



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

I.S. 230

Middle School Q230

**73-10 34th Avenue
Queens
NY 11372**

Principal: Ronald Zirin

Date of review: December 15, 2015

Lead Reviewer: Luz T. Cortazzo

The School Context

I.S. 230 is a middle school with 1,202 students from grade 6 through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 37% Asian, 1% Black, 56% Hispanic, and 5% White students. The student body includes 11% English Language Learners and 12% 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 95.8%.

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	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	Focus	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	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	Additional Findings	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The school's choice of curricula is aligned to the Common Core learning Standards and the instructional shifts, as reflected in data-driven academic tasks across grades and content areas, promoting college and career readiness for all students.

Impact

The school makes purposeful decisions to ensure that curricula are Common Core aligned, and strategically integrate the instructional shifts, resulting in coherence across all grades.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's curricula were selected based upon their alignment to the Common Core and content standards. Through expert professional development such as Teachers College Reading/Writing Project, Learning Systems, Urban Advantage, Stem Initiative, literacy skills and strategies have been integrated into the four major content areas in the curriculum with a continued emphasis on the instructional shifts of evaluating and analyzing challenging and complex text in all content areas through closed reading to deepen comprehension. In math, the school has chosen to focus on standards that require students to use fractions and decimals to solve real- world and math problems in grade 6. In grade 7 the school chose ratio and rates reasoning stretching and shrinking, equivalent ratios and proportions and in grade 8, the use of functions vs. relations to model relationships between quantities. The school's continued instructional foci of developing and implementing systems to monitor and adjust instruction using ongoing assessment data to ensure student progress, result in coherence and provide the conceptual support for students to expand their thinking and become college and career ready.
- Every unit begins with a pre-assessment to measure individual and whole class prior knowledge, and inform curricula adjustments. Teachers then design mini lessons, scaffolds, and access points in accordance with student needs. In Social Studies, The New York City Scope and Sequence is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the new Framework to focus upon understanding analytical, informational and argumentative understanding. Close reading practices, common writing strategies and rubrics, discussions and debating protocols have been integrated to promote literacy across the content areas. A grade 8 unit on Expansion and Imperialism includes an essential question asking, "*Was expansion/intervention into foreign affairs positive or negative?*", thus, guiding students through gathering, evaluating, and integrating evidence from text to support their argument. Teachers choose a performance assessment task, a quick on-demand writing, and note taking to monitor growth of individual and student groups to ensure that curricula adjustments provide access for all students. Consequently, teachers focus on deepening student reasoning across all subject areas as evidenced by student data analyses in English language arts indicating a 13 points average scale score growth.
- The Rubicon Atlas online curriculum system is utilized by the teachers to collaboratively reflect on curriculum and ensure multiple entry points and instructional supports are integrated to meet the needs of all student groups including ELLs and students with disabilities.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, instructional practices demonstrate the school's philosophy of how students learn best that purposely offer all students access to the curricula, exposure to higher order thinking skills planned supports and challenging tasks.

Impact

School wide practices, including questioning and discussions techniques, turn and talks, scaffolds, and student-to-student interactions are evident across grades and subjects. However; strategically multiple entry points and high quality supports and extensions that reflect high levels of student thinking and participation in student discussion vary across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Students in all classes engage in the same curricula with the appropriate scaffolds to meet the needs of all learners. Close reading practices, common writing strategies and rubrics, discussions and debating protocols have been integrated to promote literacy across the content areas. In English Language arts students practice and apply newly learned skills and strategies using texts at their assessed reading level as well as high-interest texts. Grade level and foundational Common Core Standards are identified and utilized to meet and support students at their developmental and ability level. Similarly, in math, students practice and apply newly learned content skills using process and product strategies based upon their entry point. Grade level and foundational Common Core Standards are identified and utilized to meet and support students at their developmental and ability level and focus upon major domains of each grade level. However, strategic high quality supports and extensions for all learners, including ELLs and high performing students to demonstrate higher-order thinking in discussions vary across grades.
- The school's beliefs on how students learn best is supported by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and supported by teachers' use of student data-analyses to understand student's academic needs, thereby developing appropriate individual and group goals. A review of all lesson plans for classrooms visited include a focus question, objective, language objective, a goal for the lesson, an assessment and the school's instructional foci to teach close reading of text to deepen comprehension, questioning and discussion to deepen students' understanding of analyzing and interpreting complex grade level texts as evidenced during a grade 7 English Language arts class. Similarly, in an Advanced Science Placement class, students use scientific information from a scientific text and diagrams to analyze questions about the respiratory system, and then write out solutions. Students were seated by their performance level on their entry points and questions were differentiated.
- Teachers utilize common pre-assessments in the four content areas to assess data that informs the learning needs of their students within all units of study. As a result, mini lessons, conferring and skills-based small group instruction is pre-planned. Consistency across classrooms reinforces and supports teaching of literacy across curricula including the use of reference charts, sentence starters, graphic organizers, technology, and accountable - talk as evidenced during classroom visits.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use common assessments to make instructional adjustments and create a clear picture of student progress towards meeting their goals.

