



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

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2015-2016**

**P.S. 047 Chris Galas**

**K-8 School Q047**

**9 Power Road  
Queens  
NY 11693**

**Principal: Heather Lorenz**

**Date of review: May 6, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Luz T. Cortazzo**

## The School Context

P.S. 047 Chris Galas is a K-8 school with 223 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 0% Asian, 2% Black, 15% Hispanic, and 83% White students. The student body includes 1% English Language Learners and 25% students with disabilities. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 94.4%.

## 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>Celebration</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>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>Focus</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts, as reflected in data-driven academic tasks across grades and content areas, promoting college and career readiness for all students.

### Impact

Students are exposed to a rigorous Common Core-aligned curriculum that demands thinking and participation for all students promoting college readiness. The school's curricular adjustments, and embedded tasks result in coherence across all grades.

### Supporting Evidence

- The Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts are at the forefront of all the school's planning. Through targeted professional development, literacy skills and strategies have been integrated into the four major content areas in the curriculum with continued emphasis on the instructional shifts. The school has a strategy for all reading and writing across all discipline areas. This strategy, called RASC (Restate question, Answer question, Support with text-based evidence, Conclude) ensures coherence across grades that promote college and career readiness for all students. In math, the school has chosen to focus on key standards that require students to solve real-world problems as observed in unit plans reviewed. In a grade seven equations and inequalities unit plan reviewed, indicated that tasks are planned and refined using student work and data so that all students including English Language Learners and students with disabilities have access to the curriculum and are cognitively engaged.
- Based on teacher team inquiry and analysis of 2014-2015 NYS ELA results, the data revealed that only 49.1% of the students were performing on grade level. Consequently, the school decided to focus on early childhood grades to ensure that the students have a strong reading foundation before grade 3. As a result, the school adopted *Foundations* for grades K-2, to be taught cohesively in those grades as a whole class curriculum. Similarly, the school decided to target students in grades k-8 by utilizing varied texts types and guided reading. *Fountas and Pinnell* benchmark assessment shows a growth of 2 or more reading levels for 90% of the students in grades k-8.
- The school's analysis of base line and benchmark performance in English Language Arts indicated a need to improve student-writing responses that pertain to answering questions from an informational text and citing evidence. When prompted, only 55% of the students were able to score a solid 4 according to the writing rubric because they still were not answering the question that was being asked. The school's continued instructional foci of working collaboratively to increase rigorous instruction and student engagement in writing by demonstrating understanding of the question or prompt from a literary or informational text, resulted in coherence and provides the support for students to expand their thinking and become college and career ready.

## Area of Focus

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

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curriculum. Common assessments allow teachers to track student progress towards goals across grades and subjects.

### Impact

The school uses varied rubrics and checklists to guide process and provide feedback to students; however, feedback sometimes varies in quality and performance benchmarks for selected standards do not demonstrate a clear portrait of student mastery.

### Supporting Evidence

- While the school has analyzed the results of the June state exams to determine priority standards for the content and grade and determine trends to inform the development of instructional strategies, specific benchmark goals for these standards were not clear. Additionally, while instruction was aligned with the trends observed, it was unclear how the common assessments used at the school created a clear portrait of student mastery for these prioritized standards.
- The school has adopted various rubrics and checklists that detail student behavior, self-assessment, student checklists, conference notes, checkpoint questions in math, skills inventory, expectations for group work, the process for accomplishing a task, and criteria charts. For example, the school has a Socratic Seminar Rubric, and also generic rubrics for specific math tasks such as a grade seven "percent equations task" used to determine which a better deal is, which sale is better, which bank offers the better option for a loan and which job pays more. Across classrooms students use rubrics and other criteria charts to ensure that they followed the steps in the activity they were participating in. However, during a student interview only two students were able to directly state how feedback from rubrics stapled to their work helped them achieve mastery.
- The school has common assessment data on standards, *Fountas and Pinnell* benchmarks with groupings based on Lexile levels, checkpoint questions in math, and Measures of Student Learning (MOSL). Results are used to adjust curricula and instruction. However, the school does not disaggregate data by subgroup therefore making it difficult to see this performance at a glance in order to track student progress

## Additional Findings

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

Across classrooms, instructional practices demonstrate the school's philosophy on how students learn best that purposely offer all students access to the curricula and exposure to higher-order thinking skills.

### Impact

School-wide practices reflect school-wide beliefs during team level discussions and across grades and subjects students demonstrate high levels of student thinking, and participation.

