



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

J.H.S. 162 Lola Rodríguez De Tio

Middle School X162

**600 Saint Ann's Avenue
Bronx
NY 10455**

Principal: Deborah Sanabria

**Date of review: March 18, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Deborah Burnett-Worthy**

The School Context

J.H.S 162 Lola Rodriguez De Tio is a middle school with 368 students from grade 6 through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 29% Black, 70% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 23% English Language Learners and 30% students with disabilities. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 88.6%.

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	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	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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Rigorous academic tasks that require higher order thinking skills are embedded across grades and subjects for all learners. These tasks are refined using student work and data.

Impact

All learners have access to curricula that include tasks that are cognitively engaging and require demonstrations of student thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- In one module of the *EngageNY* grade 6 math curriculum, students are required to solve rigorous, real world mathematical problems involving area, surface area, and volume. All learners must find the area of right triangles, other triangles, special quadrilaterals, and polygons by composing rectangles or other shapes and applying these techniques in the context of solving real-world mathematical problems.
- Rigorous tasks that challenge a variety of learners to exercise their critical thinking skills are consistently found in curriculum maps, unit maps, and lesson plans. For example, the grade 8 curricula maps require all learners to incorporate narrative elements into the writing of argumentative, informative, and explanatory texts. In grade 8 social studies, students must be able to incorporate narrative accounts into their analysis of individuals or events of historical importance. In grade 8 science, students must write precise enough descriptions of the step-by-step procedures they use in their investigations or technical work so that others can replicate the steps and reach the same results.
- In the grade 7 science curriculum, the learning set dedicated to sound and light as forms of energy, requires students to determine what factors affect sound energy. The class is divided into groups to explore different indicators of sound energy. The groups then share out their results in the form of a fully analyzed explanation. Purposeful grouping based on student data, a variety of leveled support materials, and teacher assistance where needed, provide access for English Language Learners and students with disabilities so that they are also cognitively engaged.
- To help English Language Learners and students with disabilities experience greater success demonstrating their thinking with mandated rigorous tasks, additional supports are included in the curricula. Online intervention programs such as *myOn*, *Achieve 3000*, and the most recent addition *i-Ready*, are embedded into unit plans and included in extended learning time to service individual and small group needs.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points.

Impact

Although teaching practices are informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts and students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks, there were a few missed opportunities for students to demonstrate their higher order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to curricula and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. For example, in one lesson students were required to “explain how pathogens can cause disease and disrupt homeostasis in the human body.” The use of heterogeneous grouping, visual aids, and texts on differentiated levels with the same content created multiple points of entry for all learners. The practice of encouraging students to share their claims and conclusions with each other was consistent across classrooms. For example, during one student-led discussion, the teacher spoke only to clear up a misconception about vaccinations.
- Other consistently observed practices that reflected this schools’ beliefs about how students learn best were the use of grouping and student discussion. For example, in a grade 7 class, students were purposefully grouped to engage in one of three tasks that were designed to meet the needs of each student. One group of students was assigned a writing task, one group a reading task and the third worked with the teacher on their inferencing skills. These eight students were asked to read rigorous text, underline evidence, and then discuss why the evidence they were using supported their claim or conclusions. In the turn-and-talk portion of this lesson, students actively engaged in questioning each other about their writing. One student was heard asking another, “Did you use context clues?” The teacher conferenced with students to clarify misconceptions around the targeted skill being taught. Student work products from all three groups demonstrated students’ ability to cite textual evidence, complete multi-step tasks, use claim and counterclaim statements in essays, and discover and use context clues.
- Although a grade 6 bilingual music class challenged students to choose their own beat, write their own lyrics, and perform the end product of the group creation, a math class was not as student centered. Students in this class worked to understand mathematical equations and expressions but were only given the opportunity to answer low-level *Depth of Knowledge* questions, which produced one word answers and thus they did not fully demonstrate their understanding of the concept being taught.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teachers create and use common assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school's curricula. Teacher assessment practices often reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding to make effective adjustments to meet all students learning needs.

Impact

Teacher created common assessments provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Data from common assessments are used to make effective adjustments in curricula.

