Quality Review Report

2014-2015

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12X047

1794 East 172nd Street
Bronx, NY 10472

Principal: Thomas Guarnieri

Date of review: December 15, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Maria Giacone
## The School Context

P.S. 47 is an elementary school with 1130 students from grade kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 20% Black, 65% Hispanic, 2% White, and 10% Asian students. The student body includes 24% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92.0%.

## School Quality Criteria

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1.1</strong> 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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1.2</strong> 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</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<td><strong>2.2</strong> 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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<th>School Culture</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.4</strong> Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<th>Systems for Improvement</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<td><strong>4.2</strong> Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**
Teacher teams are engaged in structured, inquiry-based collaborations and use the practice of analyzing student work to promote the achievement of school and team goals to enhance teacher practice and student achievement.

**Impact**
Collaborative, inquiry-based teacher teams address the school’s instructional goals through assessment of student work and data to refine pedagogy resulting in adult and student learning.

**Supporting Evidence**
- Teacher teams are structured to align their work with the school-wide instructional focus on independent reading and writing and review and analyze student work to assign themselves specific goals. For example, during a grade five ELA team meeting, teachers reviewed student work and determined that their next step was to adjust lessons to address figurative language. They set as a goal the attainment of one rubric level higher by the next benchmark assessment.

- Team collaborations have led to the strengthening of instructional capacity amongst peers. For example, the practice of developing question cards as a strategy was adopted by team members when a third grade teacher shared that strategy as a best practice. In addition, ELA teams have established the practice of norming the grading of student work together so that there is a uniform understanding amongst them on what merits a standards-level grade.

- The literacy teams are structured to use a school-developed protocol to look at leveled student work to analyze strengths and challenges and adjust lessons. The five-step protocol includes reviewing the task, rubric, curriculum map and standard; reading the student sample to see how it relates to the above; discussing the score received and the strengths and challenges for the student; aligning next steps for teachers and students to the demands of the Common Core Standards; and identifying areas for further professional development. For example, when one ELA team discovered that students struggled with opinion writing supported with reasons, they adjusted instruction to include point of view writing as a scaffold to lead to opinion writing.

- Teams collaborate to develop vertical alignment of curriculum and instruction. For example, grades two and three are looped for that purpose. The teams look at work from both grades to make adjustments to tasks and rubrics. As part of their work, the teams came to agreement on the rubrics to be used to score performance based assessment pieces.
Area of Focus

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
Teaching practices across classrooms consistently provide entry points for all learners including English language learners and students with disabilities. However, the use of strategic supports and extensions to foster deeper reasoning in student work products and participation varies across the school.

Impact
Across classrooms, curricular extensions support students to produce meaningful work products and discussions, yet there are missed opportunities for all learners to take ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence
- Across classrooms visited, students were afforded supports for access to instruction. This includes the Associate Teacher Model which the school has established so that for every classroom, teachers are paired for team teaching. This allows for teachers to spend more time to conference with greater numbers of students to address the needs of both individual and small groups of students.

- Across classrooms visited, there were variety of supports for all students to access the curriculum. For example, English language learners were provided with visuals, conferencing time with the teacher, Bloom’s Taxonomy question cards, vocabulary visible on charts, and opportunities to talk in small groups.

- Student work products and discussions in the classrooms visited reflected high levels of student thinking and participation. For example, in a 5th grade science class, students were asked to ponder what they could do with the knowledge gained from learning about a particular ecosystem through direct observation. In a 4th grade ESL class, students were in the planning stages of writing an explanatory text by grouping related information regarding types of joints and muscles needed in playing different sports into paragraphs and sections. However, across classrooms, there were missed opportunities for students to formulate questions to extend thinking, or assume responsibilities to ensure that their peers’ voices were heard and incorporated into discussions and tasks.
### Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum

**Rating:** Proficient

### Findings

Across grades and subject areas, curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Higher-order skills are consistently emphasized for all learners across grades and content areas.

