Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. Q086
Elementary School Q086
87-41 Parsons Boulevard
Queens, NY
11432

Principal: Karen Zuvic

Date of review: March 30, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince
**The School Context**

P.S. Q086 is an elementary school with 930 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 50% Asian, 8% Black, 34% Hispanic, and 4% White students and 4% other students. The student body includes 32% English Language Learners and 16% students with disabilities. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 94.0%.

**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>
<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>Celebration</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 <em>Framework for Teaching</em>, 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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<tr>
<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>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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<td><strong>To what extent does the school…</strong></td>
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<tr>
<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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<tr>
<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
School leaders and faculty engage in a rigorous process of curriculum development and refinement, strategic integration of instructional shifts and emphasize rigorous habits for all students including students with disabilities and English language Learners.

### Impact
Engaging coherent curricula encourage all students to demonstrate their thinking. Curricula and lesson plan refinement ensures access for all learners.

### Supporting Evidence
- An examination of unit plans indicates that they closely meet the needs of individual students, using rigorous content, critical thinking and problem-solving skills through a *Wonders* Program, specifically for the first grade aligned with the *Common Core, Ready-Gen, Fundations* and *GO Math*! programs. Grade-level curriculum units in science and social studies are blended with the *ReadyGen* program and focus on strategies that ensure the coherence of what is taught and how it is taught across each grade level. Questioning and discussion strategies are incorporated into lesson plans in order for students to answer an essential question in unit plans. Self-reflection checklists, using elements of the task rubric, is seen across subject areas and grades. Students with disabilities and English Language Learners participate in lessons with leveled literacy texts and are in small groups with scaffolding such as graphic organizers, manipulatives and visual representations.

- Consistent focus on academic vocabulary and daily explicit word-work activities are introduced and reinforced throughout units of study. Teachers collaborated and created rubrics for informational, persuasive, narrative, opinion writing by grade. As a result, a focus on the question became a catalyst for students to generate their own question related to the task rubric. A question format and criteria checklist was created to assist all students in using questioning and discussion techniques. Also, in addition to *GO Math!*, the instructional teams have implemented a questioning and discourse protocol in math in order for students to demonstrate their thinking.

- Teachers review and refine curricula based on trends revealed by careful analysis of student work. Interim data provides additional information leading to further versions of the curriculum. Modifications are then made to all units of study to address gaps in student understanding and provide scaffolding and rigorous activities for each grade level, as evidenced by adjustments to prior lessons, tasks, assessments and various research strategies. Multiple entry points are embedded into all unit plans addressing the needs of students with disabilities and the English Language Learners (ELLs). Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* is used to create high-level, tiered and open-ended questions to expand writing and student discussion. Units of study include cognitively demanding summative assessment tasks while subject area lessons include scaffolding and enrichment components for all learners to have access to these tasks.

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**Area of Celebration**

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings
Across classrooms, teaching practices reflect a coherent set of beliefs informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points into the curricula for all students.

Impact
Teaching practices that ensure that all learners are engaged in challenging tasks that enable them to demonstrate higher order thinking is not yet evident across the vast majority of classrooms.

Supporting Evidence
- In all classrooms visited, students participated in class discussions by responding to both teacher and student-generated questions. Students not only answered questions, but asked questions and extended their own thinking and that of their peers by providing examples from text or their discussions to support their contributions. In some classes, teachers asked open-ended questions to encourage student thinking, facilitate responses, and give students an opportunity to deepen their thinking by questioning each other during think-pair-share portions of the lesson, as well as in whole-class discussions. In a grade 4 class, the students were exploring New York and the colonization and revolution in the 13 colonies. Students worked in groups to discuss what they discovered, define specific vocabulary, and summarize throughout the task. Instructions included scaffolding targets of "write what helps you remember what happened, retell in your own words, elaborate in your own words the main idea and key details." In another grade 1 class, vocabulary was not frontloaded prior to writing an opinion piece to further student thinking. Although there was a mentor text, students did not have enough time to turn and talk about the story.

- In most classrooms, multiple entry points were embedded in lessons. Student groups were flexible, depending on their specific needs. Students were observed working with great effort when sharing peer-to-peer tasks. In a grade 3 math class, students were asked to solve multi-step problems involving fractions and share out explanations with each other using reason and evidence. Teachers used visuals, leveled texts and a variety of graphic organizers assuring varied scaffolds. Flexible groupings in most classes included remedial, on-level and enrichment groups.

- A review of observation data showed classroom practice alignment to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Also, the school's beliefs about how students learn best, that is, to promote student ownership of questioning and discussion, coupled with students taking initiative in partner and whole-class discussions, are embedded in the instructional goals. Across most classrooms visited, children were engaged in purposeful groups with clear expectations about what independent work and partner or group work should look and sound like. Some teachers are in the beginning stages of the school practice of implementing admit and reteach slips on a daily basis to assess student's knowledge before starting a lesson in order to engage them in instructional goals.
Additional Findings

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subjects. Teachers use ongoing checks for understanding across classrooms.

Impact
Assessment results are used to adjust curricula and teachers make effective adjustments during instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

Supporting Evidence
- School leaders and faculty regularly review student work to inform instruction and develop supports for all learners, including students with disabilities and ELLs. Curricula maps and lesson planning provide evidence that the school is embedding the use of assessment and ongoing checks for understanding. Item analysis of State exams also leads to curriculum adjustments. School-wide data is collected and examined to monitor the impact of learning and plan for future professional development. Furthermore, a school-wide grading policy provides continuity across the grades along with common rubrics and checklists to assist teachers. Running records are used to monitor student progress and enabling teachers to access next steps for individual student reading levels.

