Quality Review Report
2016-2017

P.S. 044 David C. Farragut
Elementary 12X044
1825 Prospect Ave.
Bronx
NY 10457

Principal: Melissa Harrow

Dates of Review:
December 20, 2016 - December 21, 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. 044 David C. Farragut serves students in grade PK through grade 5. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Rating</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</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>Developing</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

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</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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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings
School leaders engage in feedback loops that encompass classroom observation data and analysis of learning outcomes to design professional development opportunities aligned to the needs of teachers.

Impact
Ongoing effective feedback informs effective professional development and ensures professional growth and development.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders provide teachers with frequent classroom observation feedback, aligned to the Danielson Framework, to support professional growth and to provide targeted professional development opportunities to support them in attaining their professional goals. These include visits to other colleagues’ classrooms with a focus on evidence from classroom observations, teacher input, and review of student data results. Outside every teacher’s door is a sign titled “#observe me.” This initiative highlights areas of strength of the teacher on display to colleagues to foster intervisitation.

- Analysis of individual components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) are incorporated into discussions at inquiry and vertical team meetings in conjunction with an analysis of ongoing student work and of assessment results to determine students’ next steps. Teachers were noted as saying that this practice is “collegial and supportive” and has assisted in improving teachers’ abilities to set instructional outcomes, and to establish a culture for learning. According to school leaders’ tracking analysis on teacher development of improved practice, teachers have improved in the Domain 2b – “Managing Student Behavior” so far this year.

- The principal and assistant principal focus on schoolwide issues related to their instructional focus: small group instruction, reading levels, tools, conferring, and feedback. School leaders have developed resources to help improve instruction on a deeper level. The school is part of the District 12 New Teacher Center Mentoring Program for all new teachers, has a partnership with Teachers College Reading and Writing Project for nine on-site staff development days and twenty-five off-site conference days, is engaged in ten on-site staff development days for math content, and is registered for at least ten three-day content workshops. The school has partnered with United Federation of Teachers (UFT) where they have a full-time academic achievement coach, and two UFT Teacher Leaders (a model teacher and a peer-collaborative teacher). TeachBoost is used to track both formal and informal observations and coaching supports. As a result of these efforts, the teachers stated they feel supported and that small group instruction and conferring have improved schoolwide.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: | Developing |

Findings
Curricula and academic tasks reflect planning to provide for student access and for alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards. However, curricula and tasks inconsistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects.

Impact
This results in inconsistent access to and ownership of a rigorous curriculum that cognitively engages all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses Teachers College Reading and Writing Project for English Language Arts (ELA) and the GoMath! curriculum aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. The school is working on creating a unified science and social studies curriculum. Conversations with school leadership, as well as a review of curriculum documents, reveal that the school is in the process of creating project-based learning in social studies and science and in aligning curricula in all core subject areas to CCLS and/or content standards. For example, the principal spoke to how this process has helped teachers to develop their skills in designing end-of-unit tasks and to ensure that a daily learning objective should focus on the content and skills being addressed in the unit.

- A review of sample unit plans shows that the school is making progress in developing units aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. However, subjects and grades are at different stages in incorporating rigorous performance tasks. The principal stated that a school goal for teachers is that they will make at least one revision to the current yearlong ELA curriculum map by analyzing student work, data, and unit expectations to meet the individual needs of students. This effort is based on the results of the NYS standardized assessments, which reflect the lack of students achieving at Level 3 or 4 in ELA.

- The school is beginning to write specific, purposeful learning targets that are aligned to the CCLS for each day’s lesson and to create rigorous learning tasks that allow students to demonstrate mastery of the day’s learning target. In addition, teachers are utilizing a lesson planning process guide to dive deeply into the creation of one lesson plan to help support instructional practices around creating more rigorous lesson plans consistently across the school community. However, many lesson plans lacked tailored supports to address the specific needs of student subgroups within the class.
## Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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**Findings**

Teaching strategies including routines and scaffolds in English and/or native language where appropriate, inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Teacher practice in the use of questioning and discussion techniques is not consistently effective or engaging.

