Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Lucero Elementary School
Elementary 09X311
1425 Walton Ave.
Bronx
NY 10452

Principal: Kattia Cuba

Dates of Review:
February 15, 2017 - February 16, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Roxan Marks
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

Lucero Elementary School serves students in grade kindergarten through grade five. 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>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>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>Area of Focus</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>Well Developed</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>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>Area of Celebration</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>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>Additional Finding</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>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>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

School leaders and staff consistently communicate high expectations with an emphasis on the instructional focus and Danielson Framework for Teaching. The administrator and teachers effectively communicate and partner with families communicating expectations and progress connected to college readiness.

Impact

Through communication and professional development around high expectations results in a culture of mutual accountability. The principal and staff successfully partner with families to provide supports and a value system that ensure progress for all students towards meeting those high expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- High expectations are communicated through staff handbook, newsletters, email, and ongoing cycles of professional development. The teachers' weekly newsletters are aligned to specific aspects of Danielson Framework for Teaching that the community is focusing upon. For example, the purposeful use of charts as instructional footprints to support content understanding are linked demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy. Expectations for classroom management is highlighted under administrative section of the newsletters and all items are aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The weekly news provides upcoming events, highlight of good practices and expectations including effective use of charts, inquiry in mathematics, assessments, lesson planning and school culture. The instructional focus is to support teachers implementing the workshop model and this area was revisited throughout the year. Teachers attend a week of professional development in the summer to help them to begin the year with clear methods to teach using the workshop model, support with group strategies, questioning and use of mathematical practices. Teachers commented that the school leader partners with them to meet expectations by co-teaching lessons, modeling and engaging in open dialogue through teams, and observation feedback.

- Expectations for college and beyond are reinforced in the core values of Perseverance, Enthusiasm for learning, Activism for social justice, Collaboration, and Empathy (PEACE). The PEACE values and mission is to cultivate college bound learners equipped with academic, inter-personal and technological skills to participate in the global society. The Community Circle brings all members of the school together to meet weekly and focus deeply on one of the core values. Teachers communicate progress and recognition of growth toward core values to families through phone calls and written comments shared in the Parent Communication Folders every Friday.

- Partnership with parents results in ongoing communication regarding progress using a messaging system that allows parents to interface with school personnel. Parents shared that teachers provide feedback to families and are always available to support them. Teacher shared that welcoming families in for meetings, email, use of Tuesday time, and phone calls are some ways they communicate. First grade teachers are piloting a new initiative whereby fifteen-minute time slots are scheduled to check in with families regarding the progress towards learning and using high frequency words and movement towards attainment of reading goals. During the parent meeting, parents stated that families are partners and twice a month they engage in learning walks. During these walks, parents visit classrooms, see instructional strategies, and learn about the instructional shifts and Common Core Learning Standards. Parents shared that regular communication occurs with staff, and on Fridays the Community Circle keeps them informed about the expectations for learning and college and career readiness. During the Principal Choice, parents were participating in an immigration session which was a result of recent questions and concerns among families that was organized by school staff.
Findings

Across classrooms teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and beliefs reflected in classrooms. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points into learning.

Impact

The instructional shifts and use of Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* inform teaching practices so that all students are engaged in challenging tasks. However, discussion and questioning among students did not reflect high-order thinking skills and there was limited use of strategic scaffolding of curricula to ensure access by all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Staff believes that students learn best when learning is authentic and provides opportunities for creative and critical thinking. The Instructional focus is inquiry learning in math, workshop model, providing authentic reading and writing experiences, close reading strategies, guided reading, and implementing the *Math Congress*. In most classroom visits, teachers were adhering to the structure of the workshops, conducting mini-lesson, modeling, guided, independent practices and the share component was observed. For example, in fourth grade class, students were reading closely and using text structure to determine how the author structured the informational text. Students were engaged in a mini-lesson on the rug and discussed aspects of the text as a group and then with a partner. In another grade five math class, the investigation by students centered on an inquiry word problem connected to baking a strawberry shortcake. Students worked in groups and used close reading to highlight key details in the problem.

- As a Transitional Bilingual School that serves over fifty-four percent English Language Learners, teachers and school leader shared the need to ensure tiered task are created to provide entry points for students. The Differentiation Menu is created for units and drives the plans for activities that vary content, process, and product. In a third-grade dual language classroom students were grouped by language levels and charged with locating details, sentence complexity, punctuation and grammar related to a common text. A checklist was used to support students in identifying how an author organizes text. Teachers use sentence starters, graphic organizers, level texts, varying levels of Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) for questions, customized learning center activities, and language supports provide entry points into learning. In math, the emphasis on visual representations and creating models assists in building conceptual understanding. In a grade two math lesson students were solving real-life problems using addition and subtraction. Students were working in groups with access to various strategies they could employ to get entry into the problem.

