Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 019 Asher Levy

Elementary 01M019

185 1 Ave.
Manhattan
NY 10003

Principal: Jacqueline Flanagan

Dates of Review:
October 20, 2016 - October 21, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Adam Breier
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. 019 Asher Levy 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

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></th>
<th><strong>Area</strong></th>
<th><strong>Rating</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<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>Area of Celebration</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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>Additional Finding</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>
</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>
</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>
</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>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: Well Developed |

Findings

Through curriculum committee and teacher team inquiry work, along with school leaders’ work in assessing the work of those structures, curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks.

Impact

Common Core alignment and using textual evidence to support arguments in curricula, classroom-based academic tasks and schoolwide projects have resulted in the promotion of college and career readiness for all students and curricular coherence across grades. Emphasis on rigorous habits and higher-order skills requires that all students demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricular maps are constructed using the Common Core-aligned ReadyGen and GO Math! programs. Teachers across subjects meet in grade level teams to plan common units that integrate instructional shifts. For example, one grade three school-wide project strategically incorporated the instructional shift of real-world applications of mathematics in which all students explored the most efficient strategies to find the total cost for a variety of objects while grocery shopping. As a result of this project, students developed a deep understanding of multiplication by focusing on grouping, skip-counting, and doubling. A later project for grade three students requires that they calculate global shipping costs and postage stamps. An example of how the English Language Arts (ELA) curricula include the instructional shift of grounding reading and writing in textual evidence is apparent in the focused reading team talk sentence starters in a grade two lesson plan that require students to support opinions with textual evidence. Additionally, lesson plans across all grades incorporate activities that require students to support arguments with textual evidence.

- Student-to-student discussions are planned for across curricula. For example, in one kindergarten lesson plan, students must listen to a story read-aloud and then talk with a thought partner about the importance of details in drawings to help convey meaning. In a grade three writing workshop, after listening to a read-aloud, students are to turn and talk with a partner about what the story teaches about the Iroquois perspective on nature. Additionally, in a grade five lesson plan, a student-to-student class discussion is facilitated by a student leader and students are to extend the discussion by responding to each other using sentence starters that require the use of textual evidence.

- Activities requiring higher-order thinking are evident in lesson plans across grades and subjects, requiring that all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, demonstrate their thinking. For example in a grade 5 reading workshop, students are asked to analyze plot developments in order to understand conflict. Students are then required to engage in conversation while answering higher-order questions, supported with a variety of modifications and extensions, so that all learners can participate. In a grade two reading workshop lesson plan, students are expected to support arguments with text based evidence, clarify the meaning of words and phrases with a text, as well as discuss the connections between events in a text while also connecting the text with either themselves, the world, or another text. This lesson includes modifications for students below grade level, on grade level, above grade as well as for students in the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Nest Program.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

School leaders and teacher peers strategically use effective feedback and next steps from classroom observations to support teacher development. Clear expectations and feedback to teachers are constructed using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and are aligned with teachers' professional goals.

Impact

While feedback to teachers from classroom observations is used by both school leaders and teacher peers to support teacher development, there are missed opportunities for even greater focus on the breadth of observation feedback and next steps, thereby limiting optimum teacher and student progress. All teachers create professional goals, aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, and regularly revisit them in order to design professional learning and track progress.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Each rated item is supported with specific detailed evidence from the observed class to support the rating. Next steps for teach improvement are included at the close of each observation report. For example, one observation includes feedback to “Continue to use accountable talk during the mini-lesson. Ask students to agree, disagree, or add on to the comments of peers. Consider using the Smartboard to do ‘shared drawing’ for greater impact.” Another observation reads, “Develop routines for pausing the use of manipulatives to have a discussion with students.” Classroom observations are frequently used by school leaders and teacher peers to support teacher growth in targeted ways. However, the lack of detail in some written feedback limits the potential professional growth that could come out of those observation reports.

- Teachers share observation reports along with professional growth plans with peers during grade-level team meetings and use the feedback and next steps included in those documents to determine intervisitation schedules. One teacher reported, “I went into a colleague’s class to observe a math lesson. I took photos of the charts she has in her room. I needed a strategy to teach multiplication and division for one of my students in need of extra support. I use this chart now with all of my classes this year.” Additionally, the instructional coach also facilitates intervisitations and provides follow-up support shortly after each visit through written feedback. In this feedback, the coach details the visit’s focus and next steps determined as a result of the share-out conversation between the coach and visiting teacher as well as in-class coaching sessions during which the coach observes as well as models instructional strategies.

- Professional growth plans reveal that all teachers use their end-of-year growth plan reflections as a baseline for the initial professional growth plan development meeting at the start of the next school year. One teacher reported and all agreed that “at the beginning of the school year [teachers] set professional goals based on Danielson and create a professional growth plan with the principal. Then we meet with our administrators and our coach and review our growth plans. We reflect on our goals and observations throughout the year and [modify our instructional practice] and close the year with a reflection activity.”
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the belief that students learn best when engaged in active discussion and cooperative learning. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking, participation and ownership.

