



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2015-2016

**P.S. 194 Countee Cullen**

**Elementary School M194**

**244 West 144 Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10030**

**Principal: Josephine Bazan**

**Date of review: May 3, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Debra Freeman**

## The School Context

P.S. 194 Countee Cullen is an elementary school with 206 students from grade prekindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 2% Asian, 52% Black, 39% Hispanic, and 3% White students. The student body includes 18% English Language Learners and 21% students with disabilities. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 89.8%.

## 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>Developing</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>Developing</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>Developing</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>Focus</b>	<b>Developing</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>Developing</b>

## Area of Celebration

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

The majority of teachers are building their engagement in structured professional learning collaborations to promote school goals and Common Core Learning Standard implementation. Teams inconsistently analyze student work for students they share.

### Impact

Team collaborations strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers, however, this work does not typically result in consistent progress toward goals for groups of students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Lower grade school team meeting notes from March indicated that a teacher facilitated the process for revising lesson plans collaboratively. This resulted in the team agreeing to continue to model task expectations for students to apply during work time, and to ensure that students who require more support work with teachers in small groups. This was in evidence in the fifth grade writing workshop and mixed grade math lesson plans, and during class visits to the fifth grade science and kindergarten writing classrooms. One teacher offered that he will “read with two students every day to practice decoding strategies, use context clues, and find character traits.” Although most teachers agreed that collaboratively planning instruction strengthens their practice, inquiry-based teamwork is not yet systemic.
- Over the course of the past two months, teachers have rotated facilitator responsibilities as they review *GO Math!* curricula or prepare for the science fair. For example, one team’s meeting notes indicated that teachers discussed strategies for developing students’ number sense through play. Another set of meeting notes reflected a team’s work to engage students in the scientific method as they prepare projects for the science fair. Additionally, after analysis of fall math benchmark assessment scores the grade 3 through 5 Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) teacher team focused on adjusting their lesson to target students’ struggle with understanding how to subtract mixed numbers with unlike denominators. While both lessons included the “I do-We do-You do” approach, the second lesson targeted essential vocabulary, designed a systematic modeling approach, and created tiered student groups with differentiated tasks. Although agendas reviewed indicated that teams meet regularly to discuss their practice and to adjust lessons, there was a lack of evidence linking this practice to student progress.
- During the lower grade school meeting, wherein each team member follows three students’ progress, the team examined high, low and medium performers’ writing products to discuss what they learned about each student’s strengths and areas of need from their conferencing notes. Teachers noted strengths such as good opening and using quotations, and areas for improvement, organization and elaboration. They also shared students’ gains in writing stamina and using more “fancy words.” The team articulated their next step, to use rubrics and checklists during conferencing. Although this team is focused on students they share, this was not consistent across teams based on documents reviewed.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to all staff; however, communicating expectations to families is uneven.

### Impact

Teachers have received training to meet the school leaders' expectations and school leaders are developing a system of accountability for meeting them. Parents receive limited feedback on their students' progress toward expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal expects all teachers to align curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards, and for all lessons to follow the workshop model structure in order to build school-wide instructional coherence. The Teachers College Reach program provided the curricula from which teachers developed their curricula maps. Teachers have begun the work to plan lessons that reflect the expectations, and some, the principal offered, "have gotten further in this work than others." Additionally, the principal invites faculty to join her for coffee to engage in issues such as the disciplinary code and classroom visitations. The staff is developing their curricula to build cohesion across grades and subject areas and to meet expectations set.
- The principal provides daily communications to her faculty that highlight best practices such as exhibiting student work, and updates on professional development topics such as creating rigorous tasks and looking at student work. The principal noted, "I model what I want to see [from all staff], being professional, prepared, and ready to work." The principal, in partnership with the Teachers College coach, models the language of hope because her expectation is that all students can learn. Selected teachers receive training on examining student work and bring the protocols back to their teams. Additionally, the principal sent special education teachers to workshops on inquiry, and general education teachers to professional learning on the writer's workshop. In this way teachers can come together to share their learning and embed this in practice." The principal noted that this shift in instructional practices is a work in progress.
- Parents feel that the school has "so much potential" and appreciate the school's family-like atmosphere. They attribute this to feeling welcomed to meet with teachers one-on-one, as one parent indicated, "I come whenever I want to." Parents also receive monthly newsletters from their child's teachers that offer updates such as the month's selected vocabulary, content area unit themes such as consonant blends or community economics, and reminders about Parent Engagement Tuesdays. One parent also noted that the school "helps me to support my child's work especially in math because the teacher shows me different ways to support my child." Additionally, a parent noted that her first grader is gifted in math and given that his teacher recognized this, he has already advanced to second grade math. Although parents appreciate the work teachers do to support their children, they stated that they do not always fully understand their children's progress toward meeting the school's academic expectations.

