



**Department of  
Education**

*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2015-2016**

**J.H.S. 189 Daniel Carter Beard**

**Junior High-Intermediate-Middle School Q189**

**144-80 Barclay Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11355**

**Principal: Cynthia Diaz-Burgos**

**Date of review: November 10, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince**

## The School Context

J.H.S. 189 Daniel Carter Beard is a junior high-intermediate-middle school with 700 students from grade 6 through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 69% Asian, 3% Black, 24% Hispanic, and 3% White students. The student body includes 23% English Language Learners and 15% 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 97.3%.

## 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>Well Developed</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>Focus</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty consistently communicate high expectations connected to college and career readiness, including elements of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, to the entire school community and successfully partner with families to support student progress.

### Impact

As a result, there is a culture of mutual accountability amongst the staff. Parents play an active role in supporting the school and their children to meet goals on a path towards 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 school. Participation of parents in the writing of the Comprehensive Educational Plan provides input that impacts actions and resources designed to advance educational goals. A system of reciprocal feedback, including open visitation of families in the classroom and common rubrics aligned to setting goals for moving students toward the next level, are embedded into the structure of the school. Staff, as well as students, track progress to know when requirements have been met. Students stated that they self-assess to measure their progress and restate next level goals as it relates to high expectations. Parents stated that there is respect for all throughout the school and encouragement in achieving goals and college readiness.
- 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 a high degree of buy-in for all school wide initiatives. Teachers' reflective practice and development of pedagogical strengths are identified, therefore leading to professional development opportunities to support growth of teacher goals and the improvement of instructional practice. Based on agendas, there is focused trainings on the Danielson domains at professional development meetings for staff and families. The Parent Association has an ongoing schedule of workshops speaking to the high expectations of student success, including examining the most recent test scores, understanding the Common Core Learning Standards, and how to build options and opportunities for students who have academic talent but limited access to outside cultural resources. Project BOOST has afforded students and families the ability to enhance learning experiences and increase student engagement through the arts.
- The school expectations are for every student to graduate with skills and knowledge leading to college or career. The school has a *The Leader in Me* grant designed to empower students and parents to take on an active role in cultural activities and community service under the school's social action plan. Consistent updates from teachers provide families with information about their child's growth in meeting benchmarks. Parents stated that they know what their children need to accomplish to be successful and prepared for the real world.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Teachers create common assessments in all subject areas to track student progress and inform curricular and instructional decisions. Refinements in the curriculum do not yet lead to consistent use of targeted interventions and varied scaffolds. Ongoing checks for understanding are not yet consistently used in the vast majority of classrooms to drive instruction.

### Impact

Teachers are assessing student learning for understanding to target interventions, vary scaffolds and make revisions to instructional planning. However, there are missed opportunities in some cases to ascertain consistent and meaningful feedback for the teacher and learner.

### Supporting Evidence

- Gathering data and presenting this information to monitor each student's progress over time is embedded into the school-wide system and provides a system of actionable feedback to further student learning outcomes. There are teacher-created assessments and rubrics by grades, across subject areas, including assessments related to projects such as genre studies and Socratic Seminars in grade 8. Curricula-aligned assessment practices and grading policies provide actionable feedback. A grade 7 English Language Arts (ELA) bulletin board displayed student work with rubrics with actionable feedback such as "What do you think this character thought?" This was not always present in other classroom displays. For example, students plotted points on a graph on math work displayed. Checkmarks were used as feedback, with only some responses stating actionable feedback such as "Can you interpret the scale to represent the exponential function?"
- 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 across grades are mostly aware of their next learning steps. All assessments are aligned with the Common Core and ongoing checks for understanding were often observed across classrooms. Teachers also used turn and talk, think, pair, share and leveled text, reflecting student self-assessment. In grade 6 ELA class the students were reading *Pandora's Box* and identifying common story elements in Greek myths. Students were working in groups, though not all students were able to identify the important characters or story conflict. Students worked together to enter information on a four-square chart. The teacher was observed checking for understanding as a baseline during the lesson, missing an opportunity to support students having a clearer idea of what was required once the project was midway. Some students interviewed stated they meet with their subject teachers on a consistent basis to review their work and to reassess their learning activities and progress.
- Teachers identified the need for reinforcing actionable feedback strategies in instruction across grades by creating a teacher rubric with actionable steps for students. Student awareness of their next learning steps is starting to be fully realized; the ability for self-assessment as it relates to the next level of expectations is somewhat limited as shared in teacher team and student meetings. Teacher teams analyze data to identify students learning needs. Written homework assignments and in class writing assignments are used to gain information about student progress.

## Additional Findings

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

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, 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

Students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities are consistently engaged in a coherent and rigorous curriculum. Academic tasks push students to demonstrate their thinking across grades and content areas.

