



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

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2015-2016**

**P.S. 146 Howard Beach**

**K-8 School Q146**

**98-01 159 Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11414**

**Principal: Mary Keegan**

**Date of review: May 18, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: AJ Hepworth**

## The School Context

P.S. 146 Howard Beach is a K-8 school with 702 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 3% Asian, 2% Black, 35% Hispanic, and 60% White students. The student body includes 2% English Language Learners and 20% students with disabilities. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. 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>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>Additional Findings</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>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

<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 are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity and promoted the implementations of the Common Core Learning Standards. Additionally, distributed leadership structures are embedded.

### Impact

Inquiry collaborations have resulted in school-wide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. Additionally, effective teacher leadership has led to teachers playing an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school

### Supporting Evidence

- All elementary and middle school teachers engage in weekly structured team meetings by grade level. Protocols are well established and include a review of the prior agenda and determining next steps. An observation of an inquiry team meeting demonstrated teachers discussing, as a part of their protocol, “What do students do successfully?”, “What does the student still need to learn?”, and “Implications for teacher planning and preparation.” Staff reflected strategically on student work samples that included the lowest third of achieving students, specifically, those identified as ELLs and students with disabilities. Action plans were developed to target those specific subgroups, including next steps for future instruction. For example, teachers stated they will make connections with their instruction of editing to “stop and swap” and model the use of descriptive words and peer editing.
- Data is collected on every student through benchmark assessments and shared during inquiry meetings for purposeful and strategic tracking of their reading and math growth. A review of extensive data charts on all students, including those highlighted as the bottom third, show significant growth in math achievement and in *Fountas & Pinnell* reading levels. Staff explained that the clear and significant growth is attributed to their structured collaborations and inquiry practices that support interventions, promote literacy, and have improved their differentiation strategies. Specifically, teachers stated, “we have seen growth for kids...some were lagging behind and with interventions, we have brought them on level.” A review of data charts confirms the significant growth on on-level achievement of most students.
- Teachers play an integral role in conducting Monday afternoon professional development sessions. A team of teachers collaborates on a Professional Learning Community (PLC) to identify and select appropriate professional development so that it supports teachers and their instructional growth. An inventory survey was administered at the beginning of the year among staff to identify areas of desired growth including differentiation and the use of technology in class for assessment and communication. Through the involvement of staff on the professional learning community and those that attend the professional development sessions, staff is integral in decisions that affect student learning and policy implementation such as systemic instructional techniques and uniform lesson plan elements.

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

3.4 High  
Expectations

Rating:

Proficient

### Findings

School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness and offer ongoing feedback. Teacher teams and staff have also established a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students.

### Impact

Families understand their child's progress toward the school's expectations and students receive ongoing and detailed feedback and guidance supports that prepare them for the next level, however the information is not communicated in a manner that successfully partners the families or student to own their educational experience and preparation for their continued education.

### Supporting Evidence

- Technology and online-based resources are used by some teachers to communicate expectations and feedback to students and their families regarding their achievement. For example, *Class Dojo* and *Engrade* are online tools used to communicate daily with parents by some teachers to share student progress live with in-class assessment data and student work performance. A review of several messages between teachers and families highlights guidance regarding next steps for students and awareness of support structures for certain students, such as information related to a child's Individualized Evaluation Program (IEP). Additionally, paper letters are mailed or backpacked home with students regarding expectations for a variety of student opportunities such as criteria for successful National Honors Society membership, school-wide grading policies, and online subscription services intended to provide homework help and tutorials with math related content. Many of these structures and services are in place, however they are not systemically integrated in a mutually accountable manner so that a unified set of expectations is communicated across all grade levels for all students.
- School leaders and staff collaborate to offer workshops and opportunities for parents to support their children's learning. Workshops designed to facilitate parents' knowledge of Common Core Learning Standards math concepts include family friendly and fun stations in kindergarten. In grade 2, workshops address how families can assist their child in utilizing online tools and resources outside of the school day, better understand a typical period of classroom instruction, and assist with homework and assessments. Additionally, parents are invited weekly to attend parent engagement Tuesdays, where they can speak to their child's teacher regarding their progress.
- Students shared how they felt prepared for the next level of their education and learning through efforts of their teachers and systems or structures the school leaders have created for students. For example, in grade 8 English Language Arts (ELA), students are assigned to read three articles related to college admissions and write about them, including what college they would like to attend. Structures in the other grades exist, however they are not systemically communicated in a unified manner for all students.

## Additional Findings

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

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts purposefully. Additionally, curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

### Impact

Curriculum decisions have promoted coherence and college and career readiness for all students, such that a diversity of learners have access to the curricula and tasks are cognitively engaging.