- The implementation of *Math Congress* has allowed students to share their thinking and exposing other strategies to students on how they could solve problems. In a fifth-grade lesson, students were working in five groups, talking about options and approaches to solving the problem. The teacher calls the group back to the rug and selects a student and displays the work for the class to see. The teacher probes the student about the approach used to begin solving the problem, could objects or picture help, does the answer make sense and other questions to understand the students’ thinking. Math games provide differentiated options for partnerships to explore and practice new concepts. Across classrooms, students turned and talked relying on questions posed by the teacher. In a self-contained class the questions posed by the teacher did not advance dialogue among students. In most classrooms, the discussion was managed by the teacher and occurred mostly with teacher support. Students worked in groups but rarely sought support from peers. Questions posed by the teachers did not trigger discussion among students. Lessons seen linked to real world applications with the options for sharing at end of lesson.
## Findings

The curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and task are adjusted and modified using students work and assessments.

## Impact

The school leader and staff have built coherence through core values that promote college and career readiness. Curricula and lesson are modified to ensure access for all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

## Supporting Evidence

- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project units are used in reading and writing following a workshop structure. Although the school opted for GO Math! and school leaders shared that is used sparsely. Exemplars and context for learning problems are frequently used along with EngageNY resources. Vertical alignment and coherence was seen in mathematics as students were learning the similar content as various grade levels. Math lessons were structured to allow for students to build up speed and accuracy as they calculate. In literacy, instructional shifts were integrated across content areas. For example, content area teachers place an emphasis on knowledge in the disciplines and employ close reading strategies, text-based answers, and academic vocabulary as seen in social studies planning documents. College readiness was evident in lessons and across the school through weekly presentations to reinforce core PEACE values and college readiness skills at the community meeting of Fridays. Teachers plan and implement the Community Circle in their daily schedule. In a given week students learned about perseverance, the characteristics and meaning, and those values were calendared and revisited every six weeks. In the meetings with students, they could articulate the values and their meaning. Students shared they learned a lot during Community Circle. One student remarked that the core values and life goals such as perseverance and enthusiasm made learning special in the school, and another shared “It makes us learn values to be ready for college and life.”

- Teachers make adjustments to lessons and units by using students work products and assessment data. Teachers shared that instructional coaches support them with modifications to lessons and units. During the team meeting, teachers shared strategies and approaches that were effective for English Language Learners. To help ensure access for all learners, teachers have created and modified checklists for students. A grade four reading lesson contained an organization checklist to help students examine an informational text. Another plan contained the use of a translated sheet to support new arrivals. Teachers shared that they use sentence starters, unpack problems, and provide acronyms to help students with steps need to solve and charts.

- Curricula is housed online and teachers use revision template to document adjustments made to units and lessons. In a grade three math unit, revisions were made based on analysis of work and assessments. Teachers added three additional lessons for repeated addition and subtraction as well as to move an activity prior to the pre-assessment to get students enticed by the topic. The unit was supplemented with two additional lessons from EngageNY and a Math Congress was placed after lesson five. Reading and writing unit plans contain standards, English as a New Language standards, big ideas, essential questions, list of content students will know, skills, vocabulary, assessment, inquiry tasks, and additional resources. Math units were accompanied with pacing calendars listing dates, quick assessment, fluency, concept development, differentiation, and problem solving. Teachers also make modifications to existing lesson, as in a reading lesson plans aligned to components of Danielson Framework for Teaching included list of prerequisite concepts, vocabulary, and differentiation using language partners, labels, pictures, and a customized sheet.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics, checklists, and assessments aligned to curricula that provide a clear portrait of student growth. Common assessments are used across grades and subjects to monitor progress, create strategic groups for Saturday classes, and adjust lessons and units.

Impact

Teachers' use of assessments, rubrics, and checklists to provide meaningful and actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding their achievements and progress. Teachers and teams use data to adjust lessons and units that ensure all learners can demonstrate increased mastery across classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- The use of OneDrive and All-In Learning as repositories for data provides easy access for staff to generate varied instructional reports. Grade specific assessment calendars reflect school benchmark tests in core subject areas, performance tasks, and state assessments inclusive of administration dates and the timeline for entering the data. Ongoing reading level assessments are conducted and data is used to create groups and plan guided reading or small group lessons. Data is used to make adjustments to curricula. Assessments are used to identify target students by Wednesday of each week based on exit tickets to attend Saturday intervention classes. For example, a grade four exit ticket summary chart lists all the students and whether they mastered the targeted exit assessment. These students are invited for Saturday program for additional instruction to develop that targeted skill. In a first grade class, students used a 3-point mathematics rubric to assess their problem and understanding of tens and ones. In a third grade class, the self-assessment activity checks for strategy used and perseverance with the assignment. Math rubrics and checklists were used by students as evidenced in work folders during small group and during class visits.

