



# Quality Review Report

## 2015-2016

**P.S. 188 The Island School**

**Elementary-Middle School M188**

**442 East Houston Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10002**

**Principal: Suany Ramos**

**Date of review: January 21, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Michele Ashley**

## The School Context

P.S. 188 The Island School is an elementary-middle school with 489 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 2% Asian, 30% Black, 63% Hispanic, and 4% White students. The student body includes 15% English Language Learners and 28% students with disabilities. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 90.7%.

## 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	Additional Findings	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 <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	Additional Findings	Proficient
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	Proficient
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	Celebration	Well Developed
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

<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 and provide training to the entire staff. School leaders and staff have successfully partnered with families.

### Impact

Effective communication and partnership with families and staff create a culture of mutual accountability and supports student progress toward expectations for college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- Leaders consistently share expectations at school leadership team (SLT) meetings, professional development sessions, observation feedback sessions, and teacher team meetings. A professional development handout includes a crosswalk of the *Framework for Great Schools*, Quality Review indicators, and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, domains 3b, 3c, and 3d. Informal observation notes include next steps connected to these domains. One form states, “Here are a few strategies connected to 3d. Follow up on a student response by fielding it to the class...engage students in peer assessment by asking them to agree or disagree and share why.”
- Teachers conduct classroom intervisitations focused on domains 3b, 3c and 3d using a checklist and provide one another with low inference data, wonderings, and recommendations. In a feedback document a teacher shares, “Your tables all have rubrics...make reference to them when the children are on task. The students need to learn to speak the language based on the rubrics so that they can check up on each other.”
- Teachers also conduct intervisitations with other New York City public schools to observe and practice instruction in English Language Arts (ELA), math, and dual language classrooms. Four teachers from the dual language team, participate in the District 1 Dual Language Project that includes ten learning cycles rotating across three schools. Project members conduct, debrief, and reteach targeted lessons.
- School leaders and staff communicate student expectations to families during Tuesday parent meetings, parent teacher association (PTA) meetings, scheduled appointments, notices home, phone calls, face-to-face morning greetings, phone blasts, and Jupiter grades. One parent noted that she knows something important has happened at school when she is at a parent meeting and all the parent message alerts sound at the same time. Another parent added that the messages come in English and Spanish in a friendly “Aunt Esther” voice.
- Students are prepared for the next level via assessment assemblies, ninth period test preparation, and Saturday tutoring. Families receive high school application support and counseling. One parent shared that her grade 2 student is prepared for grade 3 testing with an extra period of “third grade work.” Parents consistently attend PTA meetings and partner with the school in a myriad of ways including, workshops, morning arrival, lunch duty, homework help, fundraising, chaperones, hallway monitors, lock downs, fire drills, and translation.

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

### Findings

The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals, and teaching practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and effective adjustments to instruction.

### Impact

Students have yet to be made sufficiently aware of their next learning steps.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school administers curricular unit assessments, educational performance tasks three times a year, math and ELA beginning, middle and end-of-year assessments, and on-demand writing assessments. Teachers use data from assessments to adjust curriculum and instruction. After a review of the ELA beginning of the year performance, a humanities teacher adjusted instruction to include “more exposure to read aloud” for ELLs and “provide students with a list of character traits.”
- A grade 7 math teacher used student performance levels to identify students for targeted small group instruction. The lesson plan showed needed adjustments that includes plans for differentiated instruction, “I will group Level 1 and 2 ELLs and work with them at table 7. I will model how to find the probability of independent/dependent events using colored blocks as visuals.” During class visitations students in this class were working in their assigned stations. (b)
- Across all classrooms visited teachers use checks for understanding to assess student learning. A grade 4 teacher asked a student a series of questions that helped the student think through an estimation problem. The teacher asked, “What does estimate mean? What happens if it is five or higher...if it is below five?” A grade 8 teacher checked student comprehension of the setting in *To Kill a Mockingbird* by asking, “In what year or time period does the story take place? What is segregation? And how did Jim Crow affect the setting?” After responding to these questions students shared connections between the political climate and the actions of the characters in the text.(c)
- Across classrooms visited, students assessed the work of classmates and used teacher resources to check their own work. A grade 5 student commented on a classmate’s oral presentation stating, “You projected your voice, you said the name of the character in the story. Next time show your face.” A grade 2 student consulted a teacher created diagram and bat facts chart before adding her response to questions about bats on a group chart.
- Across classrooms visited teachers prompted students to move forward in their learning and to respond to their classmates with questions or comments. A grade 5 teacher prompted students to use a protocol to respond to their classmate, “Next time respond with you agree or disagree with their response.” In an Integrated Co-Teaching class students responded to peer presentations with questions, praise and constructive feedback. One student responded, “I like that you projected your voice and said the names of the characters from your story. Next time look at the audience and show your face.” However, this level of peer and self-assessment, evident in this class, was not prevalent in the vast majority of classes.

## Additional Findings

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula and academic tasks are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, integrate the instructional shifts, and emphasize higher-order skills.

