



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2015-2016

**J.H.S. 080 The Mosholu Parkway**

**Middle School X080**

**149 East Mosholu Parkway  
Bronx  
NY 10467**

**Principal: Emmanuel Polanco**

**Date of review: May 6, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Tracie Benjamin-Van Lierop**

## The School Context

J.H.S. 080 The Mosholu Parkway is a middle school with 641 students from grade 8 through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 13% Asian, 13% Black, 67% Hispanic, and 5% White students. The student body includes 30% English Language Learners and 22% 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 88.8%.

## 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>Focus</b>               | <b>Developing</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>Developing</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>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>Additional Findings</b> | <b>Developing</b> |

## Area of Celebration

|                           |                              |                |                   |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Quality Indicator:</b> | <b>3.4 High Expectations</b> | <b>Rating:</b> | <b>Proficient</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|

### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

### Impact

There is a system of accountability in place. Ongoing feedback is provided is provided to families to help understand student progress toward college and career expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school leadership team communicates their expectations through weekly newsletters, staff handbook, instructional support emails, and teacher individualized support plans. Newsletters are focused on the consistent development and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards coupled with clear criteria for high quality work that students are able to articulate. For example, a March newsletter focused on customizing instructional content to individual students to facilitate learning and mastering of new concepts using adaptive teaching and learning. Additionally, the newsletter highlighted teacher and paraprofessional expectations to communicate with parents to encourage attendance at parent-teacher conference meetings.
- Emails from assistant principals included feedback to teachers on utilization of their instructional strategies such as questioning and discussion techniques and promoting student voice. In order to further promote expectations connected to the school's professional development, the assistant principal attached a protocol for teachers to use with their student pairing work.
- Teachers and school leaders engage in instructional rounds targeting teacher questioning and student discussion. An instructional rounds agenda included the school's instructional focus, observation norms, academic conversation look-fors, such as, "Are there opportunities for students to engage in student discussion?", "What conversation skills are students using during discussions?", and "Is there evidence of conversation protocols being used?" Teachers are grouped with an assistant principal and complete a classroom visit data collection tool in which teacher and student actions are captured and then discussed to determine the next level of work.
- Parents receive communication regarding their children's progress via a parent-student handbook that includes the school's instructional core values, preparedness and readiness for school, enrichment classes, digital curriculum library offered to students at home and school, and student of the month expectations and criteria. Parents have and utilize access to their children's grades using PupilPath and are able to keep track of their academic performance according to the Common Core. A parent commented, "*Achieve 3000* is really helping my daughter's reading to improve, because she is able to use the program at home, too."

## Area of Focus

|                           |                     |                |                   |
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| <b>Quality Indicator:</b> | <b>1.2 Pedagogy</b> | <b>Rating:</b> | <b>Developing</b> |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|

### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson *Framework of Teaching* and the instructional shifts. Discussion and work products reflect uneven levels of student thinking.

### Impact

Across classrooms, high levels of student thinking and participation are yet to be reflected across most classrooms.

### Supporting Evidence

- The faculty believes students learn best when they feel safe mentally and are able to share their ideas and responses with each other. The school also believes students learn when they push each other's thinking and are able to explain their rationale using evidence based arguments. During an English Language Arts (ELA) class, the learning objective included students being able to determine the central idea of a poem and identifying the details that most strongly support the central idea based upon inferences. Students were asked "What can we infer about the author's point of view from the following quote- 'There's so much pollution in the air now that if it weren't for our lungs there'd be no place to put it all.'" Student responses were submitted using GoogleDocs in a timely manner, however, the time spent on moving to the main portion of the lesson was delayed due to the teacher's pacing. There were missed opportunities to transition to next phase which allowed for down-time for high-level student thinking.
- In a self-contained class, students used the electronic curricular resource, NewsELA, a literacy website which provides unlimited access to leveled news articles and Common Core aligned quizzes. The aim of the lesson asked students, "How can we use information from the text to help choose the best response?" Students used Google Forms for their activity and were able to articulate the expectations of the task which the teacher emailed to the class, however, the reading level of the articles coupled with the lack of time allotted for the activity restricted participation, as students needed more time to complete their readings.
- A seventh grade math lesson that addressed the connection between proportional relationships, lines, and linear equations exposed students to an eighth grade task. The lesson included student helpers working with different groups of students asking each other to be more specific when referencing the dilemma that they faced regarding two different unit rates, and the use of Google Forms to document their responses. The teacher circulated the room checking-in with students and challenged their thoughts by asking them to be more specific and reflect on what the different numbers represented. While there was an attempt for students to work collaboratively, and to share ideas and evidence, the teacher dominated much of the questioning in the class which allowed for minimal student-led discussions in a whole group setting.

