

# Quality Review Report

## 2017-2018

**P.S. 115 Alexander Humboldt**

**Elementary 06M115**

**586 West 177 Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10033**

**Principal: Boris Consuegra**

**Dates of Review:  
October 25, 2017 - October 26, 2017**

**Lead Reviewer: Liza Zarifi**

# The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Celebration** to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Focus** to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as **Additional Finding**. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

## Information about the School

P.S. 115 Alexander Humboldt serves students in grade PK through grade 5. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm>.

## School Quality Ratings

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area	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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Area of Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</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 Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area	Rating
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</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 Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

### Systems for Improvement

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area	Rating
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products	<b>Area of Celebration</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.3 Leveraging Resources</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

The use of resources and leadership decisions related to space, partnerships, consultants, teacher assignments, student program groupings, and interventions align with the school leaders' instructional goals and support student learning needs.

### Impact

The alignment of resources to instructional goals effectively supports student access to college and career ready learning opportunities, as evidenced in meaningful student work products from a range of learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

### Supporting Evidence

- The use of resources and organizational decisions support the school's instructional goals. For example, the administrative team separated the math instructional time into two blocks to align with the school leaders' goals on improving math student achievement through increased conceptual learning and problem-solving work. The classes teach grade-level content in one block, and interventions and problem-solving in the second block. Interventions address standards-based gaps that were identified through a prerequisite assessment given in the beginning of the year. The leadership team purchased notebooks for all students across grades to support problem-solving instruction. Teachers use the math journals as a daily structure to support students' use of multiple strategies to solve problems and the inclusion of writing to explain math thinking. Teachers provide feedback directly in the notebooks and utilize them in collaborative planning meetings to refine tasks and instruction. Additionally, the administrative team allocated funds for a math consultant who supports planning and the data-driven selection of standards-aligned math tasks with teachers. The consultant observes and meets with teachers to support instruction on conceptual understanding.
- Teacher assignments and student interventions effectively support access to learning opportunities that lead to college and career readiness. The school leaders have appointed two dedicated Reading Recovery teachers that focus support on the most at-risk struggling readers. Last year, they focused support on sixteen first-grade students and were able to move eight students out of the program and onto grade-level. The other eight students made gains through June 2017, and continue to receive targeted support this year. Additionally, the Reading Recovery teachers support the Response to Intervention (RtI) program in grades two and three by providing intensive small-group literacy instruction. Students in these grades all made gains as measured by Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) reading levels.
- The administrative team has allocated funding for five teachers to participate in a data committee. Teachers applied for the position and the goal is to build transparent data systems and coherency across the grades, as well as attend professional development (PD) sessions and turnkey the learning for staff. The committee worked with teachers to establish transparent data systems using Google Drive, and are now focusing on building vertical coherence and tracking growth in major standards to improve math achievement. One teacher reported attending a recent math PD on "13 rules we teach wrong in math" and having the opportunity to share that with the staff.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices align to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about student learning. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points to engage learners, particularly ELLs and students with disabilities.

### Impact

While teachers incorporate practices and strategies aligned to the curricula and in support of all learners, opportunities exist to provide high-quality supports and extensions so that all learners demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices reflect the school leader's beliefs on the gradual release model to structure lessons. In a second grade math lesson, a teacher worked on a subtraction problem with students in the meeting area. Students used their whiteboards to solve the problem with the teacher as a guided practice, and then were released to table groups to continue working independently. In a kindergarten class, students worked independently in table groups on a writing task and had access to a model task with a drawing and words. The teacher worked with a small group and then circulated. In a third-grade English Language Arts (ELA) lesson, the teacher introduced the objective and then modeled the skill by doing a think aloud with a familiar book. He then chose another book and asked students to practice answering the same question with that text. There was a missed opportunity to effectively utilize the guided practice portion to address the misconception students were having; the teacher called on multiple students until one gave a response that was accepted, and then moved on to the independent work.
- Across classrooms, teaching strategies provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Teachers are differentiating instruction through grouping and scaffolding tasks, for example, in a second grade math lesson, the teacher gave the same problem to all three groups, but changed the numbers based on the level of the group. In a first grade class, students were working on the same skill, but had access to various levels of books to work on the skill at their table. In a kindergarten class, the teacher supported a small group during the independent practice by transcribing their ideas into writing. There were missed opportunities in other classes to provide extensions for students who completed the independent work early.
- The staff are focusing on discussion as a best practice for learning and accountable talk anchor charts were observed across all classrooms. Students engaged in turn and talks across classrooms; in a fourth-grade ELA lesson, students talked through the purpose of the task they were about to work on independently with their partner. In a fifth-grade science class, the teacher asked groups to discuss how technology is used in everyday life. In a kindergarten class, the teacher projected a piece of student work and asked questions that were answered by one student at a time. Opportunities exist to build in more student-led and student-to-student discussion in classrooms.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Planned and refined curricula and academic tasks align to the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards, and consistently emphasize higher-order skills across grades and subjects.