Impact

Teachers use common assessment results to monitor student progress, deliver actionable feedback, and make effective adjustments to curricula and instruction so that students are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- The school developed a yearly assessment calendar that is used by all teachers on a regular basis to design and deliver school-wide assessments. This calendar guides the teachers to monitor and adjust their instruction, as well as to support student mastery of content. Similarly, during lessons, teachers are able to provide immediate feedback to students based on questioning scaffolds and afford students the opportunity to take ownership of their own learning as they work toward mastery of content as observed in a grade 7 math classroom. Furthermore, a school-wide grading policy ensures equity in the distribution of assignments, homework and student work ethic among the diverse student population.
- I-Ready is used school-wide as a formative and summative assessment. Students start the year with a diagnostic baseline assessment and take a formative assessment each quarter to assess whether students are on track according to grade-level Common Core Learning standards in English Language arts and in math. Moreover, all teachers use Skedula, a computerized program so that all teachers monitor student progress across the grades. Teachers enter grades onto a spreadsheet and can then view rosters, access student data, and issue course grades, which will automatically appear on student report cards.
- Teachers use curriculum rubrics to assess thematic project-based tasks, and student portfolios to evaluate student progress and make individual and group instructional adjustments. Moreover students utilize rubrics for criterion-based peer and self-assessment to identify strengths and next learning steps as evidenced during the student meeting. Student groups are flexible and students are regularly assessed and re-grouped based on data. Furthermore, student comprehension in content areas is measured using an end-of-unit study assessment to evaluate progress towards meeting goals for all students as evidenced in science and social studies units.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and staff partner with families in communicating expectations connected to a path of college readiness. Teacher teams have a clear culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of expectations for all students.

Impact

Structures that support high expectations, assure a culture of mutual accountability among staff members. As a result of teacher teams' and staff members' critical interventions and on-going provision of feedback and advisement, students have ownership of their own learning and are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders reinforce high expectations through feedback from walkthroughs, observations and team meetings to ensure coherence across the school and to support teachers by providing differentiated professional development. Through this practice, all teachers reinforce the school's instructional foci of implementing Common Core-based instruction to ensure students are making progress towards meeting grade level requirements; close reading of text to deepen comprehension; high level questioning and discussion protocols to engage students in critical thinking processes required for college and career readiness. Teachers receive actionable feedback from school leaders and peers through observations, walkthroughs and inter-visitations to reflect and revise practice and build coherence. Criterion-based student peer and self-assessment is utilized in the vast majority of classrooms in order to ensure understanding of academic expectations. Students reflect on their personal goals to measure their progress towards grade-level requirements.
- Teachers engage in on-going professional development by colleagues and outside expert providers. Teachers further develop their skill sets through modeling, inter-visitation, learning labs with debriefing sessions. A review of the school's professional development calendar indicates that the teachers are currently engaging in Professional development cycles, which focus on close reading strategies, common writing strategies and rubrics, questioning and discussion strategies, task and activities designed around Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels, feedback loops, and adjustment of instructional plans based on ongoing assessment of student work product.
- In the parent meeting, every parent was able to speak about ongoing feedback to families in the form of Pupil Path online progress reporting system that provides them with comprehensive access to their child's progress towards meeting grade level requirements. Parents stated that Pupil Path is easily accessible for them to collaborate with teachers in providing appropriate academic and social/emotional supports for each child. Furthermore, parents indicated that the school in partnership with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), offers parents multiple opportunities to participate in workshops that are geared towards Common Core expectations, assessments, the high school articulation process and College and career readiness. Additionally, a Parent Academy offers workshops and outreach events to promote family supports for students' academic, wellness and the social/emotional needs of students. Consequently, parents stated that they are able to work with the school to support their children at home.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have a voice in school-wide policies that affect student learning across the school. Additionally, shared leadership has yielded a culture where teachers feel their expertise is valued, thus empowering them.

Impact

A focus on analysis of data, shared responsibilities, and shared leadership, is resulting in strong reflection and improved instructional practices.

Supporting Evidence

- The vast majority of teachers collaborate in professional teams 3-5 times per week in addition to the Monday 80 minute session. Teams meet across grades and interdisciplinary teams. They utilize this time to engage in lesson review, norming and analysis of student work through inquiry practice, development and evaluation of common assessments and implement school-wide instructional practices, embedding school-wide goals, instructional shifts and Common Core Standards to continually promote improved achievement for all learners. During a Grade 8 math teacher team meeting, teachers used a protocol to norm Unit 3 Benchmark Task assessment for an (ICT) class using a 3-Point Holistic State Rubric. During the meeting, the team facilitator introduced and presented the topic, set norms, clarified roles and teachers engaged in low inference observations, asked clarifying questions, provided cool and warm feedback, shared a reflection, identified possible instructional implications and suggested next steps, for both the team, and the ICT class. Consequently, professional collaborations encourage strategic decision making, helps build teacher capacity, engage all staff in meaningful work and support the improvement of student achievement as evidenced by a review of item analysis of Unit 2: Linear Functions that indicate gains for 90% of all grade 8 students.
- Administration and teacher leaders are able to identify distributed leadership structures that are deeply rooted in the school's day to day operations. For example, teacher leaders within departments have been identified to be mentored by school leaders in order to leverage their expertise with their colleagues within their content. Using the school's model of distributed leadership, teachers' demonstrating expertise in identified areas and have demonstrated the ability to foster trust, collegiality and motivate teachers support the instructional foci by providing professional development during the Monday 80 minute block as evidenced by a review of the Professional Development calendar as well as the Professional Learning Series 2 workshop offerings led by teacher facilitators.
- The school uses the Power of Two, a research-based model for collaborative teaching, to strengthen the Co-teaching models for their Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) teachers. ICT teachers are subject-area specialists; they attend common planning and professional development with their collaborative teachers and are parallel-programmed. Similarly, a Collaborative team-teaching model is used for ELLs to support language development within the content of English Language Arts as evidenced during the classroom visits, and the Team meetings.