Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 56 The Louis Desario School
Elementary 31R056
250 Kramer Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10309

Principal: Dean Scali

Dates of Review:
October 24, 2016 - October 25, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Buffie Simmons
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. 56 The Louis Desario School 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>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</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 Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</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 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>Additional Finding</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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<td>Proficient</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 Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>Proficient</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>
Findings

School leaders engage in feedback loops that encompass classroom observation data and analysis of learning outcomes that strategically promote professional growth and reflection by all teachers.

Impact

All teachers are well supported. School leaders’ provide staff with feedback that provides clear understanding of next steps and results in their strengthened teaching practice.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders believe that teachers, especially new teachers, are best supported through multiple opportunities to practice new pedagogical skills in an environment where they receive consistent and effective feedback. Through frequent formal and informal observations the administrative cabinet uses low inference notes to provide teachers with concrete examples of strengths and next steps to support their growth. The cabinet also consistently engages all teachers in conversation focusing on classroom data and analyzing student work samples, to align instructional practices to student outcomes. Observation reports reflect feedback that includes next steps, such as professional development opportunities that include inter-visitations or peer coaching support from the Instructional and Impact Team.

- An analysis of trends in teacher performance ratings identified two areas where improvement was needed. The data was used to develop professional learning opportunities for the teachers aligned to their goals. Peer inter-visitation to observe effective collaborative team teaching strategies was implemented with strategic next steps for improvement of a specific teacher’s growth. Additional school-wide learning focused on practices in the collaborative classroom was to ensure improved teacher practice across all classrooms. The analysis of the second and third rounds of teacher observations indicated improved assessment practices for a majority of teachers especially in the area of inclusion classroom practices.

- Through the thoughtful analysis of teacher practices, individual teacher’s professional development plans are modified and include identified trends to ensure coherence and improvement across classrooms. Currently, veteran staff members are strategically placed to provide opportunities to support their colleagues. During observation conferences administrators refer to student work and previous evaluator notes to ensure clarity of expectations and support a teacher’s growth. For instance, one teacher was reminded to utilize the school wide process, “to, with and by,” to provide the necessary gradual release of responsibility from teachers to students. During feedback sessions, teachers are encouraged to seek support from lead teachers, assistant principals and mentors who are an integral part of the feedback loop. These collaborative endeavors allow administrators and selected teacher peers to provide meaningful advice to all teachers in alignment to their goals resulting in improved levels of effectiveness according to the Danielson Framework for Teaching.
Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

The English Language Arts and math curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and integrate the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks.

Impact

Extensions of tasks for all learners are not as yet embedded across grades and subjects, thus limiting opportunities for students to engage in additional, challenging learning experiences.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of curriculum maps across the content areas provided evidence of alignment to the Common Core and the inclusion of instructional shifts. For example, a unit in the math kindergarten curriculum map requires students to compare numbers 0-5 and identify strategies to compare numbers from 0 to 5. In a grade one map, students are to represent and solve subtraction problems, apply properties of operations and subtract numbers from 1 to 10. The grade two map has students determining a pattern to find ways to show a number with ones, fives, tens, and hundreds to 1,000. This logical development of the concepts related to number sense promotes concrete learning and understanding and provides for the successful advancement of students from one level to the next.

- Creating a unified science curriculum is one of the school goals. Science and social studies non-fiction content has been incorporated into the English Language Arts (ELA) units. A review of ELA lesson plans indicated modifications and revisions to address classroom learners, especially students with disabilities. For example, an ELA plan included modifications to address special needs students' learning needs by providing scaffolds during the lessons to answer the essential questions being addressed. A math lesson plan indicated the manipulatives for students to use while problem solving. However, extensions are not yet evident across all classes. The principal stated that the school is in the process of reviewing, modifying and revising the curriculum to strengthen access for all learners and engagement in rigorous tasks.

