



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2015-2016

**P.S. 103 Hector Fontanez**

**Elementary School X103**

**4125 Carpenter Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10466**

**Principal: Farid Reyes**

**Date of review: January 6, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Daisy Concepción**

## The School Context

P.S. 103 Hector Fontanez is an elementary school with 1,193 students from kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 3% Asian, 53% Black, 37% Hispanic, and 3% White students. The student body includes 17% English Language Learners and 18% 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 91.0%.

## 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>Celebration</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>Additional Findings</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>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

**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 and engage students in self-assessment.. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

### Impact

Teachers have useful feedback and adjust instruction. Students have actionable feedback that they understand and use to self-assess.

### Supporting Evidence

- Rubrics, checklists, and self-assessment charts were observed in every classroom. Students in kindergarten were observed using a teacher created Informational writing self-assessment rubric as they brainstormed and labeled ideas for their All About books. An experience chart also displayed an illustrative checklist for adding key details such as feelings and actions. Student work had feedback such as "I love your illustrations and label." Next time stretch your pictures to tell your story." Similarly, feedback for a grade 5 piece of student writing graded with the Teachers' College informational rubric stated, "Good use of transitional words through your essay. Next time use a dictionary to ensure you spell the words properly."
- The school uses the *Exemplars* rubric in conjunction with its *Go Math!* program to provide students with feedback that address the mathematical practices and shifts. A kindergarten student presented his work and along with a problem-solving scoring guide for grades K-2. He pointed out how he had showed all this work and had drawn a model, labeled his work and noticed something about the math. He spoke about his drawing of people holding balloons and how his drawing was a representation of counting by twos.
- In addition to pre- and post-unit assessments, the school uses running records as a school-wide assessment and cross references with the school grading policy that stipulates expected levels of achievement. For example, the grading policy indicated that in March a student in kindergarten reading an "A" level book is at a Level 1, while a child reading at level D or E book is at Level 4 and is exceeding the grade standard. Running records are used to make adjustments and inform small group instruction as evidenced by the "Strategy Groups Based Running Record Assessment Sheet" which showed that students were receiving instruction based on their running record review. This sheet showed that some students were grouped for retelling, others for inferential comprehension, and others for alphabet letter recognition.
- In one of the lower grade math classrooms, a student came up to the SMARTboard to demonstrate her work. She stood behind the experience chart and began to explain her work then hesitated. She came out from behind the experience chart and looked at the chart because it contained a checklist listing with the criteria and steps for explaining a math problem. She looked to see what step she was on. After her silent self-assessment, she smiled, nodded her head, and continued to present to the class.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Developing**

### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies including scaffolds provide inconsistent multiple entry points. Communication is teacher-to-student and student-to-teacher directed and student work and discussion reflect uneven levels of student thinking.

### Impact

Across the school, students are inconsistently engaged in challenging tasks that reflect high levels of participation and demonstration of higher-order thinking skills.

### Supporting Evidence

- In a lower grade science class, a teacher used a picture book along with the materials clay and sand to discuss the best type of soil to grow plants. Students recorded notes from the read-aloud and from conversations when they turned and talked with their partners. In an upper grade class the teacher read to students about the discovery of King Tut's grave with a text that included language such as sweltering, scowling, and the phrase, "Death comes on wings to those who enter the tombs of the pharaohs." No scaffolds were observed to support student understanding of vocabulary and language, nor did the teacher ask questions about the text read.
- In a lower grade math class, the teacher engaged students in a think-aloud on re-grouping through an interactive lesson on the Elmo projector. Students used wipe boards and manipulatives as they worked along with the teacher. The teacher required students to explain their thinking and asked them to use their self-assessment sheets to ensure that they were following the process. Students were observed working independently on the wipe boards and using the checklists as they worked. The teacher selected a student to present to the class and explain their thinking. This was not the case in an upper grade social studies lesson that required students to rotate through different stations that contained primary documents and fictional literature on slavery and the Trail of Tears. In one station, students examined a series of photographs and drew inferences. The teacher realizing that a student was struggling to make a connection with the picture offered the answer. In another group, students were struggling to read a poem on the Trail of Tears that was heavy with figurative language with no supports thus hindering their ability to engage in a discussion about the text.
- In a lower grade Integrated Co-Teaching class, students worked at stations to understand ways that animals used plants. Students looked at pictures on the SMARTboard of animals in a grassy plain and in burrows. The teacher asked students to turn and talk about why animals would hide in plants. Student discussion in this class was limited and when students replied, they spoke to the teacher and offered answers that were unrelated like "The deer is hiding from sharks."

## Additional Findings

<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 the Common Core Learning Standards and promote college and career readiness. Curricula and academic tasks are refined using student work.

