



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

PS/IS 116 William C. Hughley

Elementary-Middle School Q116

**107-25 Wren Place
Queens
NY 11433**

Principal: Debra Farrow

**Date of review: May 26, 2016
Lead Reviewer: AJ Hepworth**

The School Context

PS/IS 116 William C. Hughley is an elementary-middle school with 763 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 5% Asian, 60% Black, 32% Hispanic, and 2% White students. The student body includes 11% English Language Learners and 19% students with disabilities. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 90.5%.

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	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	Additional Findings	Proficient
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:

Proficient

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, integrate the instructional shifts, and make purposeful decisions regarding the curricula being implemented. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

The curricula were designed to build coherence and promote college and career readiness. All curricula provide cognitively engaging tasks for all students including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- Curriculum analysis reports are conducted across grades and content areas by teams of teachers. Resources are evaluated and assessed for how they will impact learning. For example, *the ReadyGen* program, aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards is used in kindergarten. It was analyzed for gaps in instruction to ensure that the particular needs of the students would be met. Furthermore, it was also identified to be used in grade 1 as a supplemental program for literacy, although, additional resources would have to be used for the phonics component. In grade 6, several resources were identified, specifically for the enrichment workbook that assists teachers with test preparation. The resources were also determined to be effective in cognitively engaging all students, including English Language Learners (ELL's) and students with disabilities. Similar rationale and analysis of curricula resources for use and usefulness was conducted in all grades.
- According to school community leaders who are involved in the development of the School Self-Evaluation Form, Common Core Learning Standards are integrated into curriculum maps, unit plans, and daily lesson plans "to ensure that higher-order thinking skills and rigor are infused." A review of daily lesson plans evidence the inclusion of questions that push students' thinking. For example, a grade 5 math lesson includes higher-order questions such as, "What does a bar graph help us identify?" and "Are other types of graphs relevant for this assignment?"
- Lesson plans include differentiated tasks to meet the needs of the various groups of students. A grade 4 lesson plan in English Language Arts (ELA) infused an anchor text on earthquakes and included four groups of tiered activities where some students either complete a sequence of events, identify traits and draw inferences, record their findings, or discuss and chart Elements of Greek Mythology. Another lesson plan, designed for kindergarten, suggests students will rotate between centers which provide opportunities to use technology, iPad phonics games, sight word identification, token and chart preferred activities, and small group instruction with the subject teacher.
- Curricula across grades and content areas include a purposeful emphasis on academic vocabulary. All curriculum documents, including lesson plans, identify key vocabulary necessary for improved comprehension and college and career readiness skills related to the lesson.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. Additionally, teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Actionable feedback is provided to students and teachers regarding student achievement and assessment results are used by teachers to make effective adjustments to meet students' learning needs. However, the feedback does not, as yet, provide students clear understanding of next steps systemically that would lead to student mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- Structures are in place for teachers to collect information from both formative and summative assessments to guide instruction and assist students towards improvement in most content areas. However, the feedback is not always meaningful for the student to provide them clear understanding of their next steps. For example, tracking forms are used by some teachers to determine if students have met grade specific standards. In math, tracking forms identify grade appropriate, end-of-year expectations, including the outcomes if the student did not meet them in the required time frame. The data is further used at the end of the school year to calculate whether the student has met the modified promotional criteria. Similar tracking structures exist using Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA) results for each student through three benchmark assessments.
- Editing checklists, peer-reflection and self-reflection forms are used in a variety of content areas across grades. For example, an editing checklist for self- and peer-editing, requires students to place a check mark after completing each step in their writing process related to items such as punctuation, capital letters, grammar, and spelling. Once complete, the students share their assignment and checklist with a peer who completes the checklist as well, and adds additional comments and suggestions. However, a review of several completed editing checklists used by students included checkmarks, but lacked additional comments and suggestions.
- Students shared that their teachers always tell them what they did well and what they needed to improve. However, a review of some students' work products revealed they were not always able to articulate the next steps they needed to reach mastery. Additionally, in a few cases, students stated that the confusion stemmed from receiving the rubric for the assignment after it was submitted. Although, students did agree their teachers explained what was necessary to include on the task, students preferred when teachers provided the rubric at the start of the project, so they were aware of their learning steps in "advance." Most students did have feedback in the form of next steps on the rubric or on attached sticky-notes with their graded work products.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Additionally, teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula for all students.