### Impact

The leaders and faculty have made purposeful decisions to build coherence in the curricula across grades and subjects that ensures cognitive engagement through tasks as well as the promotion of college and career readiness for all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty ensure that the curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards to build coherence across grades. Year-long curricula overviews across grades and subjects map out the pacing for the year and content for each unit. Curriculum maps align content to the Common Core and content standards, give teaching points along with questions, and identify vocabulary connected to the unit. For example, a first-grade integrated reading and writing unit about Animals and Habitats indicated unit assessments, text-based questions, bilingual resources, and differentiation strategies for ELLs and students with disabilities. A kindergarten math unit also details the Standards for Mathematical Practices along with daily objectives and assessments. A third-grade science map includes key ideas, curricular resources, and assessment.
- Academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills. In a fourth-grade class, students worked on a performance task that paired media and grade-level complex texts. Across grades, math journal tasks are selected based on standards alignment and student need. In a third-grade math journal, students used multiple strategies to show conceptual understanding of a multiplication word problem, and a fourth-grade bilingual class worked on timed multiplication sprints to build number fluency.
- Leaders and teachers have incorporated resources from *EngageNY* into math curricula in order to build conceptual understanding of math standards to give students more strategies and greater mastery of the standards in grades three through five, most classes use one of the two math blocks to teach an *EngageNY* lesson. It is primarily used in general education classrooms and has yet to be utilized as a resource across all classrooms, so that all learners have access to rigorous, grade-level curriculum.

## Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teachers use common assessments, such as pre-requisite baselines and performance based assessments, as well as rubrics that align with the curricula. Common assessments are used to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

### Impact

Leaders and teachers utilize assessment data to provide actionable feedback to students and gain greater understanding of student achievement. Results from analysis of state test data and school-based common assessments, such as reading running records, inform adjustments to curricula and instruction.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers leave actionable feedback on student work that highlights strength and a next step for improvement. For example, in a fifth-grade class the teacher's next step said, "The introduction can contain a hook to motivate the reader." In a second-grade classroom, the teacher's next step stated, "Let's work on including more math vocabulary in our explanation." Opportunities exist for teachers to provide an explicit example for the next step so that students have a model to follow.
- Teachers also provide actionable feedback to students by conferencing with them as they are working on a task to inform next steps. In a first-grade teacher conferenced with a student three times about their progress on a writing task, and captured a highlight seen in the student work and a note on the strategy taught as a next step: "Small moment – slow down by adding transitional words." In a fourth grade classroom, the teacher had notes for individual and focus areas for small group conferences. One small group worked on inferring character traits, and another small group worked on using evidence to support inferences. In a kindergarten class, the teacher indicated the focus of a small-group conference was "labeling using initial sounds."
- Teachers use a baseline assessment to determine student progress towards goals. Teacher teams utilize a data analysis protocol to inform math instruction across all grades. The math baseline prerequisite assessment was administered at the beginning of the school year, and the vertical data analysis teacher team analyzed the results that identified areas of strength and areas of concern for each grade. The team then supported grade-level teams to create an action plan that included teaching implications, timelines for instruction, and assessment. For example, the third-grade team focused on using repeated addition for rectangular arrays to find totals as well as topics in measurement. The team decided to address these needs through selecting aligned daily math journal tasks as well as embedded fluency drills. Three students that were the focus of a cycle of inquiry work demonstrated progress in explaining their thinking and using two problem-solving strategies.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* around professionalism and instruction to the entire staff. Leaders and staff communicate high expectations around college and career readiness and offer ongoing feedback to families on student progress.

