



# Quality Review Report

## 2015-2016

**P.S./I.S 087 Middle Village**

**Elementary - Middle School Q087**

**67-54 80<sup>th</sup> Street  
Queens  
NY 11379**

**Principal: Caryn Michaeli**

**Date of review: November 20, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Luz T. Cortazzo**

## The School Context

P.S./I.S. 087 Middle Village is an elementary – middle school with 595 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 3% Asian, 1% Black, 50% Hispanic, and 46% White students. The student body includes 8% English Language Learners and 24% 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 91.5%.

## 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>Proficient</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>Celebration</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

<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

As a result of teacher teams' and staff members' critical interventions, ongoing provision of feedback, and successful partnering with parents, students are taking an active role in their learning experience and supported to meet high expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- In the parent meeting, every parent was able to speak about the ongoing feedback to families in the form of newsletters that outline the school's instructional focus, curricula calendars, and assessments. Interim progress reports outline student progress and next steps for parents to support their children. Parent workshops aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, and Parent Engagement Tuesdays are further evidence of the school's exemplary connections with families. Furthermore, parents stated that teacher's partner with them to help their children succeed by providing them with strategies and resources to help them at home.
- School leaders create high levels of expectations for all staff which is evident throughout the community through verbal and written structures. For example, teachers received the Teachers Handbook at the first staff conference, highlighting the school's instructional goals, and instructional focus for the year; new teacher orientation, ongoing workshops, one-on-one meetings with the administration which emulates a culture where administration and teachers reflect on teacher and students performance regularly. These reviews serve to hold teachers accountable for meeting school expectations. Each teacher/grade create consistent classroom environments that include charts with clear expectations, content and skill based goals for students, displays of student work and instructional goals, posted essential questions and learning objectives so that students are aware of their own learning process.
- Students benefit and persevere from strong partnerships with teachers, school leaders and all members of the school community who consider academic success and performance of learners their central mission.

## Area of Focus

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

While pedagogy is anchored in common beliefs about how students learn best and is informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts, extensions that foster higher-order thinking demonstrated in rigorous student work and discussions varies across classrooms.

### Impact

Across classrooms, multiple access points support student engagement in rigorous tasks, though supports and extensions are not always strategically planned, so that all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs), have consistent opportunities to be highly engaged and demonstrate critical and analytical thinking.

### Supporting Evidence

- Pedagogical practices reflect the school's core belief system on how children learn best supported by the research and work of David A. Sousa on how the brain processes and intakes information allowing students to learn. Additionally, teaching practices are closely aligned to the Common Core-driven curriculum emphasizing students' instructional levels. Teachers follow specific elements of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* by grouping students according to the need identified by their cognitive development levels as "high", "medium" and "low". Based on these levers students are provided with modifications, as evidenced during classroom visits.
- Across all classrooms there was evidence of clear key student learning objectives and lesson planning aligned to the workshop model. In most classrooms teaching strategies included teachers using the "I do, we do, you do" model. In most classrooms teachers required students to use text-based answers in reading and writing based on evidence from text. Students were observed utilizing chunking, highlighting or underlining relevant information and writing in margins. However, in some classrooms, lessons did not strategically provide multiple entry points and high quality supports and extensions into the curricula for all learners to yield student work products reflective of the expectations and rigor of the curricula. In some cases, differentiation cited in lesson plans did not target ELLs or students with disabilities specifically.
- One of the instructional focuses is to provide ELLs with picture prompts to facilitate discussion and writing skills as the analysis of the NYSESLAT data indicated that there was a lack of ability to write a response to picture prompts. In most classrooms visited, students participated in class discussions by responding to teacher-generated questions. However, the practice of students generating their own questions is at different levels in all classrooms visited.

## Additional Findings

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

The school's choice of curricula is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

### Impact

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are Common Core-aligned, thus promoting college and career readiness for all learners. The school's curricular adjustments and embedded tasks ensure that all students have access to the curricula.

### Supporting Evidence

- During classrooms visits, tasks and texts across classrooms emphasized critical thinking skills for all students including ELLs and students with disabilities. All teachers use the workshop model in reading, writing, and math. A skill is taught in concise mini-lessons which consist of direct instruction, guided instruction and independent practice. Flexible small student groups follow modeling techniques shared by teachers during the mini-lesson in order to engage students in higher-order thinking through challenging tasks as evidenced in a grade 6 math class. Students engaged in understanding the concept of a ratio and used ratio language to describe a ratio relationship between two quantities. Students were asked to write comparison statements using ratios, fractions, and subtractions. Students were observed working in three distinct groups and were cognitively engaged. Furthermore, teachers plan lessons based on student learning styles, assessment results and conference notes as evidenced during a visit to the art classroom. Upper grade students used art work from the optical art movement of the 1960's to create an optical illusion piece, and they looked at and discussed the work of Bridget Riley. As a result, the art teacher explained that through their artist study, students engage in higher-order thinking as evidenced in the art work on display, assessment rubric and student reflection.
- Teachers plan lessons based on students' needs, assessment results and conference notes as evidenced by lesson plans reviewed. For example, during a grade 3 English Language Arts (ELA) class, the lesson plan for guided reading indicated six student groups based on skill assessment results, and student need. Similarly, a review of a grade 2 social studies lesson indicated that students are given oral cues, visual aids, and ELLs are given picture cues and word banks in order to engage them cognitively. Furthermore, during a grade 8 ELA class, students were cognitively engaged identifying the theme and central idea of a mentor text, *Nothing Gold Can Stay*. A review of the teacher's lesson plan indicated that her plan was adjusted to meet student needs as indicated by *Fountas and Pinnell* and ELA scores for grade 8.
- The entire school focuses on the Common Core instructional shift of reading to find important, relevant information in text. Curriculum, pacing calendars and unit tasks reflect vertical and horizontal alignment to the school's instructional focus. The instructional focus was based on end-of-year data which indicated students' were in need of additional work on being able to excerpt relevant and irrelevant information from their reading of text. A review of interdisciplinary unit tasks revealed rigorous habits as evidenced in students' reflections and writing results in grades 2 and 5.

