



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**P.S. 138 Brooklyn**

**Elementary – Middle School K138**

**760 Prospect Place  
Brooklyn  
NY 11216**

**Principal: Marie Chauvet-Monchik**

**Date of review: March 27, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Debra R. Lamb, Ed.D.**

## The School Context

P.S. 138 Brooklyn is an elementary - middle school with 679 students from pre-kindergarten through grade eight. The school population comprises 87% Black, 9% Hispanic, 2% White, 1% Asian and 1% other students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90.3%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
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### Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports and extensions into the curricula. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

### Impact

All learners, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs), are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills and ownership in student work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- The learning objective of a lesson in a grade 5 Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class was “Students will explain the interactions between two or more individuals in a text.” Of the 24 students in the class, eight were SWDs, nine were ELLs, and the remainder were general education students. All students participated in guided close reading of the book, *Pale Male: Citizen Hawk of New York City* by author Janet Schulman, followed by small group instructional activities targeted for specific groups of students based on their strengths and areas of need as well as their assigned accommodations and interventions. While the teacher circulated among groups, a paraprofessional worked closely with one student and a reading specialist worked with a targeted group of students. “We do a learning style inventory with the staff and try to match the staff with the students based on the learning styles,” stated the principal. “We also address student diversity. For example, we have a lot of students of the African Muslim faith and we match them with a teacher who is able to address their cultural needs.”
- The learning objective in a grade 3 math class was “Students will explore perimeter and area as attributes of polygons.” The essential question of this lesson was “How is finding the area of a shape different from finding the perimeter of a shape?” Two teachers are assigned to this class, one of whom is a grade leader and the other is a second-year teacher. One teacher used a document projector to model for students how to roll a pair of number cubes representing width and length to create shapes with color tiles on one-inch grid paper. The teacher recorded the area of the shape and then drew the shape. In one group, students were helping a peer to understand the concepts. While one teacher circulated among the groups, the other teacher worked closely with six targeted students, recording information about their individual effort in this activity.
- A group of students in a grade 8 Regents Algebra class, said “We’re drafting a linear function and quadratic equations.” Students knew the class routines well and had freedom to work wherever they felt comfortable, with some at desks, others on the floor, and others in the hallway. Students used iPads to chart information. Teachers circulated among groups as students worked. Classroom routines were well established and a flexible grouping chart was posted.
- In response to the question “How do you know what you’re learning?” a student said, “We do journal entries and can choose an activity from the ‘Show What You Know’ sheets.” Another student added, “My teacher explained that you can’t judge a book by its cover so you have to look at the learning objective, events, main idea, definitions, and details from the text.”

## Area of Focus

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

Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students on whom they are focused. Distributed leadership structures are in place within this school.

### Impact

Team analysis of assessment data and student work has resulted in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students; however, regular documentation of the team's discussions to connect team participation in collaborative work to improvements in teacher practice is not systematic. Teachers have built leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers participate in collaborative grade-level and vertical team meetings weekly, and take turns facilitating their meetings. During meetings, teachers look for common trends, including strengths and weaknesses, among student work categorized as low, medium, and high. "We look at the needs of the children and discuss different entry points," said a teacher. Teachers mentioned discussing student data using the *Atlas Looking at Data* protocol during common planning meetings. In a grade 8 meeting observed, teachers discussed the mock English Language Arts (ELA) and math assessments administered the prior week. Teachers noticed that some students were spending a lot of time on the short response section of the assessment, and discussed commonalities among the two assessment results. Consistent with the *Atlas* protocol, teachers discussed (a) what the data suggests, and (b) what inferences could be drawn. One teacher questioned whether students were self-checking their responses. Another teacher identified scientific notation as a challenge, particularly student comprehension of word problems. Student recognition of linear equations was a consistent challenge for students performing at the bottom third of 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Assessment data was discussed, such as the number of students who responded incorrectly to a question. Team members agreed that distributing copies of the actual student responses to the test questions would facilitate more in-depth discussion.
- Eighth grade teachers mentioned their participation in intervisitations scheduled to observe each other's practice related to Danielson practices and *CODE X™* implementation. There is also evidence of team articulation with 7<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, such as the sharing of research articles. Teachers talked about recent professional development focused upon how children of diverse cultures are treated in the classroom, which was connected to a book they read entitled *Changing Hearts and Minds*. Teachers talked about trends, such as an increase in text-based evidence seen in student work. Regarding the impact of team participation on their pedagogy, teachers talked about reflective practice and discussions of what strategies are working, such as "pair/share," as well as those strategies not working. Teachers agreed that taking minutes of meetings to document the team's work related to curriculum changes and shared practices will strengthen the team's ability to connect their process to pedagogical improvements.
- Every curricular decision is driven by the work of the school's teacher-led Data Team, such as the identification of the school's instructional focus on writing. Teachers serve along with administrators on the school's Professional Development Team, Curriculum Team, Response to Intervention (RtI) Team, and Measures of Student Learning (MoSL) Team. Every grade is represented by a grade leader. Teachers serve as ambassadors for monthly network professional development in which they are exposed to and share the latest strategies and methodologies in their areas of expertise.

## Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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### Findings

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

### Impact

Coherence exists across grades and subject areas that promotes college and career readiness for all students. Individual and groups of students, including the lowest- and highest-achieving students, ELLs, and SWDs have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school selected Scholastic's *Common Core CODE X™* for its middle grades and Pearson's *ReadyGEN™* for its elementary grades. For mathematics, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's *GO Math!™* program is used in kindergarten through grade 5 and *Connected Mathematics Project 3 (CMP3)*, together with access to the program's *ThinkCentral* website. Teachers infuse curricula modules from the state's EngageNY website to ensure integration of instructional shifts.
- Teachers also supplement these programs with real-world applications, virtual experiences, videos, and current events articles from *Junior Scholastic®* magazine to enhance critical thinking skills. Examples of curricula-related real-world experiences include students visiting the Barclays Center to discuss the building's architecture; attending a viewing of the film, *Selma*; participating in ongoing conversations with an anthropologist; engaging in robotics as part of Medgar Evers College's Pipeline Initiative. The Pipeline Initiative has increased STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) awareness among the school's students in grades 5 through 8, as evidenced by the high number of students passing their science courses (96.7%) in school year 2013-2014. Middle school students have access to NYS Regents exams in biology, earth science, and mathematics. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of the grade 8 students taking the biology regents have successfully completed the course and have earned high school credit upon graduation.
- Grade-level curriculum maps include the topic and length, standards addressed, big ideas and enduring understandings, essential questions, content and skills, key terms and vocabulary, and assessment activities. Lesson plans include teaching and learning objectives, essential questions, vocabulary, differentiation, resources, and strategies such as literature circles. Teachers have modified the pacing of lessons they deemed to be too long. "We've chosen what's important," said teachers. "We look at the needs of the children and develop different entry points." Lesson plans include advanced activities for students who have demonstrated mastery of skills as well as detailed interventions for students with special needs, such as non-linguistic representations (visuals) for ELLs and accommodations for SWDs like identifying a peer as a designated reader to read aloud, using alarms to help with time management, and providing extra time to process oral and written information.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The school uses common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress towards goals across grades and subjects, track progress, and adjust curricular and instructional decisions. Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