## Additional Findings

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

School leaders and faculty are in the process of aligning curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards. Curricula and tasks inconsistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills across grades and subjects.

### Impact

School leaders and staff are not yet consistently integrating the instructional shifts in curricula, and tasks do not consistently provide English Language Learners (ELLs) or students with disabilities with opportunities to engage in higher-order skills.

### Supporting Evidence

- First graders write narratives to demonstrate their understanding of the main character in the story, *Miss Rumphius*, and based on the lesson plan reviewed, represent their thinking in writing and drawing. With teacher support, they reference the text with guided writing prompts such as “What do we know about the character based on pages four through five?” or “Where do Alice and her grandfather live?” The plan also indicated time provided for independent practice during which students write a sentence or draw a picture in response to the question, “Who is the main character?” Although the lesson plan indicated that the teacher would differentiate instruction by modeling how to find details in the text, and invite students to discuss the details, there were no specific modifications made to support ELLs or students with disabilities in this task.
- Teachers across most content areas created curriculum maps for each grade that identify essential questions such as “How do different materials affect the makeup of the earth?” in second grade science, and “How do readers recount stories using text-based details to understand the central message, lesson, or theme?” in upper grade English Language Arts. All maps include learning targets that indicate what students should know by the end of a unit and are included in most lesson plans. The targets are written as “I can” statements. The principal credited last year’s focus on teachers learning how to align learning targets to the Common Core Learning Standards with this year’s learning target coherence across the school. While learning targets were in evidence in most curricula documents reviewed, the maps did not include purposeful modifications for ELLs, students with disabilities, or high performers. Therefore, opportunities for students to be prepared for their next academic level were uneven across grades and subjects.
- In the early grades, math tasks introduce students to composing and decomposing a set of numbers. In one task, students are provided with manipulatives such as white boards, color counters, magnetic chips, and markers to gain an understanding of the process for composing and decomposing numbers from 11 to 19, and forming equations. The lesson plan indicated that the process of “I-do, We-do, and You-do” is the structure used to prepare students for small group work. In a kindergarten math task, students receive math talk cards and counters to help them determine tens and ones for the number 15. In each plan, students would be grouped by level, “below, on or above”, by what the task required, or for independent activity, but neither plan included modifications for ELLs, students with disabilities, or high performers thereby limiting student engagement in rigorous habits.

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

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into curricula or discussions.

### Impact

There is uneven engagement in higher-order thinking in student work products, thinking and participation.

