Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

PS 5 Port Morris

K-8 School X005

564 Jackson Avenue
Bronx
NY 10455

Principal: Thomas Cozzocrea

Date of review: May 13, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Clarence Williams

The School Context

PS 5 Port Morris is a K-8 school with 768 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 0% Asian, 27% Black, 70% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 24% English Language Learners and 20% students with disabilities. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 90.7%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
To what extent does the school…	**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 *Framework for Teaching*, 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**	**Proficient**
School Culture		
To what extent does the school…	**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	**Focus**	**Proficient**
Systems for Improvement		
To what extent does the school…	**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**	**Proficient**

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings
Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best. Across the vast majority of classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

Impact
Across all classrooms, teachers are engaging, and meet the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products and demonstrate ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade 5 English Language Arts (ELA) class, students cited text-based evidence from the book *The Skin I'm in.* When asked why the story ended the way it did, one student said that the author wanted to show how the character's self-esteem increased and gave readers a message to stand up for themselves and not let anyone control them. During small group discussions, students continued to cite text-based evidence for the story discussing how the character Maleeka demonstrated growth throughout the story so that by the end she did not allow herself to be bullied. One group cited this as evidence that the character had evolved and had become independent.

- In a grade 6 12:1 class for students with disabilities, small groups were engaged in a discussion on the book *13*. The teacher asked the question: "What do you think about peer pressure?" and "What is significant about this part of the story?" Students referenced the story and made connections to personal experiences. Small groups were observed using predictions and agree/disagree statements to engage in dialogue. One student stated: "I feel that Malik will give into peer pressure because he couldn't get the things he wanted." Another student added, "I agree, based on the fact that he said he read the book when he didn't, I felt this was an example of peer pressure. I predict in the end he will learn his lesson."

- In a grade 2 math class, the teacher asked the students to think about a strategy and how it would help them solve a problem, and explain why they chose the strategy. Each group worked independently on a word problem. One group worked on the problem: "Paola has a blue ribbon that is 17 centimeters long and Alissa had a ribbon that is 5 centimeters long. How many centimeters do they have all together? How do you know? Explain your thinking. What do you think the answer will be?" Students assisted each other with prompts and used different materials and strategies to solve the problem. Some drew diagrams and others used task cards and/or a centimeter ruler.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations, provide training, and give feedback to hold staff accountable but systems of accountability are not always explicit in terms of specific goals and timelines. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness for families, however opportunities for families to partner with the school are fewer.

Impact
While expectations are consistently communicated, variability in terms of accountability measures impairs full establishment of a culture of mutual accountability. Parents have support to help them understand their children's progress but have not fully partnered with the school to support their children's progress toward expectations set.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal distributed an instructional focus booklet and focused the first two months of professional development to support school-wide implementation of strategies discussed within the book such as turn and talk, Socratic Seminars, and formative assessment. The handbook content reflects the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* domains on instructional planning and preparation and participating in the professional community, however, during a teacher interview, they did not express how they shared the accountability for the school wide implementations.

- In a memorandum to classroom teachers, the administrative team discussed observed learning walk highlights, noting evident practices in classrooms such as posting of rubrics and grading policies, feedback on posted student work, and use of math manipulatives. The memorandum also listed areas that required improvement including unit goals, learning objectives, word walls, and providing students with actionable feedback on their work. The principal holds teachers accountable for learning walk reflection requiring teachers to submit a learning walk feedback form that highlights emphasized areas of expectation for instructional goal setting, academic vocabulary, and guided reading.

- The school administration sends out a parent handbook to all parents that includes the staff table of organization, the mission statement of the school, and a description of the parent's role in the education of their child. Parent-Teacher conference dates are included in the handbook with instructions and methods for parent-to-school communication. The elementary and middle school grading polices are also published in the handbook. To support college and career readiness, English Language Arts teachers have students write college essays and write their career goals. A student in a grade 6 class wrote: "I'm going to Fordham University because I want to help the poor and the homeless." Another student wrote: A goal I am trying to reach is to become a teacher. Teachers also support college and career readiness by conducting student interviews. During a student interview, one student stated that the teachers push them to think about college and prepare them and their families for school sponsored college trips.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings
Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks and are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact
All learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, have access to the curricula and demonstrate their thinking in cognitively engaging tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers and administrators presented units of study that show curriculum refinement based on student data. Grade 1 curricula were revised as running records showed that students' independent reading levels were low. The revised curriculum includes guided reading, reading conferences, and revisions to unit essential questions. To support a focus on strategies and understanding, the original essential question was changed from "How do I use everything that I know about reading to read books that teach me information and ideas about things?" to "How can I use all the strategies that I know in ways that let me understand and figure out words in the books that I read?" The revised unit also added instruction to teach students how to ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text, and included additional teaching points for guided reading for struggling readers.

