Quality Review Report
2015-2016

P.S. 171 Patrick Henry
Elementary - Middle School M171
19 East 103rd Street
Manhattan
NY 10029

Principal: Dimitres Pantelidis
Date of review: January 14, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Jacqueline Gonzalez
The School Context

P.S. 171 Patrick Henry is an Elementary - Middle school with 734 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 5% Asian, 25% Black, 63% Hispanic, and 4% White students. The student body includes 3% English Language Learners and 20% students with disabilities. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 94.0%.

School Quality Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<td>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</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<th>School Culture</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<td>3.4 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>Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<th>Systems for Improvement</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</table>
Findings
Across the vast majority of classrooms, lessons reflect school wide beliefs that students learn best when they are engaged, valued and challenged with meaningful and rigorous learning activities. Teachers effectively implement a wide variety of instructional strategies to meet student's needs, learning styles, interests and strengths.

Impact
The school's commitment to student discussion and inquiry results in participation and work products that reflect higher order thinking and ownership of learning across content areas and grades.

Supporting Evidence
- Administrators and teachers espouse the belief that students thrive in learning when they are engaged in well-matched and appropriately challenging tasks. Across classrooms teachers asked questions as well as provided students ample independent learning time to engage with their peers in solving problems in a math class, giving feedback to classmates about written work in an English Language Arts (ELA) lesson and discussing their evidence based claims in social studies.

- Clear expectations for alignment of teaching to school wide beliefs are grounded in the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Administrators and teachers have developed a list of "Look-for's" which describe indicators of evidence for each of the domains in the Framework and specifically by instructional components. These expectations underline the school's emphasis on teachers as facilitators and students as participants and owners of their learning experiences. Across classrooms visited, the use of independent learning time as well as the facilitation of discussions allowed students opportunities for critical thinking and reflection. For example, in an ELA peer assessment activity, students were charged with helping their classmate improve the quality of their writing. In another lesson, students analyzed text structure to determine intention of the author. In a sixth grade lesson required students to answer questions from the perspective of colonists.

- Student ownership of learning is reflected in early childhood lessons as much as in upper grades. In a kindergarten class, the teacher worked with a small group in a guided reading lesson while the rest of the students worked in small groups on math, art and other tasks in thoughtfully organized centers. In the math center, one student as the group leader led her peers in a counting by 10’s lesson. She reminded them of the norms for respecting the other students in the room by keeping their voices low and ensured that they all took turns at the board. In a third grade lesson identifying cause and effect, one student reminds her classmate that he should underline the words he sees as important so that he could use them later in his answer.

- Across all lessons observed, scaffolds such as annotated text, vocabulary supports and modeling were provided as needed for students with disabilities and English language learners. For example, in one lesson, the teacher toggled between using Spanish words to ensure that English language learners were on task. In another classroom, the paraprofessional worked with a small group to model the activity and guide the students who were purposefully grouped through the designated task.
## Area of Focus

<table>
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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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**Findings**
Across classrooms, teachers strategically use a school-wide grading policy and data from common assessments that measure students’ progress and performance on Common Core Learning Standards aligned tasks. Rubrics and assessments are well aligned to the school’s curricula.

**Impact**
Teachers and administrators analyze assessment results and provide actionable feedback based on student mastery of learning goals. However, feedback does not illustrate the optimal use of timely, effective adjustments during instruction based on student work and discussions.

**Supporting Evidence**
- The school wide grading policy is used by all teachers and clearly states that "decisions about instruction, intervention, support, and promotion are informed by the report card grades allocated to students within the three marking periods per school year." Teachers also provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students about their progress and student work as evidenced by teacher created, task specific rubrics and comments on student work which refer to scores on rubrics. Students refer to teacher feedback as "very helpful" as they guide their next steps and improvements. However the feedback is typically at the end of a task or unit project. Opportunities for formative actionable feedback, for example about how students are developing their work or expressing their thinking during a lesson are often missed, hindering the acceleration of learning and the use of academic language for some students.

- The school's assessment calendar for the year provides a comprehensive view of the wide range of data that is collected about each student in all content areas. For example in reading, students are assessed via running records and Rally interim assessments, portfolios of student work, performance tasks aligned to content standards and Accelerated online assessments. In math, teachers administer diagnostics and performance based tasks. For science and Social Studies, teachers create common assessments and performance based tests which are administered monthly.

- Teacher teams analyze data from the wide range of assessments to determine adjustments to curriculum and instruction. For individual students teachers adjust scaffolds, text selection and grouping for learning activities as evidenced by lesson plans which demonstrate targeted supports for students and classroom observations which reflected strategic grouping of students based on reading levels and task mastery. This careful analysis and targeted support has ensured a consistent high performance and proficiency in math and reading across all grades and subgroups over the past 10 years as reflected in the school's performance ranking 85% or higher than all schools.
### Additional Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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**Findings**
The schools curricula are strategically aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and reflect effective integration of the instructional shifts. Across grades and content areas teachers collaborate to develop coherent, rigorous learning activities for all students.

**Impact**
All students including students with disabilities and English language learners access carefully designed curriculum that promotes college and career readiness. Lessons and activities provide a variety of ways for students to demonstrate critical thinking across content areas and grades.

**Supporting Evidence**
- Curriculum maps, lessons plans and pacing calendars across all content areas are aligned to the expectations of the Common Core and include strategic integration of the instructional shifts. Administrators and staff ensure that the school wide use of Ready Gen and CodeX, Go Math and CMP3 instructional materials is combined with protocols for implementation of a Workshop model, a balanced literacy approach and learning activities that extend student thinking through writing and discussion in math. Lessons across grades and subjects reflect school wide coherence and promote college and career readiness skills such as higher order thinking and analysis of text and high quality prompts for discussion. Higher order teaching points are included in every lesson and essential questions reflect the expectation for critical thinking. For example, one social studies lesson asks, “How did the development of colonies lead to rebellion?” In a math lesson students are asked to "justify why (a) and (a2) are unlike terms."

