments to set learning goals, create guided reading groups, program targeted students for additional periods of intervention and flexibly re-group students as warranted, based on students' identified learning needs. Charts in data binders show monitoring of reading levels and targets for individual students in each class. Assessment practices also include the use of rubrics aligned to curricula and tasks to evaluate and provide feedback on student performance. Work folders maintained by each student contain logs with goals set for the student, records of the student's performance on assessments administered, including copies of the assessments and rubric-based scores and teacher comments about the student's strengths and areas of need. A work sample in a grade 4 student's folder showed feedback via a rating of performance Level 3 on the attached 4 points rubric for math problem-solving and next steps for the student to improve their work.

<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 communicate expectations for high levels of shared accountability for staff and student learning across the school. All staff members communicate and partner with families to support expectations for college and career readiness for all students.

### Impact

Effective communication of and support for high expectations for all staff fosters mutual accountability for improving teaching and learning across the school. Strong partnerships among staff and families result in students' progress in meeting high expectations for their learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- During the teacher team meetings, several teachers stated that the principal sets clear expectations for teaching and learning through an explicit school-wide instructional focus on improving students' oral language skills. Using a monthly calendar, weekly staff meetings and other professional learning sessions, school leaders identify learning targets and expectations for each week and remind all staff of unit goals, classwork, homework and assessment needs for all students across grades and subjects. Teachers reported that, through ongoing observations of classroom practices and follow-up conferences, administrators hold them accountable for delivering high quality instruction to all students. The observations assess the teachers' use of complex texts, emphasis on academic vocabulary, integration of close reading activities in lessons, questioning and discussion strategies, assessment practices, and provision of meaningful feedback to students.
- All teachers receive ongoing professional development from school-based staff and consultants, including school leaders, teacher leaders, a data specialist and a coach, based on an analysis of their learning needs, as well as the learning needs of students whom they teach. Utilizing classroom observation data, school leaders work with teachers to evaluate their progress based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching and help identify areas of need for specific students. Teachers also participate in peer inter-visitations focused on student engagement, questioning and discussion strategies and using assessment in instruction. Observation reports show that school leaders provide specific, timely and actionable feedback addressing these elements of teacher practice. The principal has also provided teachers with training in Orton Gillingham techniques to support improved instruction for struggling learners, especially ENL students. Teachers and school leaders reported improvement in teaching and student achievement as a result of these activities.
- Based on feedback from a family survey, parents have varied opportunities to be involved in their children's day to day learning. Staff members disseminate progress reports, an events calendar and newsletters that keep families informed about curricula, tasks and goals for their children, and offer them strategies for supporting their children's learning at home. During the meeting with families, they noted that staff members help them to prepare their children for the next grade by working with families in classrooms one Friday each month and constantly reaching out to them via text messages, phone calls and emails. During parent outreach time on Tuesdays, teachers train parents to help their children by conducting grade specific workshops on various topics in the curriculum. ENL and AIS providers also meet with parents on Tuesdays for individual conferences. On Saturday mornings, staff members host ENL classes for the many families who are learning English, with childcare in place for all who attend. Families also spoke of being able to borrow books from the school's library, which is open to them on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.