



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 096

Elementary School Q096

**130-01 Rockaway Boulevard
Queens
NY 12420**

Principal: Vivian Eweka

**Date of review: May 24, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Deborah Burnett- Worthy**

The School Context

P.S. 096 is an elementary school with 310 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 49% Asian, 24% Black, 14% Hispanic, 2% White students. The student body includes 10% English Language Learners and 7% students with disabilities. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 93.9%.

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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Focus	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	Additional Findings	Well Developed
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	Additional Findings	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

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the content standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts while emphasizing higher order skills in academic tasks.

Impact

There is coherence across grades and subjects. All students have a range of opportunities to both build skill as well as dig deeply into important topics; the curriculum ensures that students are engaged in challenging tasks that require them to think, reflect and problem solve.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher use Webb's *Depth of Knowledge* levels and Bloom's Taxonomy to craft instructional tasks and scaffolded learning opportunities for groups of students. *GO Math!* lessons, focus on problem solving and writing about math. The problem of the day is incorporated to provide a spiral for math concepts that need strengthening. The Splash program is used in pre-kindergarten where science and social studies topics and concepts are embedded within the reading program and a science cluster teacher provides inquiry-based instruction.
- The professional development calendar, collaboratively crafted by the Professional Learning Team, developed training sessions to ensure that teachers have the opportunity to analyze data from benchmark assessments, track trends in student progress, and determine next steps for instruction. Professional development sessions that included training on *Universal Design for Learning*, setting instructional outcomes, and aligning lesson activities to student outcomes were also instrumental in the strategic integration of the Common Core Learning Standards and key instructional shifts into curricula maps and lesson plans across grades and content areas.
- All curricula across grade and content areas include challenging tasks to engage students. For example, grade 5 students who are reading the novel *George's Secret Key to the Universe* by Lucy and Stephen Hawking, are tasked with writing a critique answering guiding questions including "Does the author's use of dialogue, details and character interactions help you to better understand the characters perspective of an event or does it make it more complicated?" Grade 4 students who have been reading about the Northwest Coast Peoples and the Ojibwa communities were tasked with analyzing the text and then writing a comparison paper. Students choose between comparing the lives of one of the communities in the past and in the present, or comparing the two communities to each other. First grade students in an integrated co-teaching (ICT) class are required to read and summarize fictional text using graphic organizers that support the students ability to answer the questions, "Who is the main character?", "What is the problem and how did they solve it?" and "What was the resolution of the story?"

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

In most classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, The Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, and the school's belief system on how students learn best. Multiple teaching strategies are used to support all learners.

Impact

Most students across most content areas are provided opportunities through varied instructional strategies to interact with challenging tasks, allowing them to demonstrate higher order thinking more consistently. This was not observed in all classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- Across most classrooms, teachers provide students with challenging learning activities that are designed to push their thinking. For example, the math cluster teacher presented grade 1 students with three different versions of the following problem: "Ms. P is making a pan of brownies to share with 3 of her friends. Half of the people like chocolate frosting, a fourth like nuts, a quarter like their brownies plain. Show what the pan of brownies might look like." She also provided them with strategies to encourage their thinking. Most observed tasks across grades and content areas were also designed and executed to develop the critical thinking skills of the students around a targeted skill set.
- Most classroom instruction was clear and resulted in students successfully achieving the teachers learning objective. However, in one observed grade 2 science class, the students did not fully exercise their critical thinking skills. Although the learning target, to explore structures and investigate what methods of building make the tallest and strongest structures, is an appropriately rigorous task, lack of clear instructions, modeling and checks for understanding left students unsuccessful. Their attempts to create a tower structure using three feet of uncooked spaghetti, marshmallows, and masking tape were unproductive. No group was able to erect a tower and none of the students questioned were able to speak to why they were executing the task or how their work was being assessed.
- Teachers used multiple methods to provide challenging experiences for all learners including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. The use of technology, one-to-one support, small group work with support staff, alternate materials such as graphic organizers and leveled text, visual support with video, pictures, and heterogeneous groupings that provide peer support were all observed across classrooms and content areas. For example, students in a grade 2 writing class conducted peer assessments and provided feedback to all students who listened respectfully in the "circle of trust." All students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, were able to successfully take the next steps needed to improve their documents guided by the advice of their classmates.
- Self- and peer-assessment are school-wide practices that prepare students for the next academic level and allow them to assume ownership of their own learning. All classes observed provided an opportunity for students to meaningfully reflect on their work and the work of their classmates. They then were able to use that information to determine appropriate next steps to improve their work. These skills are vital to successful experiences in high school, college, and future careers.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Teachers use and create ongoing checks for understanding in all classrooms as they visibly circulate actively listen and to discussions and address misconceptions as they arise. Teachers also regularly use common assessments to assess student progress, track results, and make adjustments to curricula and unit plans.