### Supporting Evidence

- Curriculum maps are detailed and accessible for teachers on Google Docs to collaborate and modify across all grades and content areas. Teachers have developed the curriculum maps to reflect instruction supporting the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts so students are prepared for college and career. For example, a grade 1 unit plan in ELA includes the big idea of connecting relationships so readers (students) will understand that they improve their comprehension by identifying and interpreting the story of a text. A grade 7 science curriculum map identifies the New York State science standards along with the Common Core Learning Standards and all relevant instructional shifts students will understand with each unit. Additionally, all lesson plan documents list the appropriate standard and practice students will be able to understand.
- Data analysis of student assessment results, inquiry meeting discussions regarding gaps in the current program, and teacher noticing's led staff to adopt new curriculum for math in grades 6-8. The newly adopted curriculum better meets students' needs with tiered interventions in both traditional reteach format and online resources. It also is more parent-friendly and is continuous with the program in kindergarten through grade 5. Staff reports that a growth of 13% in math concepts and understanding has already been observed from the beginning of the year assessment to the middle of the year assessment.
- Lesson plans reflect a focus on the instructional shifts and writing in the content area across grades and subjects. An awareness that improvement with short and extended response questions was necessary for college and career readiness led staff to adopt 6+1 Traits of Writing and Writing is Thinking with Strategic Inquiry (WITsi) strategies. The impact of these curricular changes was an average 30% increase in Level 3s for all six traits in students from kindergarten through grade 5. The WITsi strategies are aligned with the instructional shifts across all grade 6-8 content areas and use high-leverage writing strategies to close the achievement gap. Goals set at the beginning of the year for growth and implementation have been met.
- School leadership places an emphasis on teachers being cognizant of planning and revising curriculum to ensure engagement for all such that "modifications to resources in the classroom vary so their [students'] journey might be different, but their end goal is the same."

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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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 with their student work products and discussions.

### Impact

The Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and instructional shifts support instruction and are reflected in high levels of student thinking and participation in student work products and discussions.

### Supporting Evidence

- A belief held by staff and building leaders is for classroom instruction to be student-centered and include grouping, which supports rich discussion. Throughout classroom visits, students were observed seated purposefully in groups to foster conversation. For example, in a grade 8 math class students worked on projects aimed at improving the concept they had the most difficulty with. In groups, students researched and collaborated on collecting ten facts to include in their project. They shared their findings amongst themselves, although some may have decided to use different findings. In a grade 1 ELA class, students worked at centers with partners to complete various tasks, such as comprehension, matching, writing, and reading. When working at their station, students questioned each other and were able to guide themselves independent of the teacher.
- Opportunities for students to have high levels of student thinking and participation during instruction were evident through structures designed in the lesson plans. A Socratic seminar led by students in a social studies Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class demonstrated students' ability to engage one another in agreement and disagreement. Their findings were based on a reading and citing of textual evidence about "How did the California Gold Rush display or not display American spirit?" Another example of students engaged in rich dialogue was in a grade 5 ELA class where students were given a scenario and instructed to collaboratively develop a dialogue to enhance the story. Students explained that the added dialogue will be beneficial for the story and help them "in the future because it will make the story more interesting." Additionally, other students felt "it is a better story with more details, because otherwise it would be just a plain summary and no emotion," "and with dialogue, it adds expression."
- Teaching practices reflect lesson plan design and a focus on questioning technique. Teachers support instruction with questions they developed and student-to-student questions. For example, during a grade 3 ELA ICT class, one of the teachers walked around to various groups asking students if they knew "Who the character is talking too?" and "Why is she saying that?" Students in a grade 8 science class shared out their difficulty with various tasks they just completed in preparation for the Intermediate Level Science assessment. Several students responded to their peers' statements with further questions, and suggestions for improvement regarding the procedural steps.

<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 curricula. 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. Teachers also use their assessment practices to make effective adjustments to meet the needs of their individual students.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Assessments in core content areas are used to provide feedback to teachers regarding their students' achievement. The results are also used to group students strategically and guide next steps. In kindergarten, assessment results presented on spreadsheets revealed many students were struggling with phonemic awareness. As a result, adjustments were made that showed an improvement of students from 73% being on or above grade level to 82% being on or above grade level. Additionally, classes using WITsi strategies and the aligned grade level rubric showed increased sentence skill development from one benchmark assessment to the next over a six to eight week period.
- Students receive feedback through a variety of methods including; self- and peer-assessment/reflection, exit slips, "fist-to-five," conferences, Socratic seminar checklists, and rubrics. For example, during Socratic seminars, partners use a checklist of ten items each time their partner does one of the following criteria, such as; speaks in discussion, asks a new or follow-up question, or interrupts another speaker. Once completed, students discuss and record what they thought "Was the most important thing the partner said?" and "What would you like to have added in the discussion?" Interviewed students were all able to reference the use of rubrics in their classes, including how they review them prior to engaging in the assignment. Several students referenced an understanding of how they could improve their work using the teacher feedback and their rubric. For example, one girl said her "teacher always puts the rubric on the wall and through conversations with my partner and sharing our papers, we improve our writing."
- Self-reflection sheets are used by students to reflect on how well they did with their work. Specifically, reflection sheets ask students to write something they did well on and explain how they did it and something they need to improve on and what they will do to improve. Additionally, students write something the teacher can do to help students with their writing or understanding.
- Data dive tally analysis sheets are used by teachers to assist in identification of next steps. For each student, tally sheets are maintained and used to help make adjustments to curriculum maps and identify professional learning, leading to cohesion of instruction across the grades.