



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

**Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning**

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2015-2016**

**P.S. 241 Emma L. Johnston**

**Elementary School K241**

**976 President Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11225**

**Principal: Frantz Lucius**

**Date of review: November 13, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Tracie Benjamin-Van Lierop**

## The School Context

P.S. 241 Emma L. Johnston is an elementary school with 551 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade five. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 0% Asian, 86% Black, 10% Hispanic, and 3% White students. The student body includes 8% English Language Learners and 9% students with disabilities. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 93.4%.

## 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>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>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the schools curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. The school uses common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress toward goals.

### Impact

Actionable and meaningful feedback is provided to students and teachers regarding student achievement. All students, including English Language Learners (ELL's) and Students With Disabilities (SWD's), demonstrate increased mastery.

### Supporting Evidence

- Based on the results of the Spring 2015 New York State English Language Arts (ELA) and Math assessments, the school created a gap analysis schedule across grades 3 to 5 which provided teachers with data to group their level one and level two students. Additionally, teachers used the results from the state ELA and Math assessments to identify the areas of challenge for their students and compared the data to the questions from Engage NY to connect specific focus areas for their students. Students are provided with feedback by means of rubrics on class assignments, projects, and exams which informs their next steps to progress to their respective next levels. For example, in grade 1 classes there is a Group Work Rubric which measures students in the following areas: Helping Each Other, Communicating, Respectful, and On Task. The rubric levels range from 1 to 4 with 1 representing Unsatisfactory and 4 representing Exemplary. Across grades in math, student work included feedback with ratings from 1 to 4 stars. A student received a 3-star rating which indicated "My work shows that I have a good understanding of this math concept. I solved the problem correctly. My explanation is clear. I included in my work what I did and why I chose the operation or strategy. I used some math vocabulary." The next step stated, "Use more details and math vocabulary to explain your answer."
- Grades Kindergarten through 5 have *Fountas and Pinnell* reading assessment data which measures the following areas for each student: independent reading level, meeting expectations, approaching expectations, and areas of need. Based on the Math baseline assessment data from the beginning of the school year, grades 3 through 5 adjusted their curricula and instructional decisions to meet the needs of their students. The data identified that students were struggling with multiplication and division and teachers decided to dedicate more time to these operations to increase student mastery. The common assessment report provided teachers and staff members the opportunity to analyze trends and put systems in place to monitor progress.
- The school consistently uses parallel assessments and units are based on pre and post assessments to measure student progress and a gap analysis protocol is conducted bi-weekly. As a result, teachers in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 5 across content areas have made adjustments to their curriculum. For example, in ELA the data revealed there was a need to focus on close reading strategies, comprehension, and increased exposure to Depths of Knowledge (DOK) levels 3 and 4 questions.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best and promote rigorous work products.

### Impact

While teaching strategies provide multiple entry points, the use of strategic high quality supports and extension into the curricula varies across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms teachers are working to improve their levels of questioning and discussion, which allow students to be engaged in higher order thinking skills and exposed to Depths of Knowledge (DOK) levels 3 and 4 questions. In a grade 2 class students were working on a lesson focused on rocks. Students were asked, "What are rocks? How can we describe rocks?" Students also engaged in Think-Pair-Share activities throughout the lesson and accountable talk - stating why they agreed or disagreed with each other about the rocks on their groups desks. In a grade 4 class, students were engaged in sharing their thoughts in different groups on science adaptations and offspring based on a video. A group of students worked on laptops to facilitate the research discussion in the class based on the students findings and notes from the video. In a grade 3 classroom, multiple entry points were evident and students were engaged in differentiated tasks using manipulatives to support their learning in addition and subtraction. There were some students who were able to complete multiplication and division problems on a separate worksheet. In a grade 4 class, students learned to differentiate between the structural and behavioral adaptations of animals through the use of stations. The three stations focused on the following – Creature Creation, Story Writing, and Research and by the end of the lesson students were expected to respond to the Essential Question, "How do structures and functions of living things allow them to meet their needs?"
- The school's belief about how students learn best is captured through the acronym DARE which stands for Danielson (Framework), Accountable (Talk), Rigor, and Encouragement which encourages teachers to reflect on their best practices and students needs as they incorporate the Instructional Shifts into their lesson delivery. In a grade 3 class students focused on the problem of the day created by a student. The student was able to articulate his problem and his peers both agreed and disagreed with his findings on associated property and distributive property. The lesson was student centered and at one point a student stated, "We got this!" As students transitioned into their student groupings, they were singing their multiplication tables and walking to their respective workstations.
- In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, students were asked "What is humidity?" and "What is weather?" by their teachers. Additionally, students were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the answers given by their classmates. A student stated, "humidity is hot air" and another student stated, "I agree with him." Students were also given graphic organizers to complete a note taking activity and there were three groups of students who were not speaking to each other and needed additional assistance in order to progress through the lesson.

## Additional Findings

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

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

### Impact

Coherence across grades and subject areas promotes college and career readiness for all students. Individual and groups of students including English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged.