**Impact**

There is uneven engagement in appropriately challenging tasks and uneven demonstration of higher-order thinking skills in student work products, including the work of English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In classrooms visited, questioning strategies to promote higher levels of students thinking and discussion were inconsistent. Some teachers asked only low level recall questions that did not ask for students to strategically think or to extend their thinking.

- Across some classes, there were opportunities for students to turn and talk to their tablemates and to work in groups. For example, in a math class, students worked on finding patterns in quotients when dividing the powers of ten. The teacher developed the lesson by reintroducing the steps to unlock a problem – reread the problem, underline key words, look at the information given in the problem, remember what the question was asking, talk about noticing and solve the problem with a strategy-- and then by asking students to unlock the problem. However, across classes, partner or small group discussion to contemplate a higher order question, think through an answer, and engage in sustained discussion was inconsistently demonstrated. For example, in a reading class, students were tasked with analyzing their own reading skills by reflecting on what they do well and on what they can improve and by creating clear goals as well as plans for achieving those goals. When asked, several students could not explain their learning objective.

- In some classrooms, students’ level of discussion reflected uneven opportunities for reasoning and thought. In a reading class, the motivation was written, “What does it mean to synthesize; when in your life have you added or changed info you already knew?” In an ELA class, students were on a rug and the teacher posed the following questions; “We have been practicing doing what? What did his brother find? A what?” Opportunities varied for meaningful student engagement in lessons that could motivate students to reach high level thinking as evidenced in student work products. Although in virtually all classes observed there were students clustered for small group instruction, lessons did not consistently reflect differentiation of modalities or a wide range of learning opportunities, especially for higher functioning students.
## 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

Common assessments, such as pre- and post-assessments, are used to gauge student progress towards meeting goals across grades and subjects. Across classrooms, teachers use frequent checks for understanding, and students self-assess their work.

### Impact

Student progress is demonstrated through these assessments. Effective adjustments to curricula and instruction are made to meet all students’ learning needs.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers use various assessments, such as conference notes, checklists, benchmark data, behavioral data and rubrics. Accordingly, standards-based rubrics are used across grades and subject areas. Students are provided “gloows and growos” feedback from their teachers verbally and in writing. For example, on one kindergarten work sample in math a student received a 100 percent and given a “gloow,” (great work) in “adding within 10” and “grow” (keep working on) “adding within 10 fluently.” Another student received a Level 2 and was given the following “gloow” for “putting your pages in order 1-2-3,” and “grow” suggesting “making your topic smaller.” Another student received a 92 percent and was given a “gloow” for using models and pictures to subtract and “grow” to keep working on using pictures to compare.

- The principal stated that the instructional focus is to monitor student learning by implementing ongoing checks for understanding and making necessary instructional adjustments to ensure academic success for all. This was evidenced in the classrooms where teachers assess student understanding and track data. Teachers circulate and listen to conversations during mini-lessons to collect information. Additionally, teachers analyze assessment data to measure student growth and to identify gaps of understanding. Teachers performed an item analysis and noticed that students struggled with academic vocabulary. Teachers examined baseline data, and Fountas & Pinnell running records and these revealed a gap in early reading readiness skill attainment. Teachers across classrooms made adjustments to curricula and pacing calendars to maintain reading readiness along with ongoing formative assessment.

- In most classrooms, actionable feedback on student work was posted on bulletin boards, provided during the student meeting, and recorded in notebooks and portfolios viewed across the school. The school uses common assessments to determine individual student progress toward goals and to adjust curricula and instruction. Teachers formally assess students and match students with unique tasks using pre- and post-assessments, New York State exam item analyses, unit tasks and writing responses, conference notes, and ELA and math benchmarks to measure literacy development and foundational skills. Rubrics are age appropriate, specifically in early childhood where they are written in student friendly language. Teachers design and use multiple assessments and track data to impact instruction. Data from running records, conference notes, end-of-unit, pre-and post-assessments and on-demand writing tasks are used to identify specific student academic levels to inform flexible student grouping and task construction.
Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff. Teacher teams consistently communicate expectations and reading progression charts students and their families to prepare students for advancement to the next level.

