



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2015-2016

**P.S. 101 School in the Gardens**

**Elementary School Q101**

**2 Russell Place  
Queens  
NY 11375**

**Principal: Monique Lopez-Paniagua**

**Date of review: May 5, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince**

## The School Context

P.S. 101 School in the Gardens is an elementary school with 633 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 6. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 28% Asian, 3% Black, 15% Hispanic, and 46% White students. The student body includes 5% English Language Learners and 9% students with disabilities. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 95.6%.

## 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 <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	<b>Focus</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>Celebration</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

<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 for professionalism and instruction to the entire staff aligned with elements of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and partner with families to support student progress.

### Impact

Structures and training that support the school's high expectations build accountability among staff, students, and parents that provide a clear path to understanding expectations and increased student achievement toward college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- The entire school community accepts responsibility for doing what is necessary to meet the high expectations of the entire school. Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* provides meaningful feedback to teachers based upon formal and informal visits and observations, as evidenced by documents reviewed. Curriculum resources, assessment data and grade specific portfolios are maintained to provide a unified system connected to college and career readiness. Rigor has been defined as challenging children to think at a high level and to expose students to grade level text, using Webb's *Depth of Knowledge* questioning to increase student understanding. The principal sends out "State of the School" letters and videos to all school constituents. The school aims to develop a well-rounded child and in doing such has residencies supported by the Parent Association such as Mad Science, Marquis Studios, filmmaking and ballroom dancing. The entire staff sets goals for moving students toward the next level; staff, students and parents track that progress. Teachers receive a faculty conference folder, handbook for policies procedures, yearlong PD calendar, assessment calendar, directions for Skedula/Think Central and Google Docs, along with protocols for teacher teams on the first day of school.
- There exists a strong relationship between families and the school. At the beginning of the year the principal meets with parents of students who scored one and two on state tests in order to collaboratively create an action plan. The school has their own website which is constantly updated with student projects, goals and expectations. Teacher's emails are on the website along with simple assignments for parents to support their children at home. There is a weekly newsletter to parents with classroom information. The teachers receive a weekly report that indicates expectations for the upcoming week, along with weekly teacher meetings to discuss clear expectations.
- Parents shared that they are aware of the school expectations to improve student learning. School leaders effectively communicate the expectations connected to a path for college and career readiness through teacher and external partners to give relevant information. There are college event days that include parent participation. There are college partnerships with Columbia University Teachers College, York College, Queens College, and St. John's University. After school programs are offered in Mandarin, Kung Fu, public speaking, Chess, Lego, Violin and several others to reinforce the concept of the whole child. High expectations are supported, embraced and reinforced by all stakeholders leading to increased student outcomes and career and college readiness.

## Area of Focus

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

Across the vast majority of classroom teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, and reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best. Teaching strategies provide scaffolds, extensions and multiple entry points for diverse students vary across the grades.