## Additional Findings

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| <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. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

### Impact

The school makes purposeful decisions to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students across grades and subjects, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

### Supporting Evidence

- Lesson plans across content areas and grades include the Common Core being taught, the learning target or objective of the lesson, higher-order-thinking questions to be included, anticipatory set do now activity, mini-lesson and discussion, and authentic assessment. The sample lesson plan provided to all teachers has the school's instructional focus on questioning and discussion highlighted in red and provides strategies for teachers to use in their planning. For example, during the mini-lesson section, it states, "Teacher invites students to explain the content to their classmates." and "You should employ a gradual release that gets students working on the task as soon as possible. If students are confused or still asking many clarifying questions, this may be a sign that you need to spend more time in this component. However, if too much time is spent in direct instruction, students will not be able to complete the task and your pacing will not be suitable."
- The school's sub-group population of ELLs and students with disabilities are 31% and 27%, respectively, and the faculty and leadership have integrated digital tools to help all of their students, keeping in mind the varying needs of all populations. As a result of incorporating digital resources into the curricula, students are working at home and at school according to the leadership team. "Every student has an electronic device and these tools complement the curricula," stated the principal.
- Teachers worked during the summer to ensure that the curricula they are using, including *GO Math!*, *EngageNY*, and *Core Ready*, were aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. As a result of this work, revised curriculum maps and unit plans were created to ensure that differentiated supports and multiple entry points into the curricula were accessible to students. Khan Academy, NewsELA, and *Achieve 3000* were implemented to increase rigor at appropriate levels while building student reading and math levels. Subsequently, students have met their achievement benchmarks in their average ELA proficiency rating and are on track to meet the performance index on the New York State math exam.

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| <b>Quality Indicator:</b> | <b>2.2 Assessment</b> | <b>Rating:</b> | <b>Developing</b> |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------|

### **Findings**

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

### **Impact**

Limited feedback is provided to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers inconsistently make effective adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The school bulletin boards reflected some student work attached to rubrics and the associated tasks in different grades and content areas with actionable feedback and next steps. However, a review of student work folders evidenced little, or sometimes no, actionable feedback to students, in particular ELLs and students with disabilities. During the student interview, when asked how often do you receive feedback, a student stated, and others agreed, "Often, but it's mostly through peer feedback forms that usually included how to improve our spelling, grammar, and punctuation."
- School leadership provides teachers with a checking for understanding implementation rubric on questioning and responding to guide teachers in designing questions that will provide students with appropriate and adequate processing time and multiple opportunities to share their ideas with one or more partners prior to responding. Additionally, there is an expectation that as the lesson progresses, questions should increase in complexity. In a science class focused on evolution, the teacher's questions were informed by the student responses and the data she collected as she circulated the room checking-in with groups. Initially students shared responses only on a surface level and the teacher then asked for students to come to the front of the room to share their thinking and draw a display to support how to represent evolutionary relationships in a changing environment.
- In contrast, in an ELA class, the teacher incorporated pre- and post-assessment data to assess student understanding while the students were also able to assess their work using the Restate Answer Cite Explain Revise (RACER) method and entering their work in Google Forms which the teacher was able to review and provide immediate feedback to students either individually or in their group setting. Students were able to base their next steps on which task they would attempt based on the correct response data for their pre-assessment.

|                           |   |                |                   |
|---------------------------|---|----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Quality Indicator:</b> | <b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b> | <b>Rating:</b> | <b>Developing</b> |
|---------------------------|---|----------------|-------------------|

**Findings**

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations on teams that may be loosely connected to school goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused.

**Impact**

The use of an inquiry approach is developing across the teams. The work does not yet typically result in improved teacher practice or progress toward goals for groups of students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The focus of teacher teams has focused on monitoring engagement for all students, fostering small group conversations, and increasing student-led discussions and decreasing teacher centered lessons. Teacher teams are working with consultants from Teaching Matters, Core Ready and the school’s peer collaborative teacher to monitor and balance teacher talk time and student engagement time, and using data to strategically group students.
- Teachers stated their instructional practices are becoming more consistent and they are owning the practice of using discussion protocols during their lessons. When asked, how have your instructional practices impacted student achievement? A teacher commented, “My lower level ELLs are now chunking texts on their own and I don’t have to assist most of them.” Another teacher stated, in September, some of my students with disabilities came in with Lexile levels of 400 and now some of those same students are at an 850 Lexile level.”
- The use of technology, especially Google Classrooms has encouraged teachers to think differently about how they plan for their students and integrate multiple entry points, notably for their sub-group populations. While planning and revision to curricula to ensure alignment to the Common Core Standards is evident, execution of strengthened instructional capacity is still building.