Impact

Teachers and students are provided with actionable and meaningful feedback. This information is used to make instructional decisions so all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, show progress.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers evaluate the progress, effectiveness and impact of the daily close reading sessions and reading workshops by analyzing data from running records, genre tests, reading comprehension conferences, and observations during class and group work. This information is used to plan for mini-lessons, strategy groups, and interventions. Close reading, short responses, and monthly extended responses further inform planning. Small group instructional strategies are selected for literacy units based on data results.
- All students from kindergarten through grade 5 take common assessments and are evaluated using a 10-month assessment calendar that includes beginning of the year, middle of the year and end of the year assessment in English Language Arts and math. Literacy assessments administered at the school level are evaluated by comparison to the baseline assessments scores at the middle and the end of the school year. The *ReadyGEN* unit programs and New York State practice tests are utilized in grades 3-5. The *Fountas and Pinnell* reading assessment system is used schoolwide to determine kindergarten through grade 5 students' progress on their independent reading levels. *GO Math!* common assessments are administered to all students to determine progress and needed areas of support.
- The data resulting from multiple common assessments are evaluated by teachers and used to make and adjust curricula and lesson plans. For example, a beginning of the year assessment determined that while 89% of the incoming grade 5 class was demonstrating mastery in using patterns to find a product and multiplying a fraction by a whole number, only one percent showed mastery in finding a common denominator or solving comparison problems involving multiplication. This data was used to adjust the pacing in grade 5 math to meet the needs of the students. The mid-year assessment taken after the adjustment showed an increase to 50% mastery in the targeted skills.
- Teachers give meaningful feedback to students, including next steps for growth and a student self-reflection. During the student meeting, the students were able to articulate their learning goals and what they needed to do to improve. For example, one student said she needed to elaborate and provide more evidence to support her claims when responding to a persuasive writing prompt.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and offer training reflecting the school's beliefs in alignment with the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* for staff members. School leaders and faculty also communicate a unified set of high expectations, in addition to effective feedback and guidance, for all students.

Impact

Teachers' awareness and training result in a culture of mutual accountability for staff members. The school's communications to students result in student progress toward independence and ownership of their learning, ensuring that college and career readiness skills are developed.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal communicates high expectations of teaching and professionalism through the school website *PS 96 Q Connect*, which houses pertinent instructional expectations and practices. In addition, the principal publishes the *PS 96Q Weekly Newsletter* and *Today at 96*, which focus on lesson design, assessment, questioning techniques, and multiple entry points to improve academic achievement for all students irrespective of subgroup identification. Teaching instructional memorandums are provided to staff to offer guidance in key instructional area, such as the analysis and effective use of data to drive instruction. *Depth of Knowledge* level questioning techniques, assessment, and guiding questions for effective lesson planning are shared with the staff.
- "Accountability is Everybody's Responsibility" is a weekly column in *The PS 96 Weekly Newsletter*. The principal speaks to the mutual responsibility of collecting and assessing students' summer assignments. She states, "You are to assess their work and use this data as additional information for your instructional planning." A request for the completed list of assessed students assures accountability by the receiving teacher for assignments given the previous summer. Other topics include the expectation of mutual accountability around assessment, inquiry team collaborations, and parent engagement.
- High expectations for learning and ownership of one's educational experience are continuously communicated all students. Students are currently in training to lead their first annual student-led conferences where they are responsible for the self-assessment of their portfolios and determine the next steps needed to improve their learning, using a self-evaluation checklist. While teachers will guide the student through the process, the students will lead the conference and have the responsibility of conveying information to the parents. Students will participate in mock sessions in class using graded work and provide evidence from various assignments noting mastery and areas in need of improvement.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Distributive leadership structures are also in place providing teachers with a voice in key decisions that affect learning across the school.

Impact

As a result of these collaborations the instructional capacity of teachers has increased and students have also benefited from decisions made by teachers in a leadership capacity.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher inquiry team meetings are held weekly using a vertical and horizontal format, which has fostered a positive culture of learning and collaboration. The teams have implemented a process of analyzing student work samples, identifying trends, and determining next steps. Teacher share best practices, assist each other with remediating weakness and ensuring coherence across the grades.
- Teams are responsible for monitoring the implementation of school goals, the Common Inquiry teams use *Universal Design for Learning* (UDL) practices and Webb's *Depth of Knowledge* to align and inform their planning of instruction so that it is accessible to all students irrespective of subgroup identification.
- Distributive leadership structures are embedded in the school to facilitate teacher leadership. For example, the professional development team developed the professional development plan and a model of professional learning time where teachers conduct professional learning sessions on Mondays. Teachers were again required to assume a leadership role due to an increase in the student-teacher ratio in the grade 5 classes this school year. Teacher leaders were empowered to make the decision and decided to decrease the ratio and supervise the program changes to accommodate the adjustments.