Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

E.S.M.T – I.S. 190

Middle School X190

1550 Crotona Park East
Bronx
NY 10460

Principal: Dianajade Santiago

Date of review: May 24, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Heidi Pierovich

The School Context

E.S.M.T-I.S. 190 is a middle school with 241 students from grade 6 through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 25% Black, 71% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 10% English Language Learners and 26% 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 92.6%.

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**	**Developing**
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	**Focus**	**Developing**
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**	**Developing**
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	**Additional Findings**	**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	**Celebration**	**Proficient**

Area of Celebration

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

Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in organized inquiry-based professional collaborations. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact
Professional collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, strengthening the instructional capacity of the teachers who have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are engaged in a couple of teams, including grade and subject. For grade teams, teachers stated that their function is "to analyze student work to see areas of weakness and strengths and to modify curriculum and make adjustments to it [from] analyzing benchmark assessments and Gates MacGinitie Reading Tests (GMRT), [that tracks reading growth and is issued twice a year] and discuss how students are doing." Teachers also share best practices. Teachers use a protocol for looking at student work and use the information to determine next steps in their teaching.

- Distributed leadership is evident in that each grade-level teacher team has a teacher serving as the leader who facilitates each grade team meeting. Additionally, these teacher leaders sit on the instructional lead team. One teacher stated and others agreed that, "We share information about how our respective teams are doing and look at the CEP [Comprehensive Educational Plan] goal to see if we are making progress at the end of the year and see what we need to revise and move on for next year." Additionally, the instructional leadership team also creates and implements professional development for their colleagues. A teacher stated and others agreed, "We plan professional development based on the needs of the teachers, whom we asked, and they told us they needed support in using discussion and questioning techniques and engagement." Additionally, the instructional leads turnkey professional development that they have attended outside of the school and from mentoring through an outside provider. Furthermore, teachers are empowered to make decisions regarding the implementation of whole school assessments and the scheduling thereof. For example, the English Language Arts (ELA) department worked collaboratively to determine a schedule for implementing the GMRT.

- Teachers spoke about how looking at student work has improved their instructional practice. One teacher stated that the teacher team members have been essential to his return to the classroom and share best practices. Another teacher stated, "The team's sharing is helpful to my practice, because I can watch her lesson and then bring it back so my co-teacher and I can use it in our class." Others concurred that they see their own growth as they too have adopted shared strategies.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing

Findings
Across classrooms, teaching strategies are becoming aligned to the curricula and are beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best. Lessons inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula, so that tasks and discussions are not always accessible to all students.

Impact
As defined by the instructional shifts and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, all students including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, are not yet sufficiently engaged in high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Staff believes that students learn best by "sharing what they know with peers, doing projects, speaking as a team, doing tasks themselves, redirecting and refocusing themselves, and using state rubrics for self- and peer-assessment." However, these practices are just beginning to be implemented across classrooms.

- In some classes, the level of rigor and questions was evident and provided students with student-to-student discussion opportunities, while in others it was uneven. In a grade 6 science class, students discussed their answers and collaborated in data-determined groups to revise their labs based on rubric-based teacher feedback and anchor charts. In a grade 8 history class, in small groups, students completed a worksheet as they discussed their answers in preparation for writing a paragraph using a schoolwide strategy. Although the lesson plan provided a list of generic multiple entry points, all students had the same worksheet. In another science class, students conducted experiments while working in groups and most discussed the evidence gathered. However, the ELL students who were grouped together did not discuss the evidence, because the groupings placed the newcomers together resulting in incomplete work products. Thus, there were missed opportunities to support students in a high-level discussion. In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) social studies class, students had just completed a gallery walk and were seated when a teacher pointed to the chart paper around the room, posed the question, "Where would you place your [quote]?" One student, to whom he was posing the question, got up and went to the chart paper and read his answer from the chart paper. Although students had worked in pairs, only single responders answered. The teacher moved to the summary where students were to complete a note catcher, but few completed it. Most jotted incomplete sentences, and the exit ticket was left for the next day because pacing was off.

- In a math class for students with disabilities, students in planned groups with tiered worksheets and technology solved for variables in expressions of real-world applications. Yet in another math class, the teacher posed low-level Depth of Knowledge (DOK) such as, "We measure an angle and it is another word for what?" and "Measure means what?" A select few answered in single word responses, leaving the class without opportunities to share their thinking. In an ELA class, although students were grouped and provided with scaffolds based on their individual needs, the discussion that occurred was uneven. The English as a New Language teacher supported a group of ELLs yet she dominated the discussion, controlling responses from teacher to students to teacher again. While another group of students finished early and had no extension, so students stated, "We are waiting for what is next." Although supports were provided, they resulted in uneven discussions.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing

Findings
Although curricula and academic tasks reflect planning, these documents inconsistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

Impact
Across grades and subjects, curricula and academic tasks unevenly provide access and supports to cognitively engage a diversity of learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- For English Language Arts (ELA), staff uses *Expeditionary Learning* and is integrating *LightSail* and *Imagine Learning* for students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs). As the main math program, staff use *Connected Math Practices 3* (*CMP3*), and is working to incorporate *GO Math!* and *EngageNY* for students with disabilities and ELLs. Staff weaves these programs together based on students' needs. However, it is unclear how this is done with coherence. Additionally, staff uses the New York City Scope and Sequence for social studies and science. Some teachers also use the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Lab program and *Urban Advantage* for science. Administration expressed an expectation for teachers to incorporate the professional learning workshops and resources provided into their lessons and units "to improve their pedagogical skills and impact student learning." Administration provided workshops with the expectation, for example, that staff use the *Universal Design for Learning* (UDL) to provide access for all students, increase rigor using Webb's *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) to create questions, and include questioning and discussion techniques in lessons and units. However, pre-planned DOK questions, using questioning and discussion techniques, and providing access for all students are implemented inconsistently across lesson and unit plans.