Impact

Shared beliefs among staff about how students learn best lead to student discussions and work products that evidence high levels of thinking and student ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers facilitated lessons in which students were highly engaged and actively participating in cooperative learning and student-to-student discussions, embodying the coherent set of beliefs that students learn best when they work together. In a grade five reading lesson, a student leader facilitated the team talk session by initially sharing the essential question, “Do you think it was right for Ben to lie to Mrs. Tibbets about going near the snake cage?” All students then engaged in a structured conversation in which they responded to each other using a variety of posted sentence starters. In a grade two math lesson, students worked cooperatively in using place value to extend counting patterns. The subsequent student conversation, structured around the use of sentence starters, created the atmosphere and process in which a student in the ASD Nest Program felt comfortable enough to contribute in a substantive way to the conversation. In a grade two reading lesson, each group conducted a read aloud that was facilitated by a student moderator.

- Students are evidencing high levels of thinking across grades and subjects. In a math lesson with a mixture of students from grades three, four and five, a student explained, “We’re working on a project to use math in a real world situation. We’re planning vacations and finding the best deal for hotels. I want a room with a view, but we won’t be able to afford it.” In a grade two reading lesson, students were conducting conversations with peers in which they were connecting textual evidence to support their opinions about Alfred Nobel. One student stated, “His obituary said that he was trying to kill people but I don’t agree with that. He was actually trying to make gunpowder safe.” Another student agreed when he stated, “Look on page 142. He was persistent and committed and helpful and sad over his brother dying.”

- Across grades and subjects, students create goals and subsequently assess their progress on those goals. Often, they update their goals, which then leads to teachers’ modification of student groups, evidencing student ownership of their growth as well as integral role in determining classroom design. Examples of students’ goals include wanting to use a greater variety of transitional words, and improving their reading stamina. In a grade four math lesson, all students participated in a group activity during which each student wrote down three strategies that could be used to solve the equation that the group had been assigned to solve. When completed, all students engaged in a protocol-guided discussion as to the value of each strategy and when one would be better than another.
### Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula as tools for giving clear feedback to students that they then actively use toward improving their achievement. In addition, teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

### Impact

High quality assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers’ assessment practices result in effective instructional adjustments during classroom instruction and in modifications to subsequent lessons, meeting all students’ needs.

### Supporting Evidence

- Students came to a quick consensus when reporting on the use of assessments and rubrics for written assignments and clarity around their attainment of mastery. After receiving rubrics with comments that include teacher-written feedback with next steps, students then conference with teachers on the feedback and how it can impact their writing. Students then improve upon their writing by implementing the next steps detailed in the feedback. One example of feedback reads, “Next time try to elaborate on your evidence.” Another example asks the student to focus on developing strong and more effective topic sentences. Additionally, a grade three student reported that teachers gave “feedback about not always using the same simple words and I should use bigger words when I can. So instead of sad I’ll use depressed.” Students’ academic growth as a result of targeted teacher feedback, was made clear on the bulletin board displaying grade-wide projects. Displayed work included multiple drafts along with the final draft, reflecting students’ application of the teachers’ feedback on earlier drafts of the same work.

- Across the school, students use checklists and rubrics, differentiated for ELLs and students with disabilities, as tools of self-assessment during the writing process. The grade five “Self-Assessment for Theory Chart and Literacy Based Opinion Essay asks students to reflect on what was learned while writing the essay, what proved most difficult, and in what areas students’ need to improve. The revision suggestions assessment tool connects students’ self-assessment with a checklist of next steps connected directly to identified areas of improvement. Some examples of statements on this checklist include, “Does my conclusion sum up my piece?” and “Read it to a friend and answer his/her questions in writing.” In addition to using teacher-designed rubrics and checklists, students are also using the rubrics that accompany the curricula.

- Across all classes, student groups were determined based on assessment data. Students were assigned to differentiated math, reading, and writing grouping. Teachers periodically adjust these groupings based on formal assessment data as well as in-class conferencing. Teachers utilize checks for understanding during instruction to determine next steps to be implemented in the moment or during the next day’s lesson. Multiple teachers utilized different strategies to gauge students’ understanding of the task. While some teachers used the thumbs up/down/sideways assessment strategy, one teacher asked a student to repeat the task’s directions in his own words. Additionally, in one class the teacher asked a question about a character’s actions from an in-class text. Students were largely reluctant to offer a response and the one response offered was incorrect, after which the teacher redirected the students to re-read a specific passage while considering an added focus question. Another teacher delivered a lesson refocusing students on the use of textual evidence based on exit tickets that showed the need for this skill to be revisited.
### Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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#### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff and provide training. Additionally, school leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness to families.

#### Impact

Teachers benefit from a culture of mutual accountability around high expectations within the structure of their grade teams. Strong communication as well as monthly Family Instruction days empowers families to academically support their students’ progress toward college and career readiness.

#### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders share high expectations through a faculty handbook that details guidelines for all aspects of instruction including planning, student work portfolios, assessment portfolios, professional development, bulletin boards, instructional anchor charts, grade curricula, literacy and math instruction, homework as well as vacation homework packets. School leaders plan and deliver individual and whole school professional development based on the high expectations detailed in the faculty handbook as well as those shared through faculty meetings and those made evident through feedback to teachers based on the *Danielson Framework for Teaching*. Throughout the 2015-16 school year, professional development topics connected to teacher observations based on the *Framework for Teaching* covered topics such as developing graphic organizers, effective questioning, student-to-student discussion techniques, and student goal setting.

- Teachers hold each other accountable to high instructional expectations through frequent intervisitations. One teacher reported, “We hold each other accountable by constantly opening our doors to our colleagues and freely sharing our strategies. I observed one of my colleagues and took photos of the charts she uses in class. When I needed a strategy to reteach multiplication and division for some of my students, I used the photos of those charts. This absolutely helped the student and since then, I've incorporated the charts from her room into my instruction.” Another teacher reported, “One of my grade team members observed another team member use a microphone as a tool for students during accountable talk sessions. Not only was it clear which student was supposed to be speaking at any given time, all students projected their voice better when they held the microphone.” All teachers present agreed that this method has been observed and successfully implemented across classrooms.

- Expectations are effectively communicated with families through newsletters, the school website, as well as through mobile device apps used for the sharing of assignments, information, photos and communication. One parent said, “My child’s teacher answers every one of my math questions with a written explanation that I use to help me help my kid. They’re great!” Another parent produced her phone and displayed messages she had received from her child’s teacher. Among the notices and calendar reminders were also tools that help parents support their students at home. One message stated, “Please click on the link to watch some of the videos correlated to our weekly reader.” This parent reported, “These messages are great. I always know what my kid is doing and how I can help.” Additionally, the school hosts parents monthly in all grades during “Family Instruction.” One parent reported that at the most recent Family Instruction, “They did math and worked on a problem of the day. Being there helped me learn that problem too and I knew my child would need help. So I took a picture with my phone of the chart paper and I was able to go over it with my child that night.”
**Quality Indicator:**

<table>
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<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
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<td>Rating: Well Developed</td>
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</table>

**Findings**

All teachers are engaged in grade level teams that consistently analyze student work in cycles of inquiry that reveal targeted areas of student need and actively address them in their work toward fulfilling the school’s goals. Teachers are empowered to positively affect student learning through service as grade team leaders as well as the open-door policy in bringing ideas for initiatives and professional development to school leaders.

**Impact**

Collaborations within grade teams and the vertical inquiry team have strengthened teachers’ instructional capacity. Across the school within grade teams and individually, teachers have built leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions around professional development and resource acquisitions that affect student learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- During the kindergarten grade-level team, teachers analyzed student work samples that resulted from a unit involving the reading of a pattern book followed by the corresponding on-demand writing assessment. Work from students who earned a rating of three or four was analyzed during the previous week’s grade team meeting. Work from students who earned a rating of one or two was analyzed during this meeting. Teachers used a protocol in their analyses of student work resulting in the identification of the common problems of students’ uneven use of finger spaces between words, overuse of high-frequency words and the reversing of letter formations. Teachers concluded that they need to identify students within their respective classes needing differentiation on writing mechanics. Additionally, teachers began planning for the addition of a station devoted to labelling which will become a fixture to lessons in which stations are used until this skill will be assessed to measure this initiative’s success.

- Grade team leaders serve as members of the vertical inquiry team. This team is conducting a long-term inquiry into strengthening coherence of teacher practice across the school. Analysis of State math test scores from 2014-15 revealed that the students with the highest scores also had teachers who used strategies focused specifically on place value and fluency. The vertical inquiry team members then polled their colleagues in their respective grade teams in order to identify best practices around strategies for teaching these two skills. By the end of 2015-2016, the vertical inquiry team collected all relevant strategies from across all grades and compiled them in an instructional manual designed for the express purpose of strengthening consistency in the use of supplemental math materials across grades. One example of implementation of this resource was in the use of grade-wide postings detailing “Today’s Number.” A common posting format is used for grades kindergarten through grade two while a different format is used for grades three-five.

- Grade team teacher leaders play an integral role in student learning across the school. Serving on the vertical inquiry team, they focus their work on an inquiry that is analyzed over the course of a year. Working with the instructional coach, grade team leaders also coordinate intervisitations between team members, matching veteran teachers with young teachers as well as teachers who have attained mastery with colleagues looking for professional development in those same areas. Additionally, teachers who do not serve as grade team leaders are empowered to present strategies or programs to school leadership and subsequently lead initiatives. One teacher shared with the faculty an online resource called News-O-Matic, a website that provides daily news stories, all available in multiple reading levels. One parent stated and all agreed when reporting that her child checks News-O-Matic every day. In her words, “I love seeing him read news stories. He signs in and he gets the news in a way he can read.”