### Supporting Evidence

- In reviewing lesson plans, seven out of seven indicated differentiation strategies, specific to the content area, for Students with Disabilities (SWD's), English Language Learners (ELL's) and the bottom one-third. Specific examples include peer assistance from a student facilitator to work one on one with students while in small groups, guided questions for some students, heterogeneous small group instruction, visual learning tools and pair-share reading to aid in the development of Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questions by students.
- Unit plans across all content areas reflected extended considerations for all students in addition to the coherence with multiple entry points via Universal Design for Learning (UDL). In a Grade 5 unit plan on Human Rights, the teacher identified teaching assistants for groups, varied the DOK questions, and provided notes for one group of students. In a Grade 4 Science lesson, the plan provided different groupings based on data from baseline assessments at the beginning of the unit.
- Content areas across grades planned and refined their unit and lesson plans to meet the needs of their students. Grades 3 and 4 created addendums to their units to improve their use of UDL strategies and vary the levels of DOK questions to meet the needs of all students. Grades Kindergarten through Second adjusted their Math curriculum pacing calendar based on the data from their September baseline assessments in order to address the learning gaps of their lowest performing students while also including access to advanced level work through extension tasks. The English Language and Science departments refined their curricula in order to promote rigor across the content areas. For example, a Grade 3 unit on the water cycle was refined for the 2015-16 school year to incorporate literacy. To extend learning opportunities, students visited the Botanic Garden to research different ecosystems and their impact on the survival of various species.

<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 promoting a culture of college and career readiness. Teacher teams and staff systematically provide clear, focused, and effective feedback and guidance supports to all students.

### Impact

A culture of mutual accountability and successful partnerships with families to support a path to college and career for all students. Students own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- The teacher’s handbook outlining academic and personal behavior expectations, non-negotiables, and Chancellor’s regulations are distributed at the beginning of the school year along with the professional development calendar. The professional development offerings for the staff include Danielson’s Framework for Teaching specifically on questioning and discussion, the Framework for Great Schools pillars, and the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. Additionally, teachers are regularly observed by administrators and their peers and receive formative and evaluative feedback that fosters a system of mutual accountability.
- Communication with families is a consistent and systematic and parental involvement is an integral part of the school’s success. The Learning Leaders program at the school is one of the largest in the district, which includes thirty parent members who serve in various capacities including assisting teachers in their classrooms. Parents receive information from the school on their children’s progress through Back to School Night, quarterly progress reports, class Dojo which is an on-line portal that allow parents to communicate with teachers and informs how parents can support their children at home. Each grade conducts parent workshops focused on the Common Core Learning Standards and the Parent Coordinator sends a monthly newsletter to inform families of events and additional academic activities.
- Preparation for college and career readiness permeates the curricular and instructional practices and is reflected in the activities students are engaged in throughout the school year. Examples of activities include Career Day, visits to the United Nations, and Student Government. The student leaders in Student Government participate in the decision making process at the school are afforded the opportunity to perform civic duties. For example the Public Relations student representative speaks with outside funders to assist the school community with fundraising efforts and has raised thousands of dollars thus far. Students also articulated they are aware of what they need to accomplish to get into a good middle school, “Teachers look at my work deeply”, stated one student. Another student stated, “Teachers explain what we need to do to get to the next level. They conference with us.”

<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 collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity. Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher and student work; distributed leadership structures are embedded to foster effective teacher leadership.

### Impact

Teachers play an integral role in key decisions that result in school-wide instructional coherence, increased student achievement for all learners, and shared improvement in teacher practice and mastery of goals for groups of students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher collaboration is strongly promoted and encouraged as teacher teams are expected to engage in vertical planning, analyze data, share best practices, and conduct gap analysis. Teams have worked to foment instructional coherence across grades and also contributed to the improvement of teacher practice. Due to their inquiry work, teachers have increased the number of intervisitations within their respective teams, have modified lessons for their shared students, in specific English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities. Teachers stated, “We are not afraid to say I don’t know.” and “We learn from each other and we take from each other to improve our practice.”
- As observed, teacher teams analyzed student work using the Looking At Student Work and Tuning protocols with the objective of closing the achievement gap for all students by focusing on the Common Core Learning Standards. The Math team determined some of their students were not able to do basic math problems and they needed to focus on incorporating addition and subtraction into their lessons while also providing learning extensions for students who were able to move on to the next learning phase. The Grade 3 team conducted a gap analysis on writing basing their findings on the Opinion Piece rubric and determined students were able to provide opinions along with details from the text to support their opinions. Teachers determined student next steps included incorporating more transition words into their writing.
- Team participation and facilitation ensures that all staff demonstrates an integral role in major decisions affecting student learning and growth throughout the school. For example, teachers make decisions about additional academic supports instructional shifts to focus on per grade and content area. In order to make certain teachers were in alignment across grades regarding communication of grade and content focus, teacher leadership decided to implement Google Docs. Teachers and school leaders use this tool to deepen their understanding of grade foci and also to increase their efficiency efforts.