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

Teachers use formative and summative assessments, rubrics, and a grading policy that are aligned to the Common Core and offer a clear, ongoing understanding of the progress of all learners. During daily lessons teachers engage in ongoing checks for understanding of taught concepts.

### Impact

Teachers' understanding of the performance and progress of all learners informs their instructional practices at the team and classroom level, including being able to make effective adjustments that meet the needs of all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers administer pre-tests when a new skill is introduced to ascertain the zone of proximal development for each child. Additionally, during mini-lessons formative assessments are conducted so that teachers can gauge who has internalized the skill, needs partial prompting, or who needs reteaching in a different manner through small group instruction. When the cycle of teaching the skill is complete, post tests are administered. This practice allows for continued small group supports along with an Academic Intervention focus. At the end of a unit or topic, tasks and benchmarks are administered to ascertain mastery. Analysis of the New York State Mathematics Test results indicate that the school went up 12% which was the school's area of focus for the 2014-2015 year. Thus, the school's strong rationale behind grouping of students.
- Teacher team work focuses on effective adjustments to instructional practices and the need to modify areas based on an analysis of student need. Data from the Beginning of the Year (BOY) *Fountas and Pinnell* NYC Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) revealed that 60% of the students are reading below grade level. Based on this information, the school's Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) goals were modified and refocused from science to literacy. Consequently, ELA goals were added and a Core Inquiry Team was formed with dedicated task masters for each grade to specifically review the rigorousness of tasks and school-wide data.
- All teachers use and/or create ELA, math, and content area rubrics to provide written feedback to students. This is a consistent practice across the school, as evidenced by a grade 5 literacy task shared during the student meeting. For example, the students engaged in narrative writing, using a performance-based assessment rubric. The feedback for the student cited specific next steps such as, "You used dialogue throughout your story. You established situation and characters, next time you need to work on grammar, spelling and using more descriptive language." Similarly, a grade 7 student shared her memoir writing piece and explained how a rubric helped her to continue with her first draft. Students shared indicated that it is easier for them to improve their writing and get better grades because they know how to apply the rules for writing and meet expectations.

<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 engage in inquiry work systematically analyzing the impact of teacher practice and strengthening leadership roles. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have a voice in school-wide policies that affect student learning across the school.

**Impact**

A focus on analysis of data and shared responsibilities is resulting in strong reflection and improved instructional practices and is positively impacting student progress in writing.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The vast majority of teachers collaborate in professional teams to develop and implement school-wide instructional practices, embedding the Common Core and instructional shifts to continually promote progress for all learners. Additionally, teacher-created rubrics aligned with the Depth of Knowledge rubric for each grade is used to assess students’ mastery of the standards and the content relative to skill development. In addition, during the student meeting, students stated that teachers’ next steps on their work is helping them reflect and improve their writing as they are able to implement those steps in their future writing, as evidenced in writing pieces shared during the student meeting.
- Administration and teacher leaders are able to identify distributed leadership structures that are deeply-rooted in the school’s day to day operations and articulate how they serve as a medium for teacher input in strategic decisions that affect student achievement. For example, during the grade 5 planning meeting, the team discussed their lesson study in which they shared their low inference notes from their intervisitation to a self-contained special education class. Teachers shared their insights relative to the coherency of teacher pedagogy and brainstormed next steps for the host teacher. As a result, the host teacher identified adjustments for future teaching and together they identified strategies and created a plan to analyze the success of the next steps in positively impacting student learning.
- School leaders and teachers have built a culture of professional collaboration. For example, during the Core Inquiry Team meeting, the team shared that their team was created as a result of the school’s CEP goals being revised based on recent *Fountas and Pinnell* records that indicate that 60% of the students are reading below grade level. Consequently, the new school-wide Core Inquiry Team with Task Masters for each grade is charged with the responsibility of analyzing assessment practices to ensure rigorous tasks, and monitoring student progress. Teachers meet on a weekly basis and extend their work during professional development time on Mondays to review the rigorousness of tasks and provide feedback.
- School leaders and teachers offer specific and clear examples of teacher leadership which illustrate how teachers and teacher leaders play a vital role in school-level decision-making. For example, the principal and the United Federation of Teachers chapter leader collaboratively designed and co-signed an intervisitation protocol to be used by all teachers during their lesson studies. Subsequently, the protocol is being utilized school-wide with 100% teacher buy-in.