### Impact

The school’s curricular decisions build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all learners. Academic tasks push student thinking across grades and subjects.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school established a curriculum mapping committee to review existing curriculum and assessment data based largely on ReadyGen. The committee made adjustments to respond to student needs and ensure Common Core alignment by incorporating elements of ReadyGen and balanced literacy, and including additional resources from Expeditionary Learning and New York City Common Core bundles. One significant change was to embed a guided reading component five times a week.

- In a teacher team meeting, teachers spoke about their ongoing work to ensure vertical alignment among grades to build skills for a smooth progression along the grades thus building coherence. For example, looping second and third grades allowed teachers to examine their students’ informational and explanatory writing samples to norm scoring.

- In reviewing their curriculum maps, teachers saw the need to amplify their writing program. To this end, a writing component was added each month across the grades to include opinion writing and informational writing that support the demands of the Common Core Learning Standards.

- Grade Five has put a greater emphasis on reading by including the LightSail program that incorporates reading libraries that are customized by Lexile levels, and includes progress monitoring and updates based on assessment performances.
Quality Indicator:  2.2 Assessment  Rating:  Proficient

Findings
Across classrooms teachers use common assessments and rubrics that are aligned to curricula, provide actionable feedback to students and determine student progress towards goals.

Impact
The school’s use of common assessments, data analysis and feedback allows teachers to determine student progress toward goals and adjust instruction accordingly to meet the needs of all students.

Supporting Evidence
- There is a school-wide practice to have both students and teachers provide rubric-aligned comments to sustain a grade on a piece of student work. Teachers also provide next steps. For example, on a third grade student’s information/explanatory text piece, the student wrote a reflective comment using the language of the rubric, “I think I deserve a 4 because I responded skillfully to all parts of the prompt.” The teacher responded, “Your essay demonstrates a strong understanding of the topic and you responded skillfully to all parts of the prompt with facts and details. Please make sure you organize ideas in paragraphs.”

- In a student meeting, students spoke about the feedback received by teachers both in writing and during conferencing that helped inform their next steps for improvement. For example, one student said, “I learned I have to use more transitional words. Now I use ‘furthermore’ and ‘however’ more.”

- To gauge the progress of students in writing, teachers use progress monitoring assessments derived from ReadyGen, the New York City Common Core library, and Expeditionary Learning. Monthly writing pieces are scored by teams of teachers and analyzed to inform instructional next steps. For example, when teachers in the fifth grade team reviewed student writing, they discovered that students struggled with the use of transition words and quotations to strengthen their writing. Subsequent lessons as well as student conferencing sessions were designed to address these areas.

- Assurance forms are used to track progress of students who are not meeting Fountas and Pinnell benchmarks. For each child, strategies and next steps are developed along with progress goals.
Findings
School leaders communicate high expectations to staff and families and provide training and feedback to guide progress towards those expectations.

Impact
Collaboration between staff and families fosters ongoing communication of high expectations and accountability resulting in a clear path to increased student achievement and college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence
- During a teacher team meeting, teachers spoke about their work in addressing the school-wide instructional focus on independent reading and writing through a balanced literacy approach. This was a collaboratively defined focus and teacher teams are structured so that each team has general education and English as a Second Language teachers as well as input from Special Education teachers so there is a commonly understood and unified approach to meeting the school’s instructional goals.

- Professional development includes teachers sharing best practices in collaborative settings. This has led to the development of a culture of Inter-visitations among staff to observe effective strategies that can be implemented across a grade relating to elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching as well as the school-wide instructional focus.

- During a parent meeting, parents indicated that teachers provide workshops on Common Core, and follow up with individualized training to help them assist their children in reading skills and formulating questions based on reading. One parent said, “One of the goals is to move children up one level by June.” Another parent said, “For Common Core, I learned it’s about problem-solving, vocabulary and working on the ‘why’ question.”

- Parents spoke about how they are continuously informed of their children’s progress. Progress reports are sent home approximately every month. In addition, there is frequent communication from teachers. One parent stated, “We see teachers on Tuesdays and they tell us step-by-step what to do and show us the tests. You know right away how your child is doing.”