



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

M.S. 158 Marie Curie

Middle School Q158

**46-35 Oceania Street
Queens
NY 11361**

Principal: Marie Nappi

**Date of review: March 1, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince**

The School Context

M.S. 158 Marie Curie is a middle school with 1,075 students from grade 6 through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 61% Asian, 5% Black, 14% Hispanic, and 20% White students. The student body includes 7% English Language Learners and 13% 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 96.9%.

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	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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Focus	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across all classrooms, teaching practices reflect a coherent set of beliefs informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points and high quality supports and extensions into the curricula for all students.

Impact

The challenging tasks and supports that are provided to all learners enable students to demonstrate higher order thinking in their work.

Supporting Evidence

- Students in all grades demonstrate competency in literacy by completing tasks focusing on both fiction and non-fiction reading, writing, speaking and listening assignments aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards in the units of study as shown through interim assessment data. The school administration and faculty review student work products to inform instruction and develop supports and extension for all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. In a grade 7 math class with English Language Learners, the students were taking different road trips, measuring distances in miles. All students were solving differentiated problems involving scale drawings, actual lengths and areas and looking at maps to plot routes from NYC to their chosen site. Teachers helped identify various solutions for the ELL students and planned questions to check on and deepen students understanding of the instructional task.
- Across all classes students were engaged in text-based discussions or solving multi-step math problems. In many classes there were differentiated supports and multiple entry points that actively engaged all learners as well as guided small group work with peer-to-peer discussions. In an eighth grade math class, the teacher was circulating while the students were working in pairs discussing operations with polynomials and factors. The “Math Seven” was posted to support students, this included 1. Read the problem and circle important numbers, 2. Underline the question, 3. Determine what is important only use numbers you need, etc. This list is a scaffolding reminder of what goes into solving a math problem using the correct process and procedures.
- In all classrooms visited, students participated in class discussions by responding to both teacher and student generated questions. Students not only answered questions, but asked questions and extended their own thinking and that of their peers by providing examples from the text or discussions to support their contributions. Teachers asked open-ended questions to push students thinking, facilitated peer-to-peer responses, giving students an opportunity to deepen their thinking. In a grade 7 ELA class, students were in heterogeneous groups drawing conclusions from news articles and analyzing the author’s message. Vocabulary words were highlighted for the ELL population in the class, and the articles were differentiated based on reading levels. Embedded into all lessons were multiple entry points and exit slips. In a grade 6 self-contained class with students with disabilities, students were asked to identify different kinds of ideas from the ancient Indians that we still use today. Students shared out explanations using reason and evidence based on a real life situations or prior knowledge.

Area of Focus

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based structured professional collaborations. Leadership structures provide a means for teachers to have input on key decisions about curricula and practice.

Impact

Informed by the implementation of the Common Core and the instructional shifts, the work of teacher teams and distributed leadership, has resulted in school-wide instructional coherence improved pedagogy, and improved student learning outcomes. The school is working to program more embedded time into the schedule for teams to meet.

Supporting Evidence

- The impact of teacher teamwork is evidenced in trends in observations showing that student work and performance is increasing. Teams work independently without the assistance of the administration and teachers set agendas and determine the strategies to unpack at their meetings. New teachers have a mentor who is there to assist in all areas. A teacher talent coach is also available to meet with new teachers in monthly cycles to give support and non-evaluative feedback. Teams use data from the NYS assessments and meet to discuss a problem of practice that results from data. Grade level content teams develop tasks/rubrics and common assessments based on the Common Core. Teachers operate as teacher leaders facilitating professional development sessions. More intervisitations and common planning time are upcoming goals as stated during teacher team visits and with the principal.
- Lead teachers meet to plan professional development grounded in research based on *Differentiation in Middle and High School* and created an evaluation form as a professional learning tool to inform new teaching practices and in addition ask for constructive support in professional development. Most teams meet during the professional development time on Mondays and Tuesdays, when time is available. Stated at both team meetings, teachers rarely meet on a formal regular basis to discuss instructional practice other than the Monday/Tuesday time allotted. There are common preps but not all members, either at vertical or horizontal teams meet. Professional learning walks have not been consistently utilized to address problems of practice and areas of specific needs and strengths. Teachers meet at lunch on an informal basis, and both teams visited stated that the meetings during Monday professional development sessions are productive, using summative data to plan differentiated instruction to better meet the needs of their students.
- The grade 6 math team looked at student work around percentiles based on a menu of Mexican food. Students were asked to look at fractions and percentiles. Discussion revolved around re-teaching basic math skills. The teachers discussed engagement and multiple entry points and planned next steps to support students needing more scaffolding. Students at the student meeting stated that they liked real world connections in their assignments

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School Leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core, integrate the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, and promote college and career readiness for all students. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all learners.

Impact

All students are consistently engaged in a coherent and rigorous curriculum. Academic tasks push students to demonstrate their thinking across grades.