### Impact

Purposeful curricular decisions build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Since 2013, the school made purposeful decisions to align curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards adopting *Core Knowledge*, *Expeditionary Learning*, *Math in Focus*, *Connected Math* and *Impact Math*. After analysis of 2014- 2015 data, the school moved to *Go Math* and *Teachers College Writers Workshop* this year. *Go Math* replaced *Math in Focus* to support a growing dual language program. *Go Math* provides English and Spanish versions of all text as well additional support and extension activities. The school selected *Teachers College Writers Workshop* in response to an identified school wide weakness in expressive writing. Teachers participated in summer professional development and ongoing professional learning sessions in the new curricula. (a)
- Across grades and content areas, lesson plans reviewed identify and align to content and Common Core Learning Standards. A technology lesson plan identifies technology standards for creativity and innovation stating, “Students will demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology.” An ELA lesson states, students will “participate in shared research and writing projects and write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement.”
- A math lesson plan asks students to create a journal entry in which they write a letter to a friend telling them how excited they are to learn about probability. The instructions require students to write a probability problem, identify the type of probability, solve the problem, explain their process, and express their answer as a fraction, decimal and percent. The lesson also includes plans to provide manipulatives and teacher support for English Language Learners (ELLs) and students performing at a Level 1.
- A second grade informative writing unit requires students to answer essential questions, “What is informative writing, and how do writers select a genre of writing for a specific purpose and audience?” In one lesson, students must answer “detective” questions in response to a text. The plan includes two versions of a short text. One version has less text, larger print and fewer questions. The lesson requires all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities to “underline and identify evidence they find in the text that support their answers to the reading detective questions.”

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

Across classrooms teaching practices, student work products, and discussions, align to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best.

### **Impact**

Alignment to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* supports high levels of student thinking and participation.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders articulate beliefs about student engagement and ongoing checks for understanding. Across classrooms visited teachers asked questions or provided prompts to engage students in learning. In an ELA lesson a teacher asked, “Can someone clarify the difference between the big and little picture?” In a humanities class the teacher reminded students, “When you write your sentences make sure you write them so the reader can infer meaning.”
- The school has adopted station learning as a school wide teaching practice. Students worked in stations in six out of seven classrooms visited. In a math classroom, one station was a reteach lesson, at a second station students read books with math themes and responded to text-based questions, and students at a third station completed fluency building activities.
- In an ELA lesson, the teacher asked a student, “What do we do when we don’t understand a word?” The student thought for a moment and then responded, “Context clues...use the words before and after, look at the illustrations, and look at the details so we can get the definition.” In a science lesson, a student reminded her classmate, “We are supposed to think before we answer the question?”
- Across all classrooms visited there were high levels of student participation. In the six classrooms engaged in station learning, students were able to articulate what they were working on and why. A grade 2 student shared, “We are learning about bullfrogs, the features of creatures, their environment, and how they adapt.” When asked what it means to adapt she responded, “The ways they get used to their environment.”
- In a math lesson, students worked in groups and talked directly to each other about how they solved their probability problems. Each group had a group leader that guided the discussion and made sure everyone shared their work. In response to a student with an incorrect response, the group leader asked, “Did you understand the question?” She then read the question aloud and explained what the question was asking. She then encouraged her classmate to try again. The student attempted the problem again.

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

The majority of teachers is engaged in structured inquiry based professional collaborations and has a voice in key decisions.

### Impact

Collaboration focused on student achievement strengthens the instructional and leadership capacity of teachers and impacts student learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school has a variety of teacher teams in place. Teams include grade level, kindergarten through grade 5, humanities, math, science, arts, dual language, instructional council and the Teacher Leadership Program (TLP). Each team meets regularly, has a team leader, a team focus and agenda. The TLP focus is on data analysis and the agenda for January 21, 2016, included a teacher presentation of a data analysis tool. During the observed TLP meeting, teachers shared reflections on student learning, strengths of the data analysis tool, questions, and feedback for improvement. Teachers noted, “This tool provides data on how they performed on each skill. We can choose students and regroup them in stations. Is there also a way to identify ELLs in the data?”
- The math team uses a data analysis worksheet to analyze data across the grade. The tool asks teachers to respond to a series of questions. "What does the data say? What is surprising and why? What implications do you see for our team focus? What is our goal for student outcomes? What are the implications for instruction, professional development, and support for teachers?"
- Over 60% of teachers have volunteered for leadership positions. Teachers have roles as lead teachers, dean of discipline, test coordinator, and as members of the School Leadership Team (SLT) and Teacher Leadership Program. Membership on the TLP has grown from three teachers to 12 teachers this year.
- Teachers on the School Leadership Team have made key decisions that impact student learning. Decisions include the creation of a lesson plan format based on the Danielson *Framework for Teachers*, the move from *Math in Focus* to *Go Math*, and from *Ready Gen* to *Core Knowledge* and *Expeditionary Learning*. (c)
- Teachers on the TLP include representatives from across grades and all school departments. TLP decisions have led to school wide station learning, classroom intervisitation, and Saturday preparatory classes for selected Level 3 and 4 students. Teachers also volunteer for the hiring committee that interviews and selects new hires. One teacher stated that being on the hiring committee “allows us to see if a teacher is a good fit and matches our philosophy.”