



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 134 Hollis

Elementary School Q134

**203-02 109 Avenue
Queens
NY 11412**

Principal: Robert Chambers

**Date of review: April 21, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Terrell**

The School Context

P.S. 134 Hollis is an elementary school with 444 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 2% Asian, 86% Black, 9% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 9% English Language Learners and 19% 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 91.9%.

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	Additional Findings	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	Focus	Developing
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	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	Developing
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	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

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

Teacher teams collaborate to assess students' work to promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Standards.

Impact

The inquiry process typically results in improved teacher practice and progress towards goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers participate in grade level teams to engage in the process of looking at students' work and designing strategies to support academic growth. Specifically, the administration requires all teachers to use the Collaborative Analysis of Student Learning (CASL) protocol to collaborate on identifying the strengths and needs of students' writing. During the CASL process, teachers review student writing samples and measure them against a rubric to assess strengths and needs. They then collaborate on instructional strategies to implement in the classroom to support identified areas of need. For example, teachers engage in a norming protocol to identify students' work at three distinct areas and design strategies at the low, medium and high end of writing proficiency. Strategies for students at the low end require more organization to show the beginning, middle and end in the writing piece. Graphic organizers are used to support students in the medium range in adding more details. Students at the high level are provided with exemplars to guide their use of transition words, in order to have more fluency in the flow of the writing piece. Teachers indicate that they engage in inter-visitations of their colleagues, which is improving their instructional capacity.
- Teachers observed in a grade 3 Inquiry Team began the process of reviewing students' opinion writing pieces. The writing task required the students to compare two texts and write an opinion around the impact of bottled water on the planet. The teachers used the English Language Scoring Guide to norm students writing pieces. After selecting low, medium and high writing pieces, the team then engaged in a discussion around what strategies to use to support each group. The teachers agreed that they would have students restate the question to start their first paragraph with a focus on the main idea. They all used the O.R.E.O writing strategy in which the students must state their opinion, give a reason for the opinion, provide examples to support the opinion and restate the opinion in the conclusion, in order to support students in improving their writing. The teachers shared writing examples from the beginning of the school year with current samples, which reflected growth in their students' writing.
- The principal shared that the grade 1 team has worked on a video that they are sharing with the staff during the extended day on Mondays. Notes from the team indicate the process they use to analyze students' work. Each teacher articulates an "I See" statement in reference to strengths and needs in the student's writing. Teachers engage in a discussion, reflect on the learning, their goals and which instructional strategy to implement; such as self-checklists, Anchor charts and model writing pieces that have improved writing.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula for all students to demonstrate higher order thinking. Students do not consistently participate in challenging discussions.

Impact

Student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of high thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal shared that teachers engage students in “relay questioning,” in which a question or problem is circulated around the classroom to various students to provide them opportunities to engage in critical thinking. In one classroom, the teacher led a discussion around using primary sources to support an opinion on Women’s Rights. The students were asked to turn and talk about what a primary source is and what they learned from it. The students were able to articulate what a primary source is and how it highlighted women’s rights. While students participated, their response was to the classroom teacher and there was no evidence of relay questioning.
- In a grade 3 classroom, the teacher demonstrated how to solve a division problem on the interactive white board. Following the modeling, the students were instructed to write and solve two division problems at their desks. One student wrote, “Sandra will bake 45 cookies. Now Sandra will give 9 cookies equally to each friend. How many friends will she give it to?” While the teachers circulated among the students, the students did not engage in a discussion of the strategies they used to solve the problems they wrote.
- In an integrated collaborative teaching (ICT) class, all of the students had a small picture with a group of fish. The students were to compare and contrast a food web and a food chain. The teacher distributed cards with the names of fish written on them to several students and asked the students with the cards to stand up. The teacher then asked the remaining students to look at the fish chart and tell which fish other fish consumed. As they called out answers, the teacher used a roll of string to connect the students who were standing with the cards. The students in their seats had difficulty using the fish chart to name which fish were consumed by others. The teacher attempted to connect the students standing with the cards in a straight line by telling them to hold on to the string, as students called out the names of fish. However, his effort to illustrate a food chain using the string was not successful, as the line weaved in and out. In addition, there were no differentiated activities provided for the students to compare and contrast, or student discussions.
- In a grade 5 class, the students sat at their desks completing the same graphic organizer to compare and contrast events in a text. When a student was asked to explain what she was learning, she stated that she was writing the problem and solution as she recorded the events and outcomes on her graphic organizer. The task in the textbook required the students to compare and contrast events in the beginning, middle and end of the text. Students shared an event and outcome from the organizer with the class, however, there was no discussion of how it was the same or different in comparison to other events.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders selected a curriculum that is aligned to the Common Core Standards and integrates the instructional shifts. Teachers make revisions to the curriculum based on data and student work samples.