### Supporting Evidence

- Purposeful lesson planning that incorporates the Common Core and instructional shifts and key standards and that builds coherence was evident across subjects. Planned strategies seen across lesson plans include tiered-academic vocabulary, fluency, multi-step problem solving, argumentative writing and text-based responses. There are weekly curriculum meetings to support academic intervention work. There is consistent review of student writing samples to assess for college and career readiness. With a 90- minute block of literacy, areas of weakness are targeted for increased instruction using supplemental materials such as anthologies, informational text and author studies to assist in specific strategies. As a result, students continue to show gains on the school progress report in ELA and math and the school is closing achievement gaps for all subgroups. There exists a multi-tiered program of ELL classes, including self-contained, intermediate, and advanced.
- Math teachers use a variety of resources including *Math Connects* and supplemental workbooks to prepare students for the NYS Mathematics test. All students have at least eight periods of math a week with an emphasis on problem solving. As discussed at the teacher team meeting, students are trained to focus on a mathematical argument and justify their answers when problem solving. Struggling learners are supported with lunchtime, early am and after school tutoring. Students, in an effort to promote college and career readiness, learn how to use learning time efficiently, supported by a teacher book study of Steven Covey using real world skills.
- Unit plans in all content areas illustrate multiple designs of academic tasks with numerous higher-order skills. In a grade 8 science class, students examined a dead body and had to solve the crime using scientific methods. The lesson contained real life skills, emphasized with a lab practical rubric, post-lab questions and forensic charts. All students stated that they are taught different ways to solve problems and there are ways to help to understand, such as peer mentoring or group assistance. Investigations in science include a rigorous writing requirement across all grades. A Comprehensive Educational Plan goal contains a focus on students who have not met NYC standards in ELA, math, science or social studies. At-risk students, students with disabilities and ELLs, receive extra tutoring supported by the Peer Instructional Coaches, and group sessions with guidance counselors to assist with attendance issues if needed.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

Across many classrooms teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teaching strategies in many classrooms provide scaffolds and multiple entry points into the curricula.

### **Impact**

Shared beliefs around the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* inform pedagogy. Students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The school utilizes a common framework that promotes teacher planning for rigorous instruction. Teachers align curricula with the instructional shifts. In many classes students were engaged in text-based discussions or solving multi-step math problems. Students were sharing explanations using reasoning and evidence. In many classrooms there were differentiated supports for all learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities. In many classes there were multiple entry points that actively engaged learners and guided small group work with peer to peer discussions. In an eighth grade math class, the teacher was facilitating a discussion on transformations to identify congruent figures to push student thinking, and students were using a math rap to create vocabulary definitions. In an Integrated Co-Teaching class, students were working in groups on budgets, each group having a similar scenario of family vacation expenditures. Several varying diagrams with explanations were provided as scaffolding.
- Across classrooms visited, students were engaged in accountable talk and these conversations were helping to deepen the understanding of the content area being taught. In a science forensic lab class, students were working in groups with microscopes and tweezers investigating evidence and determining the answers to questions based on a rubric. The use of scaffolding activities was present in most classrooms allowing all students an opportunity to engage in the lesson. Across classrooms, teachers employed differentiated strategies such as visuals, graphic organizers, work study and intentional grouping to assist the learner.
- The school partners with Urban Advantage to deliver training specifically focused on evidence-based investigations. Teachers have been supported by ongoing professional development to promote a high level of student discourse and infuse lesson planning with Depth of Knowledge questioning. In addition, there is an increased number of teachers attending professional growth opportunities off site and turn-keying internally. Instructional coaches have assisted in strengthening the use of instructional shifts in the classroom.

<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

All teacher teams are engaged in structured inquiry-based professional collaborations that support the goals of the school and strengthen instructional capacity. Embedded distributed leadership structures that influence key decisions are in place.

### Impact

Teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning. Teacher capacity in the classroom is improving as a result of these decisions and is positively affecting student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- All teacher teams meet regularly during time embedded into the weekly schedule. Teachers work in subject areas to ensure curricula alignment and make key decisions on teaching practices, as evidenced by the teacher team observed, which focused on rigorous learning tasks and assessing student work. Each meeting is facilitated by a different teacher who selects the agenda topic. A school-wide program, Teacher Career Pathway Goals (TCP), is geared toward improving pedagogy using a shared process. Inter-visitations within the school exist and two model teachers head the TCP, assessing lesson planning and classroom facilitation. As a result of this work, teachers embrace a common understanding of instructional expectations that elevates instructional quality throughout the school.
- Teachers meet to discuss shared students and identify students in need of academic or emotional support. Using spreadsheets, targeted student performance data is tracked and analyzed weekly. Teachers were observed analyzing a student assessment writing piece and determining which strategies increased the performance and which were unsuccessful. This work was compared to another student's work in an attempt to identify trends and patterns. Teachers provide feedback to support each other and advise on next steps that inform instruction, as seen at the ELA grade 7 team meeting. Teachers shared that the general goal of all teacher team meetings is to identify missing skills and ascertain gaps in student learning between the intended outcomes and actual outcomes to inform and strengthen instructional practices. This has further empowered teachers to define their teaching and learning needs in building their pedagogical practices. Practices also include a teacher self-reflection tool to support teachers in celebrating their growth and assist in continuing to strengthen their practice.
- Teachers stated they look forward to their time together for feedback and to help advance and improve their lesson planning. Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work including classroom practice, assessment data and student work. Teacher collaboration is embedded into the schedule. Also stated was that the administration has given them freedom to explore their students' needs and to find ways to best address them. Scheduling accommodations by the administration with teacher leaders are made to provide opportunities to visit other sites and share best practices. There is a culture of distributive leadership throughout the school that allows teacher leaders to serve as peer instructional coaches offering support, establishing model classrooms, inter-visitations, and providing professional development to demonstrate best practices.