### Impact

All students, including ELLs and SWDs, demonstrate increased mastery. Teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs and students are aware of their next learning steps.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use a variety of formative and summative assessment tools to check for understanding, including baseline, benchmark, and performance-based assessments. Pearson's *Development Reading Assessment (DRA)* is used to assess student reading levels for instructional planning. Students were able to identify their Fountas & Pinnell reading levels. Quick checks for understanding are used, such as admit and exit slips. Examples of exit slip topics include, "The most important thing I learned today was...", "Summarize today's lesson in 25 carefully chosen words," and "One thing I still need help with is..." Teachers maintain conference notes and use checklists to record anecdotal information regarding student performance. Other quick checks for understanding include parking lots, and the Stop Light, Fist-to-Five, and Thumbs Up/Down methods.
- Students said rubrics are used "to look at what we need to do to excel." "My science teacher tapes the rubric to our table," said a student. Students engage in self- and peer-assessment practices, using the language of their rubrics to provide feedback. "Teachers use rubrics to give us good comments, next steps, and to evaluate what we learned." When students engage in group activities, teachers use four-point rubrics to score their interactions, including how members listen respectfully, actively participate in share-out, use library voices when talking, use text evidence to support their responses, and share material.
- Students shared work of which they were proud. A 4<sup>th</sup> grade student shared an essay he wrote about the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. "It was an interesting event though not as well-known as the American Revolution or Civil War," he said. The student received a score of "3" on a five-point (0 to 4) expository writing rubric, which rated the student's content and analysis; command of evidence; coherence, organization and style; and control of conventions. "My teacher said I need to add more descriptive words." A 5<sup>th</sup> grade student shared a story he wrote entitled, "The Night of the Spadefoot Toads." The student received a score of "3" on a four-point dialogue rubric. An 8<sup>th</sup> grade student shared a graph she made in which she "rotated around a point of a fixed figure." Her teacher's feedback was, "Great work (The figure is not fixed but the point is fixed). Was there a pattern you noticed?" Finally, a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student shared an essay she wrote about homeless youth following her reading of an article entitled "No Place to Call Home," for which she received a score of "3.5."



<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### 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, and provide focused feedback to all students.

### Impact

A culture of mutual accountability for high expectations exists at this school. The school has successfully partnered with families to support student progress towards those expectations. All students own their educational experience and are aware of their next learning steps.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school’s motto is “Educate to Elevate.” The staff handbook supports the establishment of a “literate environment” by maintaining literacy and math word walls where students can add to their vocabulary from the current unit’s key ideas. The school’s professional development plan is aligned to the New York State Professional Development Standards which “...provide a blueprint for high quality professional development for all educators to improve instruction and student achievement.”
- “I’ve been here forever,” said a parent. “My eldest is 29 years old and graduated from here. I volunteer over and over again.” Each fall, the school hosts a career day and invites parents to share their professional experiences with students. Parents reported that workshops are held three times each month. Parents attended a Cook-Shop Program workshop, a nutrition education initiative of the Food Bank for New York City (NYC). A particularly well-attended workshop series conducted during the fall and culminated in a graduation exercise was the SISTA project, an intervention initiative of the Centers for Disease Control. Parents said this workshop focused on “how we as women should take care of ourselves, our relationships, and how to value ourselves.” Parent-Teacher Association meetings are well attended. Parents serving on the School Leadership Team were able to describe their contribution to the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan.
- In response to a question regarding whether schoolwork is hard or easy, a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student said, “It hard, but it gets easier as you get the hang of it.” A 4<sup>th</sup> grade student said, “Teachers don’t try to give work too challenging because it might cause a delay in learning. A 5<sup>th</sup> grade student said, “It’s not that hard, but I understand it. Some students get help from the AIS (Academic Intervention Services) and ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers.” When asked, “What do you do when you don’t understand something being taught, students replied, “Our teacher gathers a group of kids who don’t get it and puts them in one table group. Kids who understand can help others as partners. Our teacher encourages us to communicate with each other and add details to each other’s responses.” Students in grades 6 and 7 have an opportunity to attend Saturday courses at Medgar Evers College that help to prepare them for the Specialized High School Admissions Test. Students participating in the school’s afterschool Beacon program receive vocational and college counseling. On the day of this visit, a team of students were actively practicing for their participation in a dance competition called “Step It Up” sponsored by the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development in which they plan and complete community service projects and develop social campaigns to raise awareness of issues that impact their communities. P.S. 138’s team was one of 80 teams who will perform at the Apollo Theater.