- Even though the school's total population includes 26% students with disabilities and 10% ELLs, the academic tasks in lesson plans do not consistently support diversity. Science unit plans have specific scaffolds, whereas other subjects have some scaffolds or a generic list of potential scaffolds to be used. Some lesson plans inconsistently provide entry points into the material so all students can access it. A math lesson plan for students with special needs included individualized support based on the students' needs such as color-coded, tiered independent practice differentiation, and an online program, to provide access for all learners. Yet, in a social studies ICT lesson, there are no scaffolds provided, but, instead, include a generic list of potential modifications for ELLs and none for students with special needs. A list of accountable talk sentence stems and citing evidence sentence starters were included for all students. In a science lesson, there was a list of modifications for each class and for each of the ELL students. Yet, although a math lesson plan had a section in which to list Individualized Education Plan goals addressed and differentiation for communication practice for ELLs, such as "Proper mathematical language is stressed to aid in pronunciation and context," no scaffolds were listed to support these practices.

- Staff inconsistently uses data and student work to revise and make adjustments to curricula. Although asked to demonstrate revisions to lesson and unit plans, little evidence was provided. Staff states that they use data to inform adjustments, but minimal anecdotal evidence was provided.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing

Findings
The school is developing their use of common assessments to measure student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas. Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact
Teachers inconsistently use results to adjust curricula and instruction or make effective in-the-moment adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Checking for understanding varied from class to class and is an area of focus schoolwide. Although the fist-to-five method of checking for understanding exists in some classes, only a few teachers implemented it. In a science class, a teacher asked students if they understood the directions and were ready to move on to the activity. A math teacher for students with special needs, used it to determine if students felt ready to move to the independent practice after few models. A social studies teacher used a different method called "plickers," an electronic method using the interactive white board and a smart phone that immediately tallied students' responses. Several teachers asked whole class questions and accepted one or two responses, then moved on to the next step. A math teacher asked questions to determine whether an angle was complementary or supplementary while a social studies teacher asked about Japan's relationship with other Asian countries. Yet in these cases, the one or two responses left most students without opportunities to share their thinking. Nor was there adjustment of practice to address students' learning needs, as many were left confused. In one class, the teacher left the exit slip for the next day. Although several teachers tracked students' responses and gave them a score based on a rubric for levels of responses for each of the standards being addressed, there was only one instance of a teacher checking for understanding, determining a need to make an adjustment to address her students' learning. A few other teachers collected data on student responses to questions and group work during the lesson with the intent to adjust future instruction.

- Students explained how to use rubrics and checklists. A student said, and others agreed, "You look at the grade you want, [like] a four and the requirements it takes and make sure you meet those requirements." Students stated they often use rubrics and checklists, "Not really to grade myself, [but] sometimes before the final draft we do peer editing." Although rubrics and checklists exist for assignments, in only two classes did students use such tools to reflect. In others, the opportunity was not presented at all. In a science class, according to the teachers' directions and lesson plan, students had a rubric and were encouraged to revise their labs based on the teacher feedback and the use of anchor charts.

- Although teachers use the assessments, not all departments use the results consistently to adjust instruction. Teachers collect assessment data, which was used to determine students' needs for additional services provided after school or on Saturdays. Yet, there is little to no evidence demonstrating that the additional instruction improved achievement, as there is no post-assessment or comparative data. Although there is evidence of Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) results, there is no evidence of a comparison of this data to demonstrate student achievement, growth, or progress toward goals. An intervention math teacher demonstrated evidence of comparing students' scores on three standards, with some improved as much as 63.7%, while others either decreased or improved less than 15%. Yet there is no evidence showing how this was used to inform instruction or pedagogy.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness and offer ongoing feedback.

Impact
Relative to school wide expectations, school leaders provide training, have a system of accountability for staff, and provide ongoing feedback to help families understand their children's progress.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders provide staff with clear expectations via weekly announcements for teachers and students, bulletins, and feedback from classroom observations aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Learning* domains. Each weekly announcement for teachers includes information about upcoming visits, meetings, classroom expectations regarding lesson plans, work samples, and providing feedback to students, and the CEP goals as aligned to the *Framework for Great Schools*. Additionally, administration, instructional leads, grade leaders, coaches, staff, and outside consultants provide professional development sessions, outlining staff expectations related to argumentative writing with claims and counterclaims, lesson planning, and use of agreed-upon instructional strategies, in order to build capacity and receive needed support for improving student achievement and effective pedagogy. Professional development occurs during teacher team meetings, and in addition, staff members plan and implement additional sessions for colleagues to support them in the achievement of school wide expectations. Staff members often attend professional learning opportunities off campus and turnkey their learning to their colleagues.

- Administrators and teachers discuss high expectations during the initial individual planning conferences, which are also used to develop teacher's goals. Classroom observations are followed-up with debrief meetings to provide specific and actionable feedback so there can be further focus on the implementation of the school wide initiative for argumentative writing to cite evidence and create a claim and counterclaim.

- Teachers reach out to families weekly to communicate their children's progress and areas of needed support. Most parents agreed that they are pleased with the consistent communication they receive from the staff especially that it is in their home language. Further, most parents stated they check their children's grades through *Engrade* or *Edmodo*, online grade books. Different grades use different programs. Students stated that they check *Engrade or Edmodo* weekly, and a few stated they check daily. Some teachers also use *Class Dojo* to share information regarding children's progress. Additionally, the school staff and administration provide parent workshops based on parents' needs, including high school applications and college trips. Both parents and students spoke about a college trip in Canada. Students spoke about attending these sessions and stated that they felt supported during the high school application process.