Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 398 Walter Weaver
Elementary 17K398
60 East 94th St.
 Brooklyn
NY 11212

Principal: Tammy Katan Brown

Dates of Review:
December 6, 2016 - December 7, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Audrey Madison
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. 398 Walter Weaver serves students in grade K 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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 Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<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 Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<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 Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<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 Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

There are structures in place such that the school community has established a positive, nurturing, and integrated approach to school culture, discipline, and social-emotional support.

Impact

A safe, welcoming environment, and inclusive culture promotes progress toward school goals and involves student voice in decision making in a meaningful way. Each student is well known by adults who guide and influence their academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders believe that if there is a welcoming, holistic, nurturing environment, that promotes a sense of family and community, and integrates with the actual community, then students and adults will learn and grow. As an open module school, with shared instructional spaces, the tone and volume of each classroom and across the school is calm, respectful and conducive to learning. Town Hall Morning meetings promote positivity and a sense of school pride and shared communication as school leaders greet the community each day. This year, a first grader introduces the day, date, and pledge. The school community recites the school’s Pledge of Respect and approximately twenty students from across grades lead a call and response of the school song and dance, “PS 398 is a School That’s Mighty Great,” which they co-created in collaboration with the performing arts teacher.

- The student council consists of a president and vice president on each grade, elected by their peers based on their campaign promises. Council members meet with their grade and meet with the principal to carry out their campaign promises. Third graders desire more books in the school and want to engage in green thumb projects so they can do more planting; fourth graders would like more upper grade students to read to lower grade students and want more technology.

- Through participation with a federally funded senior volunteer program, thirteen Foster Grandparents work one to one with students with special needs, but also help with classwork, facilitate small groups, and provide emotional support to students as needed. Several of the grandparents speak Spanish or Haitian Creole and assist with communication to students and parents.

- Weekly meetings between school leaders, the guidance counselor, attendance teacher, family worker, parent coordinator, and pupil personnel secretary, are held to review various attendance data reports to identify students regarding chronic absence or other attendance needs. For instance, team outreach has informed school leaders of one student’s hospitalization and in another situation, a student in temporary housing had moved to another state. The attendance teacher, family worker, and parent coordinator conduct home visits as needed.

- Opportunities for adult learning are offered to families and the community to further support student growth. ParentCorps is offered to parents of pre-kindergarten students to develop parenting skills that encourage good behavior, manage misbehavior, and help children deal with feelings. Events, such as classes for adults in Basic Education and English as a Second Language, Bring your Dad to School day, which engaged over 120 family participants, and an eight session nutrition workshop series, all contribute to the integrated development of a communal culture.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

School leaders use the Danielson Framework for Teaching to support the development of teachers with effective feedback that captures strengths, challenges and next steps from frequent cycles of classroom observation and analysis of student work.

Impact

Feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice and promotes professional growth to elevate schoolwide instructional practices, yet does not consistently align with teachers’ professional goals.

Supporting Evidence

- The observation calendar and consecutive observation reports reflect frequent cycles of observation by all school leaders. Teachers in need of improvement have had at least three observations thus far as indicated on the observation calendar and articulated in plans for improvement. Challenges and concerns that surface during classroom walkthroughs, are used as additional opportunities for school leaders to provide informal verbal feedback.

- Observation reports reveal feedback to teachers that identifies strengths as evidence to support component ratings. For example, one teacher’s report shows that six out of six component ratings were effective, including the identified school focus on the use of assessment in instruction. The rationale for assessment stated, “The teacher elicited evidence of student understanding through questioning. Volunteer students explained the step by step approach taken to gather information from other students and created a tally chart and frequency table.” However, the recommendation presented for next steps offers an additional attribute of effective practice, rather than next levels of practice. “Provide opportunities for student self-assessment, students must be encouraged to monitor their own learning.” No further recommendations were made regarding other components. In another instance, a teacher received two effective and four highly effective ratings, with an effective rating for the use of questioning and discussion. Feedback included a recommendation and example of a protocol - one question, one comment, which would extend student discussion and learning and lead to highly effective practice.