Impact

The curriculum promotes college and career readiness skills across all grades. Tasks are planned and refined using student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal states that the school's focus is on improving students' writing skills, therefore a decision was made to select the Reading Wonders literacy program, as the school believes it provides more emphasis on writing and grammar skills. The program is aligned to the Common Core and supports the instructional shifts with informational text, opportunities to engage in close reading and text-based responses. *GOMath!* is being implemented across the school as it is also aligned to the Common Core and integrates the instructional shifts with an emphasis on problem solving skills and building math fluency and coherence across the grades. Science and social studies are provided through programs aligned to the State standards.
- In addition to the literacy and math programs, the principal states that he is very proud of the Art program within the school, which exposes students to the Blueprint for the Arts curriculum. A special grant was written by the Art teacher, from which the school has received additional art supplies, such as personal sketchbooks, in which students maintain their individual artwork and laptop computers. There is a focus on building academic vocabulary within the Art curriculum. For example, displayed on bulletin boards in the Art room were the words, sculpture, still-life, realism, technique and perspective. The curriculum exposes students to various art mediums and artists. During an art activity, students used a variety of watercolors to capture different birds in their drawings from a collection by James Audubon displayed on the interactive white board. The teacher stated that they would complete the activity with a writing task.
- Teachers review student data and work samples to make adjustments to the curricula. They use the Understanding by Design (UDL) template, which provides multiple means of learning a skill, to plan and revise the curriculum and design student tasks. A review of a revised grade 3 unit template focused on providing students with support on using text based evidence to answer questions. The tasks required the students to use specific words to help locate information in a text, such as who, what, when, where, why and how. A grade 2 unit planning template, focused on developing an understanding of adding within 100 and regrouping in the tens and ones places. Tasks require students to identify the value of numbers based on place value, model 2-digit addition with regrouping and to apply place value concepts when using a break-apart strategy for 2-digit addition.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teachers use rubrics and common assessments aligned to the curriculum to assess students' progress towards goals.

Impact

An analysis of data and student products inform curricular adjustments and tasks to improve achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the school, grade level teams use a variety of assessments to determine students' levels of achievement. At the beginning of the school year, measures of student learning (MOSL) are administered to all students. In addition, teachers use end of unit assessments, *Fountas and Pinnell* (F&P) reading levels, chapter tests, as well as New York State summative assessments in ELA and math. Writing rubrics are used to measure students' growth and provide specific feedback. For example, while writing an essay on "Basketball is Life" the teacher reminded the student to pay attention to his punctuations and indentation. A rubric attached to the writing assessed the student's performance in organization, details, commentary, conclusion, conventions for grammar and, conventions for spelling and punctuation. The feedback reflected that the student was meeting grade level proficiency.
- Throughout the year benchmark assessments are administered to inform curricular planning and task design across the curricula. Across grades, teachers use common writing rubrics, aligned to the Common Core Standard to assess students' writing proficiency. For example, in grade 3 all teachers use the ELA scoring rubric as guidance on grading writing on comparing two texts. Teams examine student work and plan revision to the curricula. In an effort to improve students' writing, teachers are inserting the use of graphic organizers in the curricula to focus students on restating a question, answering the question, inserting "for example" and tie it up, (R.A.F.T) as a strategy to move students to grade level writing goals. A review of the *Fountas and Pinnell* reading levels from October 2015 to March 2016 indicates that students are improving in their reading levels.
- Students shared that they all have goals and use rubrics to determine when they have met their goals. One student stated that she has to add more details to her writing. Another student shared his best work and stated that the teacher complimented him for having a lot of details in his friendly letter. Teachers shared that they use common rubrics so that they all have the same expectations for students' work at different levels. A second grade teacher shared that students are having difficulty with phonemic awareness on the grade. Consequently, teachers are using *Foundations*, a program designed to help students "tap out" sounds in words, and also use flash cards. These strategies are supporting academic improvements with identified students.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations to the staff aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. The administration and staff are developing high expectations for families aligned to college and career readiness skills.

Impact

The administration lacks ongoing systems to hold the staff accountable for high expectations. Families are not consistently provided feedback on their children's progress toward meeting high expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal provided the staff with a list of professional and instructional “non-negotiables” at the beginning of the school year. In addition, the teachers were provided with a chart that highlights “Steps to Providing Coherent Instruction,” which is aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. The chart lists five areas to focus teachers on effective instruction, such as “clearly identify a goal/objective for the activity, provide instruction that will enable the students to achieve the goal, provide an opportunity for students to practice and show mastery, summarize the activity and reflect on the outcome to strategize/plan for the next lesson.” While these documents were presented to the staff, there was no system in place to support the staff and monitor the implementation of the items on the chart. The principal publishes a weekly staff newsletter, in one of the newsletters, teachers are asked to answer questions as they self-reflect on the five steps on providing coherent instruction. The questions were framed in “yes”, “no” format, such as, “Do you use the guide when planning?”, or “Are you planning according to your own process?”
- The administration shared that the school’s instructional focus is to “improve writing skills across all grades and subjects.” Although teams are focused on improving students writing, there is no evidence of professional development presented to support this school wide initiative. In April 2016, teachers were provided with a link to the Department of Education’s (DOE) *WeTeachNYC*, to select and view a video on their individual learning track. The teachers completed a feedback survey, however there was no evidence around how the administration uses the feedback to support identified trends across the school for teachers. In November 2015, teachers completed a jigsaw activity during the extended day Monday professional development, on using Understanding by Design (UBD), as they plan their lessons. There was no evidence on how this activity was used to support teacher development in the classroom.
- Parents state that they did not know that the extended day on Tuesdays was an opportunity for parents to come to the school to meet with teachers to discuss their child’s progress or get information on strategies they can use at home to support their children in being prepared with skills for college and careers. One parent shared that the monthly newsletter that is sent home does not indicate that teachers are available during the extended day on Tuesday to support families in strategies or information that they may use to help their children at home. Teachers indicated that the school sends home an interim progress report as needed, to inform parents of their child’s academic progress. Some parents indicated that they do not feel their children’s success is a priority with some staff.