Impact
High expectations are communicated through school leaders and teachers, thus offering clear direction towards student progress and college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leaders provide a professional handbook for staff that outlines clear expectations and professional duties. The staff handbook also includes the school’s mission, expected lesson planning, the use of preparation periods, and the expected professional attire and conduct. The instructional focus resounds in the classrooms and was easily recited by administrators and teachers. The teachers also shared that the administrators hold them accountable for their learning own professional learning and increasing students’ outcomes. Teachers hold themselves accountable for our school’s instructional focus through professional learning activities and intervisitations. Moreover, teachers post the pedagogical practice in which they excel on a sign outside their door, such as “Come visit me to see small groups and conferencing.”

- Teacher teams and administrators work together to create criteria for mastery and the skills students need to know for the next level. All students receive three report cards per year. All grades send home a monthly newsletter, which shares the academic learning that is happening in the classroom. Grade teams have created a yearlong parent engagement schedule on Tuesday afternoons. Teachers communicate with families via ClassDojo and Dojo stores which allow them to post updates about the class.

- The school created a culture to communicate high expectations for all students. The guidance counselor works closely with grade five students for the transition to middle school through classroom visits to discuss the Middle School Directory and application process, and followed up by one-to-one meetings for every child to discuss school options. In addition, the social worker helps support students in temporary housing to prepare for their next steps. Classes are named after colleges and universities, such as: Rutgers University, Princeton University, Hunter College, New York University, Brooklyn College, Pace University, Cornell University, Columbia University, Wesleyan University, Yale University, Syracuse University, University of Connecticut, Indiana University, and University of Michigan.
Additional Finding

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

**Findings**

School leaders ensure that teachers across grade levels engage in structured professional collaborations, and distributed leadership structures are in place.

**Impact**

Cross-functional professional collaborations have resulted in improved teacher practice. Teachers have built leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In an observed grade team meeting, a teacher presented student work on a task and teachers collectively developed strategies to be implemented to improve teacher practice. Teacher teams use scheduled meetings to discuss the performance and needs of students they share in common. Teachers meet regularly in grade and content-specific teams and use collaboratively developed protocols to analyze curricula and student work, to engage in shared reflection, and to develop action plans to address next steps. Agendas and minutes of all instructional meetings are shared through the use of Google Docs. In 2016, 19 percent of students scored at the proficient level in ELA, a 5.5 percentage point increase from the previous school year.

- Every grade and each content area has a teacher leader. Teacher leaders meet regularly with administration to discuss curriculum, student performance trends, and the needs of the grade or department thus ensuring coherence and shared accountability for schoolwide improved instructional practice. By using checklists that gauge student mastery of targeted skills as well as revised checklist criteria and indicators, teachers discuss student performance and make adjustments to assessment practices such as rubrics. In one instance, analysis of the place value unit assessments led to teachers revising base-ten instruction to include manipulatives and value charts.

- A distributive leadership structure is embedded as an integral part of the school culture. Teacher leaders, such as the Peer Collaborative Teacher, Model Teacher, Academic Achievement Coach, Academic Intervention Services Coach, Positive Behavior Intervention Services Leader, and Individualized Education Plan Coordinator facilitate department meetings, and teachers assume a leadership role in supporting colleagues in instructional decisions that impact student programming and curricula development. Teachers state that they have significant voice in key instructional decisions, such as departmentalizing ELA and math in grades three through five to support and encourage instructional capacity. As a result, grade three students showed an increase of 6.5 percentage points and grade four students showed an increase of 1.1 percentage points.