Impact

The Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and instructional shifts are used to inform teachers how students learn best, resulting in students being engaged in appropriately challenging tasks. All students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in their work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Throughout all classes, students were engaged in practices associated with the instructional focus. Specifically, students were observed working in groups being assigned differentiated tasks and attempting high-levels of discussion. In a math lesson a targeted group of students were challenged with identifying items from a restaurant menu that would make for a healthy choice and permit them to apply this knowledge to their daily nutrition. During a science lesson, students were grouped to identify characteristics of a specific animal; while in a math lesson, students were provided their own candies to sort and graph, and asked questions of one another based on their sorting.
- Differentiation was observed in most classes to support student's ability to be more engaged at their level of learning. For example, during a math lesson where students were directed to demonstrate fractions of a whole number using manipulatives, the teacher further challenged some students with additional questions relating the fractions to money. Although the task was not written out on the activity sheet, it permitted the students to further demonstrate their thinking. In another math class, students working on solving the volume of complex shapes were able to calculate their findings using different techniques and model their process for their peers. Similar structures for differentiated tasks were observed in other classes across grades. Teachers shared they "use multiple entry points for all [their] learners by differentiating tasks...we get an understanding of what they can do and that drives the instruction."
- Academic vocabulary is infused into instruction and discussions, specifically when teachers question student's conceptual understanding. For example, one teacher asked her students "What is a natural phenomenon?" Several students shared their understanding with the class, including referring to it as "an occurrence." In a kindergarten class when a student mispronounced his site word, the teacher had members in his group, each sound out a letter in the word, allowing their classmate to understand the full word. When one girl in a math class was explaining her approach she used to solving the volume of an object, she was asked to correct her choice of descriptive language. Throughout most math classes students were required to explain their answers using content-based terms such as, histogram, or x-axis and y-axis when discussing a graph.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide appropriate training. Expectations are connected to a path to college and career readiness and offer ongoing feedback to students.

Impact

A system of accountability for high expectations is in place and communications help families understand student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Expectations regarding assessment, school beliefs, college and career readiness, and approaches to understanding data are communicated to all teachers. The Source, a weekly publication from the principal, provides ongoing information as to daily happenings and expectations. The staff feel The Source keeps them informed and to understand the focus for the week. More specifically, it offers advice on using data to drive instruction and address the needs of the students. Several recent publications included college and career readiness suggestions, including, a project where students select a college and having the students complete a bulletin board containing information such as, where the college is located with a focus on prominent alumni who attended the school. Additional communications are provided to teachers on such topics as the role of a teacher, definition of good teaching practices and what constitutes proof of learning by students. One example provided to the teachers for them to consider as evidence for learning centered on the idea of students being able to articulate and show their own academic growth.
- Each grade, including kindergarten, is assigned a specific college or university to research and develop a presentation for their class. For example, grade 1 researched New York University, grade 4 researched Stony Brook, and grade 6 Hunter College. A monthly activities calendar is published explaining the college readiness focus for each month. For example, one month students researched the requirements an applicant needed to apply for a scholarship. Websites are provided to students based on their career interests, favorite subjects, race, ethnicity, gender, and special ability as well.
- Academic achievement is communicated to students through a numerical standards based system and a grade point average conversion to a Level 1 through 4. Non-academic factors, such as behavior and individual student characteristics, are reported separately. The school wide grading policy is discussed with the students and expectations are made uniform for all students in grades sixth through eight. Students reported that there is a framework for grading and it is “woven into the classroom” like they do in college.

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 the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Additionally, distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Inquiry practices result in strengthened instructional capacity of teachers. Distributive leadership structures support teachers to have built leadership capacity and engage in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers regularly meet to discuss and analyze student work samples to help inform them of student progress and to strengthen their own teaching practices. At an inquiry meeting, the teachers used established protocols that they had chosen based on various protocols they reviewed. During the meeting, three student work samples were studied, including, two high performing samples and one low performing sample. Teachers reflected on several implications for teaching. Suggestions for implementation included, pairing students with a buddy, making the boxes for students to write in smaller, and using a white board or magnetic letters for selected students to help them with their writing. As part of their work together, teachers share and recommend research-based literature for the team to read, often prior to their next meeting. *Resources to Help Kids Learn About the Alphabet*, was an article that was recently read and discussed by the kindergarten team.
- The distributive leadership philosophy is fostered by the administration and is evidenced when teachers conduct their own professional development sessions. One such workshop designed for parents centered on providing parents hands-on projects to complete with their child and reinforce the skills they learn in school. Parents shared that the teacher led workshops help their children stay focused since the parents better understand how to help support good study habits in the home. Teachers, engage in intervisitations where they provide each other with feedback and practical next steps to help improve their practice. Teachers shared they “are given opportunities to self-evaluate on their pedagogy...and develop next steps.”
- Teachers believe that collaborating and engaging in inquiry has improved their teaching practices in a variety of ways. For example, one kindergarten teacher shared she struggled with consistently answering student’s questions. She felt they were doing a good job but a colleague suggested they could do better if they were more actively engaged in the lesson and not just following along. The teacher implemented the appropriate changes and learned that her students could do much more than she had believed and appreciated the feedback provided by her colleagues.