



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

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

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2015-2016**

**P.S. 100 Isaac Clason**

**Elementary School X100**

**800 Taylor Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10473**

**Principal: Chad Altman**

**Date of review: November 20, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Daisy Concepción**

## The School Context

P.S. 100 Isaac Clason is an elementary school with 616 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 33% Black, 64% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 5% English Language Learners and 24% 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 91.6%.

## 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	Focus	Proficient
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	Proficient
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:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

The belief that students learn best in a supportive yet challenging environment that holds students accountable is evident across the vast majority of classrooms.

### Impact

The school's focus on student-to-student discussion and work products reflects high levels of thinking and ownership where students are accountable to and for each other's learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams have incorporated the school's belief of a supportive environment into the school wide goal of improving writing and strengthening student discourse. Across classrooms, students were writing to think. For example, in a math class, the writing prompt was "I know my answer is right because..." and "I solved this problem by..." Students were required to write the answer and share strategies in small groups. Student discourse is natural and fluid. Students demonstrated confidence in questioning each other with "What makes you say that?" or "I agree with your answer" and "I want to build on that."
- The school has implemented an engagement chart, with an Owl Mascot, called "Whooo's Engaged" which aids students in holding themselves accountable to being present, active and involved in conversations. In one classroom where the discussion focused on European Exploration, the teacher asked students to look at text-based evidence and draw inferences. One student jumped in to facilitate the group by saying, "Ok, team. Let's continue from here together and figure these questions out." When asked if he was the table leader, he looked puzzled and said, "No, but this is what we do here at our school. We think about things, ask questions and we discuss them using Accountable Talk to figure things out."
- In a grade 5 class that was reading *Esperanza Rising*, the learning target required students to find evidence to support the student's inferences. Students worked in pairs sharing evidence from the texts to support their findings using various organizers to write a paragraph about Esperanza's struggle. The teacher worked with a small group modeling how to draw an inference from the text. A student readily shared his writing and analysis of this chapter of the book with the visitors. He went on to read his synopsis and stated that his inferences were based on the fact that Esperanza was confused about the things that she was seeing because they did not align with her expectations. The student went on to say that this is an example of the internal struggle because of Esperanza's refusal to accept her new reality of being poor. He shared the following, "Esperanza is now poor, but she still thinks and behaves like she is rich." As the student finished reading his paragraph another student leaned into the conversation and said, "Yes, and I want to build on that idea" thereby opening up a small group discussion during the lesson.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessment rubrics that provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

### Impact

Across classrooms student use rubrics to refine their work and as a touchstone for conversations. Although teachers consistently use checks for understanding adjustments are not as yet always successful.

### Supporting Evidence

- Students were observed in all classrooms using rubrics and a checklist to gauge progress in their personal work, to support partners by providing feedback aligned to the rubric and as a basis for discussion. The following rubrics were used in the classrooms: a paragraph writing checklist, a persuasive letter rubric and a NY State grade 4-5 Expository Writing Evaluation Rubric. Students used rubrics as a way to talk about the work and norm their understanding. Students were observed discussing each other's work using a teacher prepared form that addressed self-assessment, peer feedback and the teacher feedback. An example of a comment that one peer provided another was "I think that you used good details, but you should work on using different transition words." A teacher comment was "I love how you tried to include details from the text. Next time use quotation marks to cite your evidence."
- Many forms of checks for understanding were observed across classrooms. Fist to five, exit slips and stop and jot were employed with various degrees of success. In a Grade 5 math class focusing on using base ten blocks to model decimals, the teacher guided the thinking on how to represent place value with models. After students formulated generalizations, the teacher asked students to explain and justify their answers. The teacher assessed student understanding of decimals by asking questions such as, "Why is a decimal point necessary for writing a decimal but not necessary for writing a whole number?" Students were then asked to go to different areas of the room based on their responses. Some students were assigned to strategic partner work, some to enrichment activities and others to a re-teach group.
- While checks for understanding are a consistent practice in the school, it does not always result in a successful adjustment. For example, as a result of a review of student work on migration of animals, a teacher decided to re-teach the lesson whole class. She gave the students a work sheet and asked them to correct their answers as they watched the video for the second time. No modification or new information was given to the students. Students had to view the video again and change their answers. While the teacher did pause the video and ask the students questions, student responses were hesitant and lacked understanding. Four students stated that they did not know what they got wrong or what they needed to correct. A few students were seen with worksheets with blank spaces.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and parents with a focus on career and college readiness.