- In a grade 2 math lesson plan, the teacher documented how students with disabilities receive extra language support and are placed with groups of students who are approaching or meeting standards. It is also documented scaffold techniques such as use of graphic organizers and manipulatives, such as cubes to represent centimeters. In a 12:1:1 class for students with disabilities, graphic organizers were differentiated based on the level of the student. Students used the organizers to help them organize facts to compare and contrast.

- In a grade 4-5 bilingual class, a unit on algebra supporting Common Core Learning Standards for reasoning abstractly and quantitatively, established the essential question "How can a line plot help you find an average of a data set." Differentiated instruction outlined in the unit included strategic grouping, process charts, and small group instruction. Higher-order thinking skills were promoted within the unit with questions such as "When is a line plot the best graph to create?" and "Looking at your line pilot, if you pulled out another math shape, what you would predict the length of the longest side will be?"

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact
Teachers and students have actionable feedback regarding student achievement. Teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Across most classrooms observed, teachers use a Webb's *Depth of Knowledge* analysis chart to create questions that assess student comprehension on recall, skill and conceptual level, and strategic thinking. Higher-level questions included "What conclusions can you draw?" and "Can you predict the outcome if…, and explain your reasoning?" The chart also rates learner responses, as well as provides sample question stems, and classroom activities and assessments. The school also uses school wide assessments. The kindergarten team administers *Fountas and Pinnell* reading assessments in January, March, and May. Grade 1 and 2 administer the assessment in January and May. Grade 3 through 8 also uses *Fountas and Pinnell* in September, January, and May.

- Teachers and students used rubrics in all classes observed including a short response rubric, a homework rubric, a poetry rubric, a whole class conversation rubric, and a reading rubric. The student self-assessment rubric listed criteria such as: listens and acts appropriately, responds to questions, asks questions, and uses textual support. Students rate each other as being on a beginning level, as being accomplished, or as being exemplary. Students stated that by critiquing others using the peer assessment rubric, it allows them to better understand their work. They further stated that the feedback is useful and that teachers support students' assessing each other.

- A student shared a self-reflection checklist for an argument essay that evaluated for evidence of an introduction, claim, supporting text evidence, and correct grammar and spelling. The checklist also required students to record what they, their peers, and teacher noticed about their work. For example, the student's checklist stated the following "I noticed that in the body of my paragraph, I only included 2 details instead of 3. A peer noticed "you need to add more textual evidence", and my teacher noticed, "You clearly stated your opinion through a claim and supporting reasons."

- A grade 8 math assignment posted in a classroom included a rubric and teacher feedback stating "All your coordinates were plotted correctly, that is a 4. Organization is a 3, try to label your graphs in a more legible manner."

- During a grade 2 math lesson, the teacher conducted quick checks for understanding, having students respond to her questions by writing their responses on individual white boards, which she monitored to make adjustments to the lesson to improve student comprehension.

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

Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards including the instructional shifts. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have built leadership capacity.

Impact
Teacher collaborations strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers. Teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The middle school English Language Arts department team notes documented suggestions for instructional strategies that included use of modeling, the revise-stop-jot strategy, imagery, visuals, and prompts. The team also engages in structured inquiry-based collaborations. Based on their inquiry work, the team adopted instructional strategies to assist students in citing textual evidence using modeling prompts such as: “this shows…, this reveals... and this is important because…” as well as increased use of visuals and graphic organizers.

- Teachers and school leaders applied for and secured a grant as part of the schools participation in the New York City Department of Education’s Middle School Quality Initiative to develop curricula for the Word Generation component of the literacy block. Teachers created a yearlong calendar consisting of 24 units focusing on key vocabulary words and conducted the required professional development for program implementation. The program also required teachers to partner with other schools to norm grading processes. Another example of distributive leadership is the mentor program for new teachers where more experienced teachers who are the grade leaders are partnered with a new teacher to oversee their instructional practices.

- A grade 7 English Language Arts teacher is responsible for new teacher orientation. This program takes place in the summer and provides incoming staff members with cultural, instructional, and logistical information on the school. The introductory orientation included icebreakers and information on lesson planning, literacy and math initiatives, instructional expectations, and expectations for students.