- According to the school leaders the instructional focus this year is to continue to develop success criteria, formative assessment, improved lesson plans aligned to CCLS containing student activities focused on specific teaching points and appropriate student self-reflection strategies. The school is working on unpacking the Common Core Learning Standards, focusing on the important components to emphasize, identify specific learning targets with specific success criteria, and specific active student engagement activities that will promote their self-assessment. Teachers use learning goals or success criteria to describe the knowledge and skills that students are required to learn. While this success criteria is demonstrated across ELA and math lesson plans, it is not as yet embedded in the curriculum for science and social studies.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</table>

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies, including leveled questioning, scaffolds provided students in English or their native language, as well as routines, consistently provide multiple entry points for tasks and discussions for all students.

Impact

All learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities consistently engage in challenging tasks and assignments which result in their demonstrating higher-order thinking skills both in their participation and final work products.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders believe students learn best when skills are modeled and students are given the opportunity to grow independently. Across classrooms, students worked in groups and teachers modeled activities. Across classrooms a minimum of three adults were involved in the lesson. All students work in differentiated groups facilitated by a general education teacher, special needs teacher, paraprofessional, speech specialist or English Language Learner teacher based on their needs as indicated in their most recent assessment data.

- Across classrooms teaching strategies consistently provide the necessary scaffolds and supports for students. Word walls, teacher made charts, artifacts, and pictures to support comprehension were in evidence in all the classrooms visited. In an ELA class, students engaged in station learning. In an English Language Arts class, the teacher modeled snap words such as, in, is, the see, I, and my on the SmartBoard. The teacher asked students to read the snap words, point to these words, identify recognizable snap words, and use pictures to aid in awareness. Lesson observations demonstrated multiple examples of flexible student groupings. In several classrooms students were assigned tasks that were specific and differentiated for them. All students participated in peer and group activities.

- Across classrooms, teachers promoted discussions by asking probing questions and cued student thinking. However, in a few classrooms, teachers asked low-level questions that required one-word responses, such as, “What is the first step?” “Which two characters faced obstacles?” Additionally, some questions were phrased improperly, such as, “The two different bar graph is what?” “We need to take that data and do what?” “We noticed that the key said what?” thus limiting the opportunity for pushing student thinking.
Findings
School leaders and staff align assessments to curricula, and use on-going assessments and grading practices to analyze data from student learning outcomes to make instructional adjustments on the grade and classroom level. Teachers use ongoing checks for understanding to inform them regarding next instructional practices.

Impact
The use of these common assessments and the data analysis that follows, allows teachers to make effective instructional adjustments at the classroom and grade levels to improve students’ achievement.

Supporting Evidence
- During classroom visits, there was evidence of teachers checking for understanding throughout the lesson. The use of checklists, exit slips and conferencing with students to assess their understanding during the lessons was observed across classrooms. In a grade 4 ICT math class, students self-checked their understanding using a flip-chart. The teacher walked around the class to observe students’ answers. The classroom teacher made in the moment lesson adjustments when a few students couldn’t express their understanding. In an ELA Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, the teachers used a quick- check sheet to assess students’ learning. The sheet included the names of the students and a check was placed next to those students who missed or were unable to answer certain questions from the assigned lesson. Teachers use the data gathered to develop their purposeful learning groups.

- Schoolwide benchmark performance assessments for the GoMath! and ReadyGen programs are administered. The results provide school leaders and teachers with item analysis data for each student. The analysis of this data is used to adjust teaching points at the classroom and grade levels as well as the development of student learning groups across the grades. In addition, the school uses Fountas and Pinnell for ongoing monitoring and assessing students’ reading levels throughout the school year.

- A significant discrepancy in the performance of the general education and students with disabilities performing at a Level 1 in math was revealed after the review of data from the State examination for 2014-2015. Approximately 30 percent – 39 percent of students with disabilities did not meet or approach standards in mathematics. This data information resulted in school-wide progress monitoring of the acquisition of the skills taught after each lesson. Through re-teaching of targeted skills and providing the appropriate supports, including manipulatives, student performance improved for the 2015-2016 school year.
Findings

School leaders have established a culture for learning that communicate high expectations to staff and families via professional development and are connected to college and career readiness. These high expectations are consistently provided to teachers and families through ongoing communication and an open door policy.