Supporting Evidence

- Student performance is analyzed via a variety of data sources such as pre-, mid- and post-unit assessments, frequent benchmark assessments, and data from online resources such as *myOn*, *Achieve 3000*, and *i-Ready*. Data is loaded into the online data recording program *DATA TALK* to determine progress across grade and content areas. The use of data walls is a common practice at this school and they are located in the principal's office, the main office, on bulletin boards and in every classroom. The shared information ranges from the progress of the school, to the grades, to individual classes and students. For example, early data showed 55% of students in grade 6 and grade 8 were making progress as opposed to only 41% of grade 7 students. Benchmark assessment scores showed only 41% of English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities were making progress. These results initiated the adjustment to curriculum that led to extended learning time (ELT) and the incorporation of *Achievement 3000* into the curriculum.
- Teachers checked for student understanding in most classrooms. Quick notebook checks, turn-and-talks that are monitored by the teacher, and instant polls of students, is normal practice. Teachers also use exit slips and clickers for electronic polling where available. These methods sometimes result in instant changes to the lesson to address any misconceptions. For example, misconceptions about vaccinations effects on bacteria and viruses caused the teacher to instantly add a discussion about antibiotics and antivirals in a living environment class.
- The student portfolios consistently included work with examples of actionable feedback from teachers. Actionable feedback such as, "Good Work! Next time expand your dialogue more by using descriptive words and details to keep your reader engaged. In addition, watch your punctuation, spelling and capitalization" on a displayed piece of writing was consistent across classrooms. Positive feedback and next steps from a math teacher read as follows "Multi step problems challenge people to use a series of strategies. Your work shows that you gave careful consideration to solving the problem. ...next time, I would like to see you provide an explanation with your work."

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently convey high expectations to faculty, students, and families focused on the advancement of student learning and best teaching practices.

Impact

Across the school community, systems of accountability are resulting in a collaborative community and professional learning are preparing students for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers nominated two parent representatives within each class to support students with classwork and turnkey their experience to other parents. This is a direct effort to build a working relationship with parents so they fully understand the path towards college and career readiness. The leadership program also supports the parent teacher relationship by providing English as a second language classes to parents to support their involvement and understanding of the academic expectations for their children.
- Interviewed parents shared that the school has a system of clearly communicating high expectations for their children. The parent newsletter, parent teacher association and open house week all have provided information on the high school process and the next steps for student academic progress. The school has a parent handbook, website, pamphlets, School Messenger and PupilPath which are effective tools that permit the parents to see how their child is progressing and strengthens the home-school connection. School Messenger also provides reminders and updates on school functions and activities.
- Teacher teams and staff members have established a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students. Interviewed students spoke to their individual next steps toward high school and college due to the individual attention they receive from their advisory class and guidance counselors. They also spoke to the expectation that, like students in high school and college, they must use technology to complete and submit many of their assignments using Google classroom and i-Ready. Students also spoke of the exposure they received to colleges. The preparations and guidance they are receiving for the student-led conferences they will be conducting for their parents also prepares them for the next academic level.

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry based professional collaborations. These inquiry teams consistently analyze student work and assessment data.

Impact

These collaborations result in the strengthening of instructional capacity and improved teacher practice. Groups of students make progress towards the achievement of school goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Three grade level and four content area teams, meet weekly at regularly assigned collaboration periods that have been incorporated into the teachers’ schedules. Attendance sheets, minutes and agendas are documented evidence that the focus of these collaborations are the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and the creation of action plans that will promote the achievement of school goals.
- Observation of the grade 8 inquiry team revealed the deep dive into student work and an even closer look at the work of English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Analyzed data revealed the need to further explore these students’ performance. There was a comparison of the work of two eighth grade classes that were achieving very differently with the same materials and teaching practices. Time was then spent analyzing student work to surface misconceptions of the students who are struggling the most within these classes. The team uncovered that some struggling students were not citing text evidence in their writing. The inquiry team members decided that it was imperative to include support for the skill of citing evidence into all classes across content areas for the struggling grade 8 class. In particular, the special education and English as a New Language (ENL) teachers will be making adjustments to the grade 8 curricula.
- Building and strengthening teacher capacity is a core belief of the teacher teams. The math inquiry team analyzed qualitative data and focused on strategies to ensure that the students were reading the problem and comprehending what the problem was asking them to do. New strategies taught included reading the whole problem, highlighting or circling the important information, then listing the steps taken sequentially. Another meeting focus was the practice of providing actionable feedback to students. The team discussed valid next steps for teachers to take to support each other’s improvement of practice, and then created measurable action plans to achieve their goals.