- Teacher improvement plans articulate areas for improvement aligned to components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Action steps and differentiated activities to support improvement clarify expectations for teacher practice. Professional development opportunities are articulated and convey supports for teacher development. For example, the Universal Literacy coach is scheduled to provide individual support to targeted teachers in addition to supporting lower grade teachers. While professional development goals for all teachers have been charted, the goals are not consistently aligned to the feedback offered to teachers. For example, some teachers have formulated professional goals based on student improvement, while other teachers have articulated goals toward improving their pedagogy.
Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum

Rating: Well Developed

Findings

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

Impact

All students, including lowest- and highest-achieving students, are cognitively engaged and have access to coherent curricula that promotes college and career readiness for a variety of learners.

Supporting Evidence

- After attending a “powerfully informative” principals’ conference focused on Cluster standards, the principal turnkeyed this information to the staff, which led to the strategic decision to focus deeply on the prioritized standards recommended for greater emphasis. As a result, teachers in grades three through five, re-examined their math pacing calendars, made adjustments to the sequence of units, and revised unit plans. In addition to the GoMath! curriculum, teachers supplement with project based learning tasks to extend application of math concepts and skills.

- Literacy unit plans reveal integration with science concepts and extended time within each ReadyGen unit to develop knowledge, understandings and skills toward the identified targeted Literacy Standards. In the lower grades, the Fundations curriculum is utilized as supplementary to address student deficits in decoding across the lower grades.

- School leaders determined the need for students to be exposed to more Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) instruction. A STEM teacher was hired to provide instruction to students, deepen understanding of science concepts and the interconnectedness of the disciplines. The STEM teacher provides additional opportunities for students to ask and answer questions, analyze data and draw conclusions, understand and apply organized ways to develop and solve problems.

- Lesson plans across grades, subjects and student populations indicate a range of collaboratively planned adjustments to make the curricula accessible for individual and groups of students. In a math lesson plan for second grade students with disabilities, differentiated accommodations are planned for advanced learners, students in need of re-teaching, and students who require additional modeling of the concepts, including English Language Learners. In an Integrated Co-Teaching plan for third grade, individual management needs such as a scribe, extra time to complete tasks are identified. Math unit plans, used across the grade, identify differentiated activities at three tiered levels of intervention: on-level, strategic and intensive. Specific curricula pages, additional online resources and scaffolding strategies are offered for each tier and include supports for students with disabilities and English Language Learners.
Findings

A variety of teaching strategies are used across classrooms to provide consistent instructional supports and questioning and discussion techniques engage students in learning.

Impact

All learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks, discussions, and work products that reflect high levels of thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- In classes for students with disabilities, active adult facilitation of groups was evident. In a third grade literacy lesson, students with disabilities were grouped according to learning styles and goals of their Individualized Education Plans. All students explored text features of informational text and were required to discuss and/or write how the text features help them understand the text, with some prompting questions from teachers, paraprofessionals, and foster grandparents. In a second grade math lesson, adults guided students to find differences, use academic language and create word problems with targeted entry points such as using a walking number line, counters and wipe boards, and individual number lines with different start and end points.

- In a fifth grade class, students referred to an anchor chart, which displayed the process for adding and subtracting mixed numbers. In another class, fifth-graders applied the use of thinking maps to support their written comparison of two challenging events a character faced in the book, Hatchet. Some students used a T-chart, while others used a Venn diagram to cite evidence from the text and organize their thoughts.

- In a fourth grade science lesson, students engaged in a collaborative investigation to explore “How do the bodies of animals help them meet their needs?” Pictures of different birds were posted and groups of students were provided with a set of inquiry tools such as tweezers, spoons, clothes pins, and chop sticks, and foods such as rice, raisins, and noodles. Students were asked to discuss and form a hypotheses about how the experiment will help them answer the investigative question. During the discussion and share, students were observed adding on to each other’s ideas. Student choice in format used to record their thoughts was also evident. In a fifth grade STEM lesson, students worked in heterogeneous groups to design and build a ramp. During the discussion, students proposed their ideas, deliberated before making decisions, and questioned each other. The teacher posed different questions to each group to elicit student reasoning.

- In a third grade math class, tiered tasks were evident as students were assigned different multiplication problems to solve. Some students used wipe boards to draw arrays, others used a bar model strategy. One group used the loop method on a number line to show multiplication facts. The teacher encouraged an English Language Learner to count in French, then work with a same language peer, and extended time for them to complete the assignment. Two students used multiplication strategies to practice responding to multiple-choice questions.
## Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### Findings

Teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned to the school’s curricula, as well as consistently check-in, track student understanding, and provide students with self-assessment opportunities.