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### Supporting Evidence

- The school's beliefs on how students learn best are influenced by the priorities of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and Common Core Standards instructional shifts and supported by teachers' innovative pedagogical practices. Across the majority of classrooms, teacher practices consistently support school wide beliefs aligned to curricula, and shaped by teacher team and faculty input as evidenced during the middle grade team.
- In a grade eight math class, students discussed how to solve a quadratic function to interpret a real world situation. Teaching practices included inquiry, collaborative learning, questioning and discussions to promote high levels of thinking and participation. Strategic use of scaffolding techniques, needs-based grouping, activation of prior knowledge, building of academic vocabulary, and effective use of differentiated graphic organizers, provided multiple entry points to the lesson and tasks for all learners including students with disabilities.
- Teachers across classrooms, provide students with challenging learning tasks that require them to use critical thinking, analysis, and problem solve as evidenced by text-talk, collaborative discussions, peer reflections and self-reflections observed during classroom visits. Teachers consistently promote higher-order thinking skills in their questioning and model to help students understand content.
- Students in all classes engage in the same curricula with the appropriate scaffolds to meet the needs of all learners. Teacher practices observed leverage strategies such as inquiry, project-based and collaborative learning, questioning, and discussion that promote high levels of thinking, as observed in science, math and English Language Arts classrooms visited.
- Close reading practices, common writing strategies and rubrics, and discussion protocols have been integrated to promote literacy across the content areas. In English Language Arts students practice and apply newly learned skills and strategies using texts at their assessed reading level as well as high-interest texts. Grade level and foundational Common Core Standards are identified and utilized to meet and support students at their developmental and ability level as observed in grade seven Literature Circles. Similarly, in math, students practice and apply newly learned content skills using process and product strategies based upon their entry point.

<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 partner with families in communicating expectations connected to a path of college readiness. Teacher teams have a clear culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of expectations for all students.

**Impact**

Structures that support high expectations, assure a culture of mutual accountability among staff members. As a result of teacher teams' and staff members' critical interventions and ongoing provision of feedback and advisement, students have ownership of their own learning and are prepared for the next level.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders consistently reinforce high expectations through feedback from walkthroughs, observations, and team meetings to ensure coherence across the school and to support teachers by providing differentiated professional development. Through this practice, all teachers reinforce the school's instructional foci of implementing Common Core-based instruction to ensure students are making progress towards meeting grade level requirements; close reading of text to deepen comprehension; high level questioning and discussion protocols to engage students in critical thinking processes required for college and career readiness. Teachers receive actionable feedback from school leaders and peers through observations, walkthrough and inter-visitations to reflect and revise practice and build coherence.
- In the parent meeting, every parent was able to speak about ongoing feedback to families in the form of *Engrade*, an online reporting system that allows teachers to post grades and homework resources for students and parents. This program provides parents with the opportunity to log on and see how their child is progressing. Furthermore, parents indicated that the school, in partnership with the parent coordinator, offers parents multiple opportunities to participate in workshops that are geared towards Common Core expectations and assessments, as well as the high school articulation process, and college and career readiness. Consequently, parents stated that they are able to work with the school to support their children at home.
- A culture for learning permeates the school where high expectations are clear, and focused. During the student meeting, students were able to speak about the effective feedback they receive from teachers, and the many opportunities provided for them such as; the career class offered for the middle grade students, life skills provided by the Sapis Counselor, as well as the extracurricular activities available to ensure that they are prepared for the next level

<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**

Structured professional collaborations have strengthened teacher instructional capacity. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

**Impact**

A focus on analysis of data, shared responsibilities, and shared leadership, is resulting in increased student achievement for all students, as evidenced by a review of benchmark data for *Fountas and Pinnell*.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Collaboration between administration and teachers is celebrated. Many structures and activities are in place to inform professional collaborations and ensure that teachers work collaboratively to plan lessons, look at student data and celebrate student growth and success. The vast majority of teachers collaborate in vertical teacher teams several times during the week to engage in collaborative work through looking at student data and lesson plans. This provides teachers with opportunities to identify effective and highly effective teaching techniques and apply them to the needs of students. During the 3, 4, 5 grade literacy team meeting, the focus was how do we incorporate the “where-to” Framework into our lessons. During the meeting, the team facilitator introduced and presented the topic, set norms, clarified roles, and teachers engaged in low inference observations, asked clarifying questions, provided feedback, provided possible instructional implications and suggested next steps. Consequently, professional collaborations encourage strategic decision-making, engage all staff in meaningful work and support the improvement of student achievement. For example: The grade 5 teacher used the letter T from the “where-to” framework to tailor and personalize the work for her students according to their varied needs and interests. The teacher explained that preliminary results indicate that all her target students will be able to generate their own questions during the Socratic Seminar.
- Administration and teacher leaders are able to identify distributed leadership structures that are deeply rooted in the school’s day-to-day operations given the small size of the school. For example, teacher leaders within grades have been identified in order to leverage their expertise with their colleagues within their content or grade or serve as mentors for new teachers. Similarly, teachers demonstrating expertise in identified areas support the instructional foci by providing professional development during the Monday 80-minute block as evidenced by a review of the Professional Development calendar.
- The school is using a Co-teaching model for their Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classes. ICT teachers are subject-area specialists; they attend common planning and professional development with their collaborative teachers and are parallel-programmed. Teachers are benefitting from professional development around what Co-Teaching is and is not. This model is used to support students with disabilities and English Language Learners within the content of English Language Arts and or grades and content areas as evidenced during the classroom visits, and the team meetings.