Impact

This supportive learning environment where school leaders communicate high expectations for professional learning and parent involvement provides the necessary understanding and support to ensure student success as they advance to the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders provide staff, teachers, and paraprofessionals memorandums, correspondence, and feedback that outlines clear expectations and professional duties. During the year, school leaders constructed a professional development plan based on the needs of teachers in conjunction with the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, teachers engaged in professional development focusing on formative assessments to ensure students demonstrated their learning.

- Ongoing feedback to families to understand their children's academic and social progress is consistently made via phone calls, newsletters, emails, and progress reports. A set of students’ recommendations to support their needs and strengths in moving to their next academic level are provided through these communications. During the parent meeting, it was shared that school leaders and teachers have an open door policy. In fact, the administrators and the principal arrive as early as 6:30 am to provide ongoing communication with parents through phone calls, text messages, emails, and newsletters. In addition, parents expressed that all three administrators have open door policies allowing them at any time during the school day to discuss their children's social and academic progress. Parents shared the instructional focus of success criteria and why it is so important for students to know how they are being assessed. Parents stated that they are happy students are being taught to be more independent learners.

- School leaders have a parent bulletin board to provide parents with current information and activities happening at the school. Information and activities include parent workshops, Saturday programs, and summer camp opportunities. With the school’s addition of a new parent coordinator, the workshops are vast and include math workshops for parents introducing the ten frames and how to use it for early childhood parents. Similarly, for upper grade parents, math workshops focus on using multiple strategies, building fluency and problem solving techniques. School leaders provide monthly calendars to families that include upcoming assessments, and special activities.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings
The majority of teachers participate in teacher-led structured instructional and impact teams working together to analyze students’ work and data.

Impact
The work of teacher teams has strengthened teacher collaboration resulting in instructional adjustments and changes in pedagogical practices leading to improve student outcomes.

Supporting Evidence
- During the grade one meeting teachers reviewed and discussed one of their colleague’s student math assessments. At their previous meeting they focused on students’ subtraction skills and the apparent weaknesses. Teachers decided that next steps include the modeling of subtraction as “taking away” vs. “taking apart,” and additional mini-lessons to afford students more practice with those skills. They planned to introduce games to reinforce subtraction and use subtraction vocabulary daily as well as different protocols, such as the gallery walk to enhance student self and peer reflection. After using the strategies and protocols they would report their findings and analyze the outcomes and if indicated incorporate these practices into their instructional toolkit.

- School leaders ensure that teachers engage in ongoing professional dialogue and collaboration. All teachers meet weekly for collaborations. Instructional teams comprise of teachers across the grade. They analyze trends and lead inquiry work. Impact teams are teacher specialists and they assist administrators by providing strategies for students with disabilities and English Language Learners and academic intervention services. Every teacher is on a team that engages in core inquiry. Teams closely monitor students’ progress and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching practices on student outcomes. Teams ensure that Common Core Learning Standards are embedded in each ELA unit of study thereby strengthening instructional coherence across the school. For example, the fifth grade team incorporated instructional protocols, such as “Give one, get one, move on” for the book - “The Spadefoot Toads” to support students sharing with their partners. Teachers revised the essential questions from those dealing with author’s craft to those focusing on character development and themes. This afforded teachers the opportunity to engage in inquiry work that leads to improving instructional practices.

- The school has incorporated a pupil personnel team, which meets frequently, to discuss students that are having academic, behavioral or social-emotional challenges in class. Classroom teachers provide the team a list of names of students who are having difficulties in making academic and social adjustments. The team reviews the teacher’s anecdotal notes and look at the students’ work and social history at the school. The team is currently looking for researched based interventions that can be shared with the teacher to support the student in achieving academic and social success. During the meeting, team members shared that curriculum and instructional adjustments made to accommodate the learning needs of identified students indicate improved learning and behavior is in evidence.