### Impact

Students and their teachers are aware and informed of strengths and next steps in learning. Teachers make effective adjustments to instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers consistently provide written feedback in the form of “glows and grows” based on rubrics used to assess student work. An example of practice, a glow statement to one fourth grader, “You clearly stated an opinion and supported it with some details,” aligns with the fourth grade Common Core Opinion Writing rubric. An acknowledged area to grow, “Work on providing adequate support and evidence that includes the use of text sources, facts and details.” Based on a narrative rubric used in grade two, feedback indicates a student, “attempted to recount a short sequence of events, dictating in complete sentences,” and included that supports given included verbal prompts, sentence starters, and picture cues. The grow indicates the need to add details and use words to signal event order. Glows and grows for a kindergarten student indicate details were included through pictures and writing and a reminder about extra periods.

- Students reflect on their work and conference with teachers based on the use of rubrics and checklists. In one example, a writing prompt assessment form provided opportunity for self-assessment to meet the expectations of the task, such as writing an interesting lead, use explanations and many details and write a conclusion. The assessment form also indicates peer assessment as well as teacher assessment of the expectations and conferencing with students. In another instance, a student’s pictograph checklist indicated, “I accurately gathered information on the tally table, chose a symbol to represent the data, I accurately and correctly represented the data from the tally table on the pictograph.” Students’ post-its on their work provide evidence that students also write their own “glows and grows” based on teacher feedback.

- Teachers employ a range of checks for understanding across classrooms to make instructional adjustments. Exit tickets were used in third grade that required students to use the bar model strategy to solve two-step word problems and fifth grade students were asked to explain their strategy used to add mixed numbers with unlike denominators. A fourth grade exit ticket directed students to write two facts they learned in the lesson and one opinion about something they learned. One teacher used a checklist to indicate whether students understood the lesson or need support. Another teacher noted student errors such as, switched numerator with denominator, difficulty finding lowest common denominator, and difficulty with multiplying to convert.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Findings

Teachers are engaged in structured, professional collaborations that have strengthened teacher capacity. School leaders have embedded shared decision making practices throughout the school.

Impact

Schoolwide instructional coherence results in increased student achievement for all learners as teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal stated that topics of inquiry are initiated during professional learning opportunities as a whole staff on Mondays and continue at the teacher team levels during additional weekly common planning periods. Teacher teams contemplate, “Where are we going as a grade? Where am I going with my class?” For example, after school leaders determined the need for prioritized target standards in English Language Arts, and a focus on the major cluster standards of emphasis in math, grade level teams revised unit plans and developed lesson plans based on their enhanced content knowledge. Collective team work also involved identifying instructional strategies to be implemented across the school to address the ELA target standards and math cluster standards. Additionally, guided by a goal to increase effective questioning and discussion techniques school wide, teachers and administrators express that collaborative planning has promoted more opportunities for student to student interactions through turn and talk, accountable talk, buddy partners, questioning each other, correcting each other, and teaching each other.

- Guided towards the instructional focus to “analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels,” classroom focused improvement process worksheets further reveal the collaborative work of teachers. Teacher assessment practice has extended to analysis of varied data sources and examining student strengths and needs to enhance implementation of the Common Core Standards within each class and across each grade. Major patterns of needs on second grade reflect stronger attention to problem solving and academic vocabulary. Grade three teachers identified strategies the team will use to re-teach or scaffold instruction that includes targeted grouping and differentiating by learning modalities.

- Fourth grade teachers presented professional learning to all staff on implementation of the Four Square writing method and offered additional lunch and learn sessions for seventeen colleagues, as evidenced in agendas and the professional development plan. Implementation of this writing strategy across subjects, has increased quantity and quality of writing, moving students to write multiple paragraphs, compared to one or two paragraphs in the fall, and include proficient introductions and relevant details, visibly apparent in student work across grades. Teachers not only collectively analyze student growth but evaluate areas in need of further instruction.

- Structures to promote distributive leadership include, shared responsibility in facilitating team meetings, turnkeying learning opportunities through facilitation of professional learning. For example, a third grade teacher attends district professional learning sessions focused on the Data Wise Improvement Process and has turnkeyed learning to extend school processes for looking at data. The teacher of English as a New Language rotates into grade meetings and has presented workshops on strategies for English Language Learners. Grade leaders meet monthly and are members of the instructional cabinet.