- Common assessments are used to track and monitor student progress including subgroup analysis for English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Reports are produced that isolate key standards and measure growth for groups of students over time. These reports and written findings accompany data and staff uses this information to create target groups and inform instructional decisions. Teachers shared that conference notes provide information to teachers to assess progress. In a second-grade lesson, while students were working in groups, the teacher was conducting a guided reading lesson and recording notes on observation form aligned to specific reading levels. The use of Data Analysis Protocol as a guide in looking at data in reading, writing, and math. Specific structures are outlined for analysis of pre-assessments from identification of standards to completing the Analysis of Student Work: Pre-Instruction form.

- Across classrooms, rubrics and checklist guide learning and offer self-assessment for students. Feedback containing next steps to assist students was seen on work in folders, on bulletin boards, and in notebooks. During small group interview, students shared their work and how the rubric and feedback helps them improve their work. Students shared that teachers' conference with them and share specific things to work on. One student remarked, "When I don't understand something I re-read it, the teachers helps me break it apart, or the teacher takes a group to the back of the class." Review of work and discussion from small group showed the consistent use of rubrics, checklists, and feedback to improve learning. In classrooms, students were using rubrics, checklists, and charts to support learning. All students shared that they use checklist, engage in self-reflective learning, and that teachers and other students provide feedback about their work. For example, during a classroom visit, a checklist was seen to help beginning English Language Learners address specific skills in writing and the teacher created an accompanying chart articulating specific goals for groups of students.
Findings

The majority of teachers are involved with collaborative inquiry using protocols and action plans. Distributive leadership structures allow teachers to be active in the school.

Impact

Protocols and action plans guide teachers’ work to further the goals of the school and strengthened pedagogy through the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards including the instructional shifts. Teacher leadership opportunities result in shared governance focused on improved student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet weekly to look at student work and assessments in literacy, additional sessions are scheduled to go deeper into ensuring pacing and lessons meet their diverse learners’ needs based on data. In math, teachers plan inquiry-based lessons using Exemplars and Context for Learning resources with the goal of increasing student engagement and planning for differentiation. Instructional coaches support teams in using data and provide individual support to teachers. Teams maintain meeting documents inclusive of a focus, minutes, and next steps for follow up and tracking assignments of team tasks. Teachers determine next steps for groups of students ranging from performance far below to exceeding standards. For example, following the analysis of the opinion writing assessment, teachers sorted data by levels indicating percentages and number of students assigned by levels. All teacher teams continually select a few of the class work products to look closer at, noting specific evidence of students understanding and documents their plans using Inquiry Cycle Action Plan.

- Staff shared that they appreciate the collaborative culture that exists and that staff has the opportunity to grow in this environment. Grade leaders meet together weekly and focus their work on schoolwide initiatives, sharing, communicating ideas and information back to their home teams. Teachers play active role in the school such as coordinating the Community Circle activity weekly, leading the Wellness initiatives, Student Council, art, newsletters, and other activities. Teachers lead and participate in instructional rounds in teams that have been arranged based on problems of practice submitted by peers. Paraprofessionals are trained in a reading intervention technique provide one to one tutoring for targeted students. Participation in hiring and development of selection criteria are aligned to the PEACE values. The principal shared that “There is great value placed in this community on collaboration and ownership.”

- During the teacher team observations, grade one teachers examined pre-and post-assessments to look for growth and identify additional areas to work on. Teachers were using laptops to access student specific data and discussed changes for the next unit based on the data and student work. The team suggested adding two other models with the conclusion and having students talk about options for the ending. Teachers also shared successful strategies used with colleagues and tools used that were helpful for English Language Learners. Teams follow a cycle for their work, teachers shared the focus for grade one was close reading. Teams work together to identify learning outcomes which are designed using student friendly format. The use of “I can” statements such as “I can use close reading ritual to organize my thinking” or I can read for the gist of the text by note-taking loose words or short phrases.” Strategies are shared to support students meeting the learning targets and possible options to differentiate lessons are documented on the Differentiation Menu for the unit.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

School leaders and teachers support colleagues, including those new to the profession, with feedback and next steps. Professional development is planned using observation data, peer feedback from inter-visitations, and needs assessments.

Impact

Advance reporting from observations, teacher feedback, and staff input guides professional learning to further the instructional and school goals for all staff.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leader tracks and monitors observation data through Advance, an online tool and shared that feedback always includes a plan to support the areas identified based on needs identified during observations. The principal shared that based on practices seen in some math classes it was felt that there was a need to foster more discussion between students, they arranged for training to assist teachers in engaging in productive discussion in math. Teachers stated that the principal, coaches, and consultants serve as resources to help them grow in the profession. New teachers are matched with mentors and teachers of English Language Learners and students with disabilities provide advice and support to peers. Teachers discussed how school leader models and co-teach lessons and that visits are not always evaluative. Staff attend professional development sessions offered by consultants, field center, and other organizations and provide turnkey training if applicable. In August, lower grades teachers engaged in a self-assessment in the knowledge and understanding of the literacy assessment. Following the training, teachers completed a post learning survey and the data is used