### Impact

Across classrooms, students have access to a curriculum that cognitively engages them and promotes their college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school uses the Teachers' College *Reading and Writing Program* as its literacy program. A review of the English Language Arts State scores revealed that students needed support with non-fiction texts and with close reading skills. The school decided to supplement their curriculum with *Ready Gen* to ensure that they were integrating the instructional shifts of reading non-fiction grade appropriate texts. In math, the school has supplemented the *Go Math!* curriculum with *Exemplars* to ensure that they attend to mathematical practices such as constructing viable arguments and modeling with math.
- A grade 5 unit on multiplying decimals identified skills to be taught such as area models, distributive property to identify expanded forms, and the proper placement of decimals. This unit listed vocabulary such as "partial products" and various types of assessments for each skill, as well as the appropriate pages to use for re-teaching or for additional support. For example, lesson number 3.5 on multiplying with regrouping lists assessments for place value and mental math and lists the page numbers for *GO Math!* supporting strategy lessons that support the unit.
- A review of the math data analysis for each grade showed that students in grade 3 needed to work on problem solving procedures and in checking their work using a rubric or checklist. A grade 3 lesson plan required that students be assessed and grouped, assigned differentiated math problems based on their level, as well as use a student rubric and checklist to complete the task.
- The grade 4 Teachers' College literacy curriculum has been supplemented with an addendum that focuses on non-fiction and close reading to address the instructional shifts. A review of the document showed that students are studying domain-specific vocabulary and key ideas and details in a narrative non-fiction, informational unit focusing on two anchor texts, *The Boy Who Drew Birds* and *The Tarantula Scientist*.

<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, provide training, and have a system of accountability for those expectations. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations and offer ongoing feedback to help families understand those expectations.

### Impact

Teachers are accountable in implementing school-wide expectations. Families understand their children's progress toward meeting set expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- A review of the professional development binder reveals that school leaders led training on Danielson 3B to increase student discussion and provide the staff with feedback aligned to the *Danielson Framework for Teaching*. A review of Danielson observations revealed feedback to teachers aligned to student discussion as follows "Through your questions you provided students the opportunity to participate and feel accountable for their own learning." There was also feedback on math as follows "You planned learning activities that provided students to understand what the number eight represents and how to write the number eight. For instance, when you asked 6 students to line up and then asked the class about how many more do you need to have 8 friends."
- Parents stated that teachers were always visible and available to provide feedback to them about student progress. One parent stated that her child had multiple hospitalizations and that the school called her and provided assignments, graded and returned work. Parents stated that as a result of constant monitoring and check-ins, that they were always apprised of student progress and provided with strategies to support their children at home. Many parents stated that the assistant principal assigned to their students' grade was the liaison between home and school. Workshops and Curriculum Nights provide parents with information on the Common Core Learning Standards and an understanding of the Common Core exams. Parents were particularly impressed with the schools' commitment to making academic achievement and student success the focus of many school gathering and public celebrations such as the honor roll.
- In team meetings, teachers spoke about the opportunities they had for attending both school and outside professional development such as Teachers' College professional development. They spoke about the coaching support that they receive from their grade assistant principal, in addition to the monthly professional development sessions that they attend in areas such as questioning and discussion techniques, using non-fiction text to teach social studies and norming and calibrating on Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused.

### Impact

Teacher instructional capacity and progress towards goals is strengthening with progress towards goals for groups of students.

### Supporting Evidence

- One of the school goals is to have 100% of teachers use informal and formal data to plan refinements to student lessons based on individual student and grade-specific findings. Teachers were observed using data from the November data collection and analysis report and discussing student work samples tied to these analyses. During the teacher team meeting, teachers noticed that student samples demonstrated that students were correctly creating table of contents for their work and using text features such as labels and diagram. Although data on pre- and post-assessments showed the majority of students had made gains in this nonfiction unit, the teachers were not observed analyzing author craft and structure, which had been the intended outcome for this unit. Additionally, some of the suggestions that teachers made as next steps such as improving mechanics and incorporating Dolch words were unrelated from their inquiry focusing.
- Various teacher teams are currently involved in work to create coherence across the school. In a discussion with members of the school's new vertical team, teachers stated that they were looking at data from the June exam and noticed grading discrepancies. The team selected student work at each performance level and discussed key differences between one performance level and the next. This work has led to teachers to having normed expectations for student performance creating coherence in grading across grades. The school has also changed the sequence in which topics appear in the curriculum to align with the sequence of the state exam. June data showed that students struggle with craft and structure in ELA. Teacher teams have made modifications to the *Teachers' College Literacy Bends* craft and structure. They are also identifying supplementary mentor books that highlight craft and structure for each grade.
- Grade 2 teachers spoke about curriculum modification to an information unit based on identified gaps in student performance. Modifications included additional scaffolding as well as the inclusion of new skills. As the teachers modified the unit, they realized that they needed to change the rubric to reflect the unit modifications as well. Based on this work, the vertical met with early childhood teachers and asked them make modification to their instruction based on analysis of learning gaps noted. The vertical team modified the grade 1 information rubric to reflect the changes made in grade 2 and asked kindergarten teachers to create a developmentally appropriate informational rubric aligned to first grade, but still reflective of the kindergarten standards.