### Impact

The challenging tasks and supports that are provided to all learners, including student with disabilities and English language Learners, enable students to demonstrate higher order thinking in their work. Students have a clear understanding of what the expected learning outcome is for each lesson based on the Common Core and the Danielson *Framework For Teaching*.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms teachers provided small group instruction. In some classes, students participate in discussions by responding to teacher-generated questions, in-depth analysis and peer-to-peer interaction. Evidence of higher- level thinking in purposeful class groupings, and pairs, to assist in scaffolding for struggling learners, English Language Learners or students with disabilities was consistent. In a majority of classes, students used research skills, including citing text-based evidence as they discussed and defended their positions. For example, in a grade 6 Integrated Co-Teaching class students were comparing and contrasting to attain the correct answer using mean, median and mode. Different groups were using cubes to visually help students understand the concept and help student thinking. In a grade 1 English Language Arts (ELA) class was reviewing their previous writing assignment using punctuation cards and different checklists within small groups. An anchor chart was used defining “Thinking Outside the Box” elaborating on using a voice to explain topic and convince readers of the importance of the information. There is a focus on creating projects and extension activities for high functioning students and teachers plan to reteach lessons for students in need of remediation.
- All classrooms had rubrics and checklists on display and were supplied as needed. Students were asked to respond in full sentences and sentence starters were available in some classes. Teaching strategies in classes visited provide scaffolding and multiple entry points into the lesson. Students justified responses by citing textual evidence, as in a grade 5 math class on problem solving data and graphs real work connections. In a majority of classes’, connections to the real world by explicitly connecting concepts to everyday experiences were present. In a grade 2 ELA class on writing with voice to influence readers, students were using real life situations. Not all teachers are assuming the role of facilitator and encouraging student-to-student responses in discussions. Bloom’s Taxonomy of questioning was evident in a majority but not all classrooms.
- Students expressed that they are comfortable talking with each other and discussing their thoughts on a subject, as well as peer assessing. It was stated that stronger students often take over discussions therefore limiting the opportunity for all students to participate. Students were in many instances serving as the leader and answering student questions instead of the teacher. Students shared out explanations using reason and evidence based on prior knowledge or real life situations.

## Additional Findings

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

Across the vast majority of classrooms, assessments and rubrics utilized are aligned to the school's curricula and clearly highlight student progress toward mastery. Teachers consistently check for understanding and offer actionable and meaningful feedback to students.

### Impact

Assessment practices inform students of their next learning steps, instruction, and allow teachers to track student progress. Student self-assessment assists teachers in making effective adjustments to meet all students learning needs.

### Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers monitor progress through data analysis of formative and summative assessments, and use this information to provide meaningful feedback to students and to guide adjustments to units and lessons. Teachers adjust curriculum based on diagnostics of incoming students and develop informal assessments. Using standardized test results and previous grades teachers make informed decisions about student learning. For example, teachers use conferencing notes to gather student data and form groups to reteach the prior lesson. Assessment in instruction resulted in teachers creating student writing and math checklist so that students engage in peer and self-assessment on a regular basis. Exit slips are a school wide practice as evidence during some classes visited. All lesson plans are embedded with assessments. Unit assessments give teachers formative data they use to adjust instruction and change the emphasis of an upcoming unit if needed. Students in a grade 5 Integrated Co-Teaching class using thinking prompts created their own outcome grids, graphs or recipes and were able to self-assess and develop next steps and set personal learning goals.
- Teachers College reading assessments are used to measure students' independent reading levels. Kindergarten students are also assessed on concepts of print and high frequency words. This has provided the teachers with formative and summative data to further planning and instruction in literacy. Exemplars in math used for problem solving and assessment of mathematical strategies are used across grades. It was noted while visiting classrooms that conference notes, checklist and rubrics are used across reading writing and math. There are social studies culminating tasks for each unit with areas for student choice. Exit slips and quick writes are used as checks for understanding. Students are used to peer assess as a means to better their work and provide next steps to each other.
- Math teachers are working with groups on implementing different problem solving strategies. In a class visited, students were working in workbooks at their own level, giving answers including the process and strategy used to find the answer. Other students were using manipulatives, and graphic organizers to further their thinking therefore assisting teacher's checks for understanding. Results are used to adjust assessments. All teachers use On Demand writing to analyze and group students. Teachers' grade published pieces using a school wide Common Core aligned rubric and adjust curricula, analyzing pre-test and state tests using this information to target instruction and develop a plan for lifting the level of constructive responses.

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

All curricula are aligned to the Common Core and integrate the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Higher order thinking skills are consistently emphasized for all learners across the grades and content areas promoting college and career readiness for all students.

### Impact

Curricular decisions build coherence and rigorous habits for all learners, including students with disabilities and English language learners. Across grades and content areas, academic tasks push student thinking.