### Impact

The leadership team establishes a culture for learning with high expectations through training and accountability systems for staff and feedback for families to understand student progress toward expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate high expectations to the entire staff. Teachers receive the “P.S. 115 at a Glance” document which contains the mission, vision, beliefs, instructional focus, and goals for the school, and unpack the goals through professional development in the beginning of the year. This document is visible throughout the school and classrooms. Additionally, a weekly newsletter is disseminated to staff that provides information on attendance data, observation cycles, teacher team work, upcoming dates and workshops, as well as a teaching focus tip connected to a school goal. For example, for the week of October 23rd, the teaching focus was “Crafting good questions when teaching math,” and gave tips to support crafting questions.
- School leaders provide training and have a system of accountability for high expectations. The learning walkthrough committee provides a structure for teachers to learn from each other through intervisitations and learning walks. Three teachers are a part of the extended cabinet team, which provides a structure for teachers to be a part of leadership decisions and share feedback. Additionally, leadership team members attend weekly planning meetings to support teachers with data analysis and planning expectations.
- Leaders and staff communicate expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness to help families understand progress towards expectations. The administration and faculty offers parent workshops throughout the year to support both academics and social-emotional development. For example, a science workshop supports parents to understand the fourth-grade science exam and content, workshops for parents of students with disabilities, dealing with child anxiety, and utilizing math resources at home. The kindergarten team runs hands-on workshops called “make and takes” to support parents to help their children at home with reading.
- Faculty gave presentations to parents to inform them of benchmarks for reading and continue to communicate the benchmarks in monthly newsletters, progress reports, and on a school bulletin board. All communications to families are in both Spanish and English. There are also workshops to inform families about the middle school process, beginning in fourth-grade. The guidance counselor provides supports to learn about their choices, finding the right fit for their child, and understand the criteria for getting into certain middle schools. Parents felt that the workshops have helped them to be able to work with their children at home and to be informed about expectations at each grade level and in different content areas.



## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based collaborative teams in which assessment data and student work are consistently analyzed.

### Impact

Teacher teams promote the achievement of school goals for increasing math achievement and improving data analysis as well as the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, resulting in strengthened teacher instructional capacity and progress toward goals for groups of students.

### Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers. Grade-level teams meet once a week to discuss the scaffolds, supports, and next steps they need to incorporate in their lessons, based on analysis of student work. Teams are currently focused on supporting students to show their thinking in math. Teams utilize the Atlas protocol (Learning from Student Work), and teachers rotate presenting three student work samples representing work from different levels or misconceptions. A first-grade team analyzed the strategies students used in a math journal task, and brainstormed ways to support students to write a number sentence that matched their strategy. Teachers modified a checklist and built in language from upcoming lessons to ensure alignment in their instruction. One teacher reflected that the work of the team “has helped build awareness of what our students need,” and that “I never would have thought of some of the strategies to support my kids on my own.”
- Professional collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the instructional shifts. The first-grade team looked at math prerequisite baseline assessment data to inform strengths and areas of concern for specific students, in alignment to school goals around improving math achievement. The team used the analysis to inform groupings for math centers, and identified targeted areas to inform planning for fluency and math journal tasks, such as completing a subtraction sentence for a word problem using ten frames. The team identified a timeline and re-assessment for the prerequisite skills support.
- Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data resulting in progress toward goals for groups of students. Teachers have completed running records and identified reading levels for all students. The data teacher team analyzed the results and created a differentiated action plan for small groups of students. The data team works with literacy teachers and support staff to plan the focus areas for support. For example, a kindergarten small group is working on using “the picture and first letter for tricky words,” and another group is working on how to “match spoken words to print.” Last year, the work of this team impacted student reading level growth; fourteen students in second grade grew by at least five levels by the end of the year.