- Administrators and teachers have collaboratively developed a structure to define the expectations for lesson planning. Teachers use a template to plan daily teaching points, higher order essential questions, scaffolds for students with disabilities or language proficiency needs and midpoint assessments of learning. Scaffolds included in various lessons across grades and subjects include but are not limited to purposeful collaborative groups, varied text complexity specific to student reading levels, scaffolded text with teacher guided think aloud, graphic organizers, visual aids and modeling by the teacher for specific subsets of students during independent work. These strategies ensure that all students’ needs are addressed so that they have access to engaging and rigorous learning experiences.

- Rigorous habits are emphasized across all learning tasks for all learners. Teachers have a variety of options for ensuring that students are held to same standards for skill and content development. A school wide resource titled *Models of visual scaffolds for instructional use* provides a menu of options for teachers to integrate in lesson delivery in support of struggling learners, English language learners and students with disabilities. Some strategies include physical gesturing, guided note-taking, sentence starters, visual instructional plans, vocabulary development supports and ready reference lists on bookmarks that remind students of learning strategies they can use independently to access the more complex tasks or texts.
Findings
School leaders and staff consistently and effectively communicate high expectations for teaching and learning across the school. The school's culture for learning systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations that prepares students for success at high school and beyond.

Impact
Effective communication of high expectations results in a culture of mutual accountability and supports students in owning their educational experiences.

Supporting Evidence
- The principal has embedded clear expectations for professionalism and instructional practices throughout the past several years. Pedagogical practices are outlined in the Danielson Framework for Teaching “Look-for’s” developed by leaders and teachers, and used school wide in a cycle of mutual accountability for reflection and identification of next steps to address student needs. The principal also details expectations and categorizing desired practices in a document called "Principal's Non-Negotiable," such as reflective practice, commitment to professional growth and promotion of critical thinking. Additionally expectations for student interactions include encouraging collaboration and incorporating visuals to address multiple intelligences. Teachers interviewed indicated that these expectations are reflective of high standards and are accompanied by high levels of support from administrators and colleagues via professional learning, inter-visitation and collegial coaching and mentoring.

- Expectations for optimal learning environments are emphasized daily as the administrative team meets each morning to discuss data from assessments and classroom visits. This ensures that the school's leadership is "on the same page" as stated by the principal about how students' needs are being met in lessons across the school. Learning Walks, brief classroom visits by school leaders and teachers provide another lens into whether teachers are implementing strategies to improve student learning. For example, a recent Learning Walk focused on student engagement in lessons and tasks. Observation data from these observations was used to make instructional adjustments around pacing and mid-point checks for understanding to ensure students are on task. Teachers and administrators share a common goal of preparing students for rigorous academic work beyond eighth grade as well as exposing students to the process of seeking opportunities related to college and career. The school has extensive partnership efforts with 21 local businesses, hospitals, colleges and universities, Students are provided information via guidance counselors and teachers about potential future paths. Students say they know they will go to college because that's the message they hear in every grade. They attend various college trips and engage in internships that are career related, for example with Mount Sinai Hospital for medical careers. Additionally, students engage in project based presentations and Regents level courses.

- Students in Regents level courses for Algebra, Living Environment and Spanish are prepared for the challenging curriculum of high school courses. Over 90% of students in Regents classes pass the exams in the eighth grade. In addition, the school focuses on social emotional development and guidance supports. The school partners with the Child Mind Institute’s full time psychologists to work with individual and groups of students based on identified needs.
Findings
Teams of teachers meet regularly to systematically analyze instructional practices and develop strategies for improving student achievement aligned to the Common Core. Leadership structures facilitate teaching ration with school leaders to make key decisions about pedagogy and curriculum.

Impact
Effective collaboration structures allow teachers to reflect on their practice and make decisions, determining improvements across the school, building teacher instructional capacity and increasing student outcomes.

Supporting Evidence
- All teachers and administrators are engaged in professional learning cycles which include weekly formal team meetings as well as many flexible informal modes of collaboration and communication. The structure of team meetings is guided by the school's thoroughly defined Professional Learning Cycles which includes a weekly, focused approach to collaboration and learning as well as deep data analysis and identification of implications for practice based on students' needs. The resulting school wide coherence is evidenced by teacher teams' effective use of protocols for discussing student work and data. This strategic data analysis and focused attention to instruction leads to improved student achievement as evidenced by over 89% course pass rates across content areas including over 75% of eight grade students graduating with high school credits.

- Teachers interviewed stated that they appreciate their structured collaboration and opportunities to share best practices. They say it is easy to receive and provide feedback to colleagues in a professional environment that engenders a high level of trust. Teachers say sharing of best practices has strengthened their capacity to implement strategies that support student learning. For example, helping students to navigate the meaning of an assessment as opposed to just administering a task. Additionally teachers stated that instructional coherence within a grade and content area is increased due to ongoing communication and planning time with their colleagues. The use of protocols also enables conversations across grades increasing vertical coherence for expectations and pedagogy which provides a stable learning environment with clear expectations for students as they progress through the grade levels.

- A teacher team observed studied a student's response to questions for a document based assessment. The findings were grounded in the student's error in distinguishing relevant from irrelevant facts. The team discussed several potential reasons for misunderstanding and then delved into potential instructional strategies that they could use to help students across classrooms to address similar questions successfully. This type of approach to looking at student work enables teachers to creatively suggest adjustments to one another from their particular content expertise as well as from their knowledge of students supporting mastery of goals for all learners.