- Teachers use checklists to gather information about student progress during lessons as well as conferencing notes, stop-and-jot and hands-up by students for assessing on-the-spot student learning. Some assessment results may lead to regrouping and re-teaching students. In addition, teacher teams engage in analysis of student work and grade teams collect and compare data, looks at sample work from classes that have made extreme gains and use these classes as models. Before lessons, students are exposed to a variety of pre-assessments that include verbal and written tasks. Teachers determine prior knowledge and student progress in attaining previous learning goals.

- Students shared that they are aware of their reading level and why rubrics are “important in their reading, writing and science classes.” In a grade 4 English Language Arts class, students were working on different assignments referring to a text on the San Francisco earthquake. Students then responded using an exit slip asking how fact-based questions help explain events. They were also asked to describe the strategy learned in finding key details in the text. Students referenced their writing plans with former feedback, and discussed ways with the table group to improve their plans. Several feedback forms referenced transition or linking words and focusing on details. The 2014-2015 Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) data increases indicated that gaps in curriculum were beginning to be addressed. Teachers stated that they are seeing improvements in student writing as students are showing a deeper understanding of content and explanation of claims using text-based evidence.
Quality Indicator: 3.4 High Expectations  
Rating: Well Developed

Findings
Across the school, a culture for learning is established that communicates and embeds high expectations shared by staff, families and students connected to college and career readiness.

Impact
A culture of mutual accountability for high expectations for teaching and learning permeates the school environment. The entire staff successfully partners with families to support student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence
- High expectations for learning and positive character traits are communicated to the entire school community. Parents are provided with multiple opportunities to participate in academic workshops with their child, meetings on social media, internet safety and how to monitor student’s behavior when engaged in these activities. The school has established a Peer Collaborative Teachers program to teach parents how to help their children at home and how to manage their time between schoolwork and other after school activities. Parents readily shared that they appreciated the school’s constant communication regarding their child’s progress via email, phone calls and in-person meetings. Also, parents of pre-kindergarten children are taught how to assist their child in transition and fifth grade parents are guided in the transition to middle school.

- During the teacher team meetings, teachers stated that the support of administration and their colleagues strengthens a common language and provides a strong culture for learning. It was noted that high expectations are reflected in the purpose and respect that is visible in hallways, classroom and offices. Students are recognized for their academic achievement and their citizenship through the Safety, Organization, Achievement and Respect (SOAR) program. There is a Career Day informing students about different fields, opportunities and steps to achieve their goals. In addition, a College Day has students make banners, write about what they want to be and how to achieve it. Teachers wear their own college attire and college websites and videos are presented to expose students to different career paths. Furthermore, the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program is used to teach, acknowledge and reward positive student behaviors and cultivates a mutual accountability among teachers and students.

- Teachers are guided by school leaders who provide clear expectation for pedagogical and professional practice via verbal and written communication, consistent team meetings and meetings with the principal. Teachers work collaboratively towards ensuring high expectations through daily instructional practices using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Expectations include that every student will graduate with the skills and knowledge reflective of a strong and engaging learning environment toward career and college readiness. For example, in a grade 5 class, students were engaged in analyzing a poem entitled *Homeless*, used in conjunction with other poems on man’s struggles, by comparing and contrasting themes and identifying examples of what it means to be without a place to live. The class also created lists of words to discuss in their groups such as courage, dreams, kindness, fears, peace and hope.
Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development  
Rating: Well Developed

Findings
All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations. Distributive leadership structures provide a means for teachers to have input on key decisions about curricula and teaching practices.

Impact
The work of teacher teams has resulted in school-wide instructional coherence, improved pedagogy, student work and progress. Shared leadership structures build capacity to improve student learning.

Supporting Evidence
- Many teachers serve as leaders. Distributive leadership structures include teacher-led professional development sessions, creation of curriculum development units and setting schedules for inter-visitations and peer collaborations. Teacher teams across grades are working together to plan lessons aligned to the Common Core generating text-dependent questions to reinforce student habits. Referring to text for evidence and promoting critical thinking skills was evidenced in lesson plans, and promoted through teacher planning. Common language, rubric alignment to practices, and analysis of student results at the end of tasks were observed in many classes, thus establishing school-wide coherence.

- Teacher teams participate in planning, inquiry and professional development meetings to facilitate increased student achievement and expertise in pedagogy. Topics that have been addressed include implementing the Common Core Learning Standards and the Danielson Framework for Teaching, as well as Webb’s Depth of Knowledge for essential questioning techniques. Common preps have been programmed for all grades to allow for grade planning, examination of student work and the sharing of best practices. Questions such as, “What am I going to try out in my classroom?” and “What can I use involving multiple entry points?” were discussed at the grade 4 and grade 5 team meeting. Teachers were also looking at student work for strengths and gaps in their writing and the implication for teacher practice. Instructional modifications were decided upon collaboratively. At the grade 1 team meeting, a significant amount of work was covered on modifying and scaffolding skills in math using consistency and routines. Assignments were delegated among teachers to create anchor charts showing basic math skills, visual clues to help mathematical process and math exemplars to model application of skills. Teachers decided to incorporate these techniques in all grade 1 classes.

- MOSL teams examine data, PBIS teams work to improve student behaviors, and Crisis Intervention Teams, Building Response Team and Professional Learning Teams all work with school leaders. New teachers are supported through professional development with a coach and teachers shared they now have more interest in working across grades to better meet the needs of students. Distributed leadership is evident through the rotation of teacher roles during meetings, thus allowing all participants to have a voice in the decision-making process. Teacher leaders conduct professional development. During an observed meeting, the vertical team was comparing student work to access learning outcomes, finding that more scaffolding was needed for English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Meeting agendas reveal a consistent practice of reviewing student work as part of an inquiry-based protocol.