### Supporting Evidence

- Curricula maps provide evidence of rigorous academic tasks aligned to the Common Core *and Danielson Framework for Teaching* through the adaption of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. In addition supplemental programs and materials to better meet the needs of the various student populations are being incorporated such as number talks, *Foundations*, *Fountas and Pinnell* Leveled Literacy Intervention Kits, *GO Math!*, and Positive Action. Harcourt Science and Social Studies New York City Scope and Sequence is used and teachers utilize Mentoring Minds Common Core aligned flipcharts to reference standards when incorporating them into their units. There are academic vocabulary initiatives such as Words Their Way that differentiate word study.
- The integration of the instructional shifts and college and career readiness skills has been facilitated by teacher led staff development, use of informational text and myON, an online library for resource in the classroom and from home. Adjustments to materials used for instruction in order to promote cohesiveness across grades are evidenced in lesson plans and curriculum maps. Students are provided trade books and access to online resources to research topics. The resulting project ensures that students experience learning through specific domain texts not only in ELA but in science and social studies. All grades, as shown in classrooms visited engage in argumentative writing units that require students to find evidence in text to support their claims and administrators provide feedback to teachers on questioning and discussion techniques where students have to justify their thinking around a text.
- Unit plans in all content areas illustrated multiple designs of academic tasks with numerous scaffolds and entry points and extensions for the advanced learners. The school has focused on promoting higher order thinking skills through workshops on improving accountable talk through the use of partner and group work. Examples include a progression of literacy skills that begin with students verbally expressing their opinion of stories in kindergarten to grade 1 students writing their opinion. Argumentative and persuasive essays are transitioned into upper grades lessons. Students are asked to self-reflect using subject-area rubrics and peer feedback protocols are used across classrooms. Focus on differentiation and multiple entry points to challenge students to think critically has been supported by teacher leaders and coaches who are assessing and refining the curriculum maps to promote higher order- thinking skills. The school participates in PENCIL, has an engineering program, media arts and visual design program to further career and college readiness.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry based structured professional collaborations that systemically analyze key elements of teacher work, data and student achievement.

### Impact

The work of teacher teams has resulted in school-wide instructional coherence, and improved pedagogy. Distributed leadership structures provide a means for teachers to have input on key decisions about curricula and practice.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet multiple times a week to discuss and refine curricula during common preps by grade. Teachers meet with school leaders to review student data and refine curricula. Teachers choose a topic form a goal, choose students and try new pedagogical strategies. These become study groups for 4 to 6 weeks and then teachers share their learning. Teacher teams are used to discuss practice and make timely adjustment to instruction; this extensive collaboration has become the driving force in the school. Google Docs are created to serve as a resource for best practices. Teams look at student work and content goals focusing on what students need to know to inform teacher practice. There is a new teacher institute where teachers' study guided reading is mentored. A School Leadership Instructional Committee consists of teachers from upper and lower grade, academic specialists, special education and a cluster teacher along with administrators to set school goals and professional learning cycles. There is also a paraprofessional institute during professional development on Mondays.
- Teachers are given the opportunity to observe the practice of a peer through inter-visitiation scheduled by teams. Teachers model good instruction and protocols to evaluate data. Opportunities and roles are assigned allowing teachers to engage in, and make school-wide instructional decisions. Lead teachers facilitate professional learning workshops and ensure that teacher teams use protocols in order for all members to participate. Teachers meet with administration to support subject areas in a think tank that brainstorms next steps for improving classroom instruction.
- Shared leadership foci on improved student outcomes are seen in agendas and goals resulting in school-wide instructional coherence. It was stated that 70% of the staff takes on leadership roles by conducting professional development, mentoring, modeling and coaching. At the grade 5 team meeting, student responses from a reading pre-assessment was examined through a lens of differing learning approaches. Common language and communication was discussed in process steps. It was determined that the use of different graphic organizers to support the students will increase skills. Looking at trends and patterns and having the opportunity to bounce ideas off each other are yielding increased student outcomes for all learners as evidenced in student work portfolios and school wide math and literacy assessments. Performance assessments show growth in comprehension and movement towards reading at grade level along with increased conceptual understanding of key math concepts.