### Supporting Evidence

- In a first grade class, the teacher began the reading lesson by introducing four vocabulary words that students would encounter in the story. Students were provided with definitions and, for two of the words, visuals such as a boat to show what a mast is. The teacher read aloud and instructed students to follow with their finger; all but one student did. During the read aloud, the teacher asked several text-based questions such as “What are people called?” and “What might the third thing be?” Several students responded to the questions, but responses were difficult to hear. The teacher repeated student’s responses for the class, which limited the opportunity for students to speak to each other instead of only responding directly to the teacher.
- During a writing workshop, the teacher attempted to generate persuasive topics regarding what students could do to change the world. When one student offered that he would like to have a house and money and “maybe become the mayor or the president”, the teacher asked, “Is that a personal change or making a change in the world?” The student was not provided time to think about this, or to consider how this might effect change. When the teacher was unsuccessful in getting the students to generate ideas, he provided the example for them. The persuasive topic was obesity; the problem was tolerance, and the solution to celebrate differences and to teach health and fitness. Therefore, students had little opportunity to figure out what a persuasive topic about changing the world might mean to them, to engage with supporting resources to derive their own topic, or to share thinking with peers.
- In a fifth grade ICT social studies class, after the teacher modeled finding the main idea and text details to support it, students worked in groups to discuss a textbook passage. They built on each other’s ideas about women’s voting rights using accountable talk stems, and the task was modified based on student ability. For example, a teacher guided one group, while another received sentence starters for their summary writing. In an ICT science class, the teachers introduced vocabulary to their third graders such as roots, nutrients, stem and leaf, and all students copied the learning target, “I can describe what plants need and plant parts and their functions.” The teacher read the text aloud to model finding details in a text. However, the modeling moved quickly, and when students called out details they noticed, the responses were not acknowledged. After the teacher summarized that plants grow in many places, students chorally agreed. During modeling, students had little time to process what they were learning about plants or main ideas, and when students were divided into groups to practice, the long tables, numbering from eight to eleven students each, limited equitable opportunities for students to hear each other’s thinking given the distance. Student work from the lesson indicated that some were able to complete the task, yet no extensions were available nor was the task or instruction modified to meet the needs of the diverse learners in the class.

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

The school is developing in its use of common assessments across grades and subjects to determine student progress. Teachers' assessment practices are beginning to reflect the use of checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

### Impact

Although teachers make adjustments to instruction and curricula to meet students' learning needs, this is not yet consistent across grades and subjects

### Supporting Evidence

- After a review of student progress on the baseline *Fountas and Pinell* reading assessment, one kindergarten teacher made two adjustments to her practice to strengthen students' ability to read and understand texts. First, she provided her students with vocabulary rings that illustrated the meaning of words by embedding them in sentences such as "Come and see the two cats" with an accompanying drawing. Second, she created comprehension questions to accompany leveled readers, and to give students time to stop and think about what they were reading. She shared the data that reflected the gains her students made on the January assessment, eleven of thirteen students moved up two reading levels.
- Some teachers presented ways they either used a check for understanding or assessment data to adjust their instruction that yielded gains for individual students. For example, a math teacher showed one student's progress from an October assessment where the student got four out of 16 math questions correct, to the February assessment wherein the student earned 12 correct answers. The teacher attributed the gains to addressing second graders' difficulty "subtracting a two-digit number with and without regrouping." The teacher retaught the lesson by first modeling the process, and then providing time for students to generate strategies for solving on their own as evidenced in the revised lesson plan. A second teacher presented revised lesson plans that included visuals to support ELLs and students with disabilities, peer-to-peer discussions to move students toward assessing their progress, and sentence starters to support students' understanding of a central idea in a text. Another teacher adjusted a *ReadyGen* writing assessment to include more reading to more accurately measure students' reading comprehension.
- One kindergarten teacher noted that three of her ELL students benefited from her implementation of the *Foundations* program. She taught her students how to sound out words during writing time, and because of this extra support and checks for understanding during the process, the teacher presented the results, the student completed her first published writing piece, and now helps her peers by sounding out words she learned. A second student is now writing in full sentences and edits his work, and a third student is using speech bubbles, labels and capital letters in student work reviewed. Of the teacher's 15 students, five improved in spelling and are using text features evident in the range of writing pieces the teacher presented. However, this level of student progress linked to a curricular adjustment was not in evidence across grades and subjects.