Supporting Evidence

- Purposeful lesson planning, and incorporating the instructional shifts and key standards are embedded into all subject curriculum. *Code X* is used and refined to address gaps in the program and meet alignment to the Common Core and instructional shifts. Work Generation is used across content areas to build upon academic vocabulary. Close reading balanced with informational texts and literature and the NEWSELA, non-fiction articles, are used to enhance units of study. There is consistent review of student writing samples to assess for college and career readiness. Websites, such as BrainPOP, Discovery ED, and Scholastic *Storyworks* are used to add multiple entry points into lessons and provide different levels of complexity. The Math department is focusing lessons on understanding concepts rather than how to get an answer. In a 7th grade math lesson observed students were engaged in visiting college by taking a road trip and using maps measuring distances. The learning target was that students could compute actual lengths from a scale drawing and establish proportional relationships. Students were engaged and on task and the work (distances) was differentiated. Students were asked to focus on the problem solving; their peers and the teacher supported struggling learners.
- Content area documents highlight the strategic integration of the instructional shifts. Social studies and science documents evidenced a focus on text and writing from primary sources. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is being introduced as a bridge to practice in designing lessons. Teachers viewed a webinar to see the impact of UDL on student learning. Teachers were asked to redesign a lesson and identify implications for instruction and planning for upcoming units. There are higher order thinking prompts embedded into all curriculum units and teachers stated that they reference their *Depth of Knowledge* questioning wheel and the Hess' *Cognitive Matrix* when planning tasks.
- Lunchtime, early morning and after school tutoring is available and in an effort to promote college and career readiness, students are learning how to use their time efficiently. Through flexible grouping and individualized instruction, tasks are scaffolded so all students can create arguments' using text-based evidence across all subject areas. It was observed that students were able to utilize academic vocabulary to explain thinking during group or partner discussions. The principal has stated that the quality of student writing has improved across all grades. Math teachers have focused on understanding concepts rather than how to get an answer. The use of the four square model is being used to assist students in finding ways to get an answer using different strategies.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The schools assessment practices are well aligned to the curricula and the standards.

Impact

Assessment practices are used to make effective curricula adjustments and are aligned to the Common Core and instructional shifts. Actionable feedback and constant checks for understanding is provided to all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, positively impacting student-learning outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use data from the New York State standardized exams, pre-teaching assessments and classroom assignments to group students. Performance tasks contain rubrics aligned with the schools curricula and are embedded in teaching practice. Rubrics and feedback forms that highlight student strengths and areas of focus are seen across a majority of classrooms. Actionable feedback on student work emphasized strengths and weaknesses and student next steps. Teachers stated that they create ongoing adjustments to embed appropriate assessment into lessons, using their conferencing notes, concept maps, pre-assessments and exit slips to determine and meet the needs of all students.
- Assessment data and item skills analysis provide teachers with information needed to revise curriculum and instruction. The principal stated that revisions on pacing/working of assessment questions and the focus of curriculum concepts have been the result of inquiry findings. In a majority of classrooms students were self-assessing using rubrics and when asked and were familiar with the expectations of the project/task. Teachers monitor for understanding during the lesson and provide focused feedback. Students, as stated in the student meeting, knew what rubrics were and why they were important, “How else will I know how to improve”. Students also stated that they like the post-it method for determining next steps. Peer editing and feedback as well as self-reflection help students take ownership of their learning and was evident in classrooms. As a result of checking for understanding and actionable feedback, students are achieving mastery levels. Quick writes and multiple-choice questions are used as exit tickets for further information regarding subsequent lesson redirection.
- Embedded in each unit of study are multiple opportunities for informal assessments such as exit slips, conferencing notes and peer to peer or self-assessments. Students stated that they are aware of their next learning steps. Student conferences, family communication and the individualized education program process are employed so that each student is known well and support structures are in place for advancing to the next level. In a grade 6 English Language Arts class, students were in pairs discussing their drafts using post-it notes to give warm and cool feedback. Sentence starters were provided when needed and examples of warm and cool sentence ideas were at each table. One student wrote for his peer: “consider adding more citations”. These purposeful prompts are used to make teaching decisions and teachers often decide to reteach the prior assignment so that all students have a clear understanding of the content. This type of assessment develops intellectual ability and skills needed to become critical thinkers who raise questions, assess relevant information and communicate effectively.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school promotes a culture of high expectations for staff, students and families through use of *the Danielson Framework for Teaching*. Administrators and teachers communicate expectations of the school connected to college and career readiness and partner with families to support student progress.

Impact

As a result, there is a culture of mutual accountability for those expectations. All constituents contribute to a culture of learning and support so that all students are on a clear path to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The entire school community has a mutual understanding of what is necessary for students to meet the high expectations across the entire school. Participation of parents in the school provides actions designed to advance educational goals. There is open visitation of families into the classroom, and rubrics aligned to setting goals for moving students toward the next level is embedded into the school structure. Students stated that they self-assess to measure their progress and restate next level goals as it relates to the high expectations of the school. Eighth grade students receive a *Personal College and Scholarship Match Report* to provide information on colleges based on their preferences and what is required to receive acceptance and scholarships.
- School leaders use the *Danielson Framework for Teaching* to provide meaningful feedback to teachers based upon formal and informal observations. There is an inclusive environment in both instructional and organizational decision making that fosters teacher’s growth in reflective practice and development of pedagogical strengths. Consistent updates from teachers provide families information about their child’s growth in meeting benchmarks. Parents stated that they know what their children need to accomplish to be successful and are at this school because of the high achievement status in the neighborhood. As stated by the principal, input from parents has been addressed in the Comprehensive Educational Plan and has informed a more comprehensive focus on subgroups.
- The school has expectations for every student to go on to high school with skills and knowledge leading to success in college or career. The entire school community works collaboratively to showcase student success and plan for success with feedback on progress toward future goals. This is evidenced through expectations of perseverance, engagement, collaboration, commitment, self-regulations, work habits and organizational skills. This message is woven throughout the community and is making an impact on student’s ownership of their education. Student accomplishments are posted when they achieve honor status and certificates are given for high academic grades. Honor Society is emphasized and information is distributed to parents outlining the requirement for honor roll and NJHS service and academic requirements. Students participate in charitable causes such as UNICEF, City Harvest, and a service leadership project at Ronald McDonald House.