### Impact

The school belief that students learn best in a supportive environment results in students having the tools they need to engage cognitively and produce high levels of student thinking and student ownership. School communications support families' understanding of career and college readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- In a leadership interview, the principal stated that creating a supportive environment and trust are two elements of the Framework for Great Schools that are essential to learning. He stated, "It's Maslow's Hierarchy! Students need to feel that they are in a safe place that values them where they are free to do the rigorous work they need to do." He went on to say that a supportive environment not only makes a cognitive demand, but provides students with the means to support their thinking. He said, "If I want students to talk, I need to give them prompts to help them be able to engage in talking that is accountable to the task." In almost all of the classrooms visited student ownership in conversations was observed.
- Teacher teams shared that they receive feedback aligned to a supportive environment and they were held accountable to the Positive Behavior Intervention Services pillar of being responsible in a different way than students. For teachers being responsible means that they actively plan with their colleagues for the rigorous and differentiated needs of all students. An observation report had the following feedback: "You provided opportunities for students to sit and turn and talk with peers, and work independently." Teachers stated that besides observations and walkthrough feedback, they receive verbal feedback and even letters of commendations.
- When asked what the school does best, parents responded with a choral "Communication!" Through letters, emails, "Think Central" which provides textbooks on-line and ITools, Through "Back to School Night" and "Planning for the Future Night" parents see the connections between what students learn in school and student readiness for career and college readiness. Parents voiced that they know that students are being exposed to more rigorous experiences because they are being asked to justify, explain and come up with multiple solutions. One parent stated "Esperanza Rising is a middle school book and my child is reading it in 5<sup>th</sup> grade." Parents feel that in addition to more rigorous academics that students are being prepared for the next level through exposure to the personal and academic behaviors of resiliency, responsibility, work habits and communication. Parents felt that these soft skills were equally as important to student success because they will help students stay motivated and more employable.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### **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 including the lowest- and highest-achieving students, ELLs, and students with disabilities.

### **Impact**

Students are engaged in rigorous instruction that is thoughtfully differentiated to ensure that all students including students with Individualized Educational Plan demonstrate their thinking.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- A grade 4 task on Iroquois' traditions required students to read two related pieces of text using close reading strategies and make a connection between the texts to identify a belief or value important to Native Americans. Students needed to identify evidence from both texts, write an essay and go through the revision process using peer editing and feedback.
- The Grade 2 Curriculum Unit Map included the Instructional Shift of Writing from Sources and an Essential Question of "How do readers get information from text features and use text features to locate information? Several anchor texts on Theodore Roosevelt coupled with leveled texts from Myon (an on-line level library.) were incorporated. The unit includes scaffolds to help students gather information, sort information and a graphic organizer to develop an expository paragraph as a step to helping students with the Performance Based Assessment, a research based biographical sketch.
- A Kindergarten Unit adopted from Engage NY on representing and counting number 0-5 was extended by 3 days because student work demonstrated that students were not clear on the concept. In addition to extending the number of days for this lesson, the school added the use of Five Frame boards to develop fluency.
- As a result of a 30% increase in students with Individualized Learning Plan (IEP) to the school, teacher teams, led by the Special Education teachers, engaged in professional development on understanding the Present Level of Performance (PLOP) for students with IEPs. Although the work initially started with a focus on understanding the needs of IEP students and learning to differentiate instruction for them, teachers across the school agreed that the strategies and differentiation they were learning were essential scaffolds needed for any struggling student. Now, three or more types of differentiation are embedded in each unit and lesson. Teachers feel that providing this more specific differentiation creates access for all students.

<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**

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity. Distributed leadership structures are embedded so teachers play an integral role in key decisions within the school community.

**Impact**

Teacher teams have created an inclusive learning community that honor student voice and ensure the academic success of all students. Distributive leadership structures result in shared responsibility for all learning resulting in a culture of trust school wide.

**Supporting Evidence**

- As a result of vertical school inquiry, led by the Special Education teachers, general education teachers stated that they have strengthened their instructional practice on differentiating instruction. One teacher stated, “I know that my students are not special education, but now, because of looking at IEPs, I look at student needs according to the goal, and think about what skill they need and what content.” Another teacher shared, “I am now thinking of ways to challenge my students with IEPs by looking at how I use cooperative learning to support them and their interest to engage them.”
- Teachers shared that “hallway conferences” are the norm at the school and they check in with each other in the hallway about progress and challenges related to the work samples that they are to bring to inquiry meetings. For example, a teacher in a lower grade class shared difficulties with informational writing and an upper grade teacher shared the informational writing rubric they were using. The lower grades modified the rubric by aligning it to the appropriate Common Core Standard and putting it into children friendly language. They also adapted the rubric by aligning it to both the learning targets and unit objectives for the grade.
- Teachers constantly refine and adapt lessons based on student data. They share this information through informal conversations and a form called “proposal” where they state the findings and the recommendations to school leaders. Proposals from teacher teams to modify the curriculum result in modifications that affect student learning and include student choice. Most recently a teacher read a supplemental non-fiction Scholastic article on Bee Colony Collapse and the students wanted to know more about this phenomenon. The grade was able to modify the curriculum by developing a unit on informational writing and included this in the student generated research topic. Additionally, teachers stated that school leaders sit in on teacher meetings frequently and “help push the thinking.”