Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 138

K-12 School M138

144-176 East 128 Street
Manhattan
NY 10035

Principal: Gregg Soulette

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The School Context

P.S. 138 is a K-12 school with 609 students from grade kindergarten through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 3% Asian, 32% Black, 57% Hispanic, and 9% White students. The student body includes 22% English Language Learners and 100% students with disabilities. Boys account for 70% of the students enrolled and girls account for 30%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 83.7%.

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**	**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 *Framework for Teaching*, 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**	**Well Developed**
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**	**Well Developed**
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**	**Well Developed**

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that strengthen teacher instructional capacity and promote the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work, including classroom practice, assessment data, and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused.

Impact

School-wide instructional coherence results in increased student achievement for all learners. Shared improvements in teacher practice result in mastery of goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are members of cohort and school-wide teams focused on looking at student work, lesson planning, using data to inform Individualized Learning Program (IEP) goal setting, and supporting students behaviorally so that they may increase their time academically and decrease the amount of time spent on behavioral challenges. A review of a team's minutes included student work samples and IEP goals. Questions asked during the meeting included, "What Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI) items were used to determine this goal?", "Do the work samples align to the goal?", and "How do the work samples show progress over the course of the school year/course of the IEP year?" The team assessed that the students were able to turn pages independently when presented with a book or newspaper and have shown a decrease in the frequency of prompts based on data collection, and an increased ability to answer comprehension questions with accuracy.

- Teachers are increasing instructional coherence for their school community and other District 75 schools by providing themselves with the opportunity to observe different levels of implementation of the verbal behavior approach, a form of applied behavior analysis, using the Count and Mand procedure, which reduces problem behaviors typically found with learners who have limited verbal abilities. A review of reflection sheets highlighted that teachers strongly agree that the approach was relevant to both their own and students' needs. Teachers learned new skills such as creating a symbols board for students and allowing increased instructional time for independent stations.

- During the teacher team interview, teachers collectively agreed that students are realizing the impact of their behavior on not only their own learning but also the learning of their peers. "I have seen growth in my students who acknowledge, 'I was disruptive for 15 minutes and no one was able to learn'", commented a middle school teacher. Teachers from the various sites that include 11 locations servicing students with disabilities from grades kindergarten to grade twelve in different settings note that the systems and structures related to academic and behavioral expectations the sites have put in place are enabling students to make better choices. This improvement has resulted from changes in curricula, which the faculty has attributed to the additions of real world experiences and their relevance to students' lives.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts.

Impact

Opportunities for discourse are built into lessons and student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's focus on student independence is promoted using instructional practices that support questioning and discussion techniques that vary in levels of challenge, include small group work, and integrate communication devices and questioning boards for students who need additional supports. During an 8:1:1 English Language Arts (ELA) class with students with autism, the essential questions included, "How can we increase our vocabulary?" and "How can we start the day positively with participation from all students?" Students had the option of working in a small group or independently. The sight word of the lesson was "clue" and students were engaged in work products that varied from an activity that reinforced the mystery unit to group workstations, direct instruction with the teacher, or work on the computer. One student worked with his occupational therapist during the lesson and transitioned with ease from one activity to the next. Students who completed their tasks before the end of the period had an area in the classroom to work on specific activities. Four of the eight students are being considered for a less restrictive environment in an inclusive setting as a result of the independence fostered in this class.

- During a math lesson, students participating in New York State Alternative Assessment (NYSSA) practiced functional and academic skills at individual workstations with and without teachers to increase their independence and foster appropriate social behaviors. A student who began the school year unable to focus and who experienced many behavioral tantrums was able to remain on task, attend to the teacher, and participate fully in the lesson while working, while other students worked at stations independently or with a paraprofessional to match identical pictures, sort non-identical items, and label functions of items. Students were able to communicate the lesson's objective to the reviewer through eye gaze, pointing, or minimal verbalization. At times, students rushed through their tasks in order to move to the next activity although some responses were incorrect and not acknowledged by the teacher.

- In a Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) second grade class, the anchor standard of the lesson concentrated on telling time from analog and digital clocks to the nearest five minutes. The teacher encouraged students to support each other while not giving the answers. The teacher also worked with an upper grade inclusion student who supports the class regularly and has successfully transitioned from being in a self-contained setting full-time. While in an ELA class, students were expected to use mystery vocabulary words such as clue, detective, evidence, suspect, and victim. Student participation was limited as the teacher facilitated rapid-fire questioning, allowing little time for students to process the questions. The fast pace of the lesson did not allow for high levels of student thinking.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Coherence to promote college and career readiness is evident for all students. Individual and groups of students, including the lowest and highest achievers, have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Lesson plans reviewed included a rationale, the Common Core Learning Standard being addressed, content area, and the standard text being used. Learning objectives were included for each student, which focused on behaviors and thinking skills students are expected to demonstrate, the IEP goals that the objective is aligned with, and how the student would be assessed.

- An ELA unit map on biographies was refined based on teacher feedback that was included on the document such as, "Sample texts are not relevant to the life of our students", "Additional literary resources needed", and "There are minimal real world connections." Teachers used the feedback to revise the unit which included Common Core Learning Standards for both NYSAA and standard assessment students, integration of technology, and assessments for both verbal and non-verbal students.

- When revising curricula, teachers ask themselves the following questions: "How do we make this lesson work for all of our students (NYSAA and standard)?", "How can the essential question make the learning relevant to students?", "Do teaching points lend themselves to differentiation by teachers based on needs of their students?", "How can we link writing and reading in an authentic way?", and "In what ways can we enhance student engagement by giving them an opportunity to share?"

- The school uses a variety of curricular resources to meet the needs of their diverse students ranging in settings from 6:1:1, 12:1:4, 8:1:4, and 12:1:1 and this is not an exhaustive list. *GO Math!, Next Steps, Equals,* and *Unique* curricular programs are used for math. *Reading A-Z, Ready Gen,* and *Buckle Down to Common Core* are utilized in ELA.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings
Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. The school uses common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress toward goals across grades and subjects, track progress, and adjust curricular and instructional decisions.

Impact
Actionable and meaningful feedback is provided to students and teachers regarding student achievement. All students demonstrate increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence
- The school uses New York State assessment data over a three-year period and Scantron data to track progress for standard assessed students. Alternate assessed student progress is tracked using the Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS) and NYSAA portfolio data. During the 2014-15 school year, out of 38 students in standard assessment, 45% scored a level 2 or above on the New York State ELA exam. In math, 50% scored a level 2 or above. Baseline high school student data for the social studies section of the NYSAA at the beginning of the 2015-16 school year included 65% of students performing independently on their assessments compared with their final average independent accuracy level of 70%.

- Students have a grading rubric for projects and tasks centered on communication, participation, and demonstration of skill. Students are evaluated on communication of wants and needs with high levels of independence during the task. Also considered are their participation and engagement with limited reliance on adult cueing and prompting, and demonstration of the targeted skill with limited to no prompting or cueing. The assessments are aligned with the school's instructional focus to increase student independence levels. Across content areas and grade levels, feedback on student work was appropriate for the student whether it was a picture symbol that communicated what the student needed to improve or written feedback, which included the student's current grade, successes and next steps.

- Teachers maintain portfolios for each student containing formal and informal assessment data, which support differentiation of curricula and targeting skills that need reinforcement. Subsequently, teacher ratings on the use of assessment in instruction have increased 10% during the first half of this school year.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

There is a culture of mutual accountability in the school community. Successful partnerships have been established with families to support student progress toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The professional development for the 2015-16 school year has focused on IEP review training to ensure student performance data is organized and evaluative. The training also ensures that the IEP is academically, physically, and social emotionally relevant, and that parent and student voices are included. As a result of the staff's collaborative efforts, the school's performance to inform student planning and goals toward college and career readiness has improved on pace with gains made within District 75. The staff has also been trained to use sensory integration, increase student independence, maximize communication in the classroom, and use NYSAA data to inform instructional practices.

- As a result of the school's targeted focus on student independence, students are navigating through school independently, requesting help when needed, increasing eye gaze to indicate understanding or misconception, and reducing behavioral issues. For example, a student at one site was able to demonstrate her comprehension of a question by pointing and nodding her head. At the beginning of the school year, the student relied on her paraprofessional to communicate for her.

- Parents are valued as thoughtful partners within the school community. Collaborative efforts have resulted in travel training workshops to prepare students for independent travel as they get older, workshops on iPad apps for students with disabilities, understanding annual goals as they relate to present level of performance information, and graduation and adult services requirements. Sessions are also conducted with the New York State Education Department's Adult Career & Continuing Education Services Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) program to provide parents with information for post-secondary employment options and potential funding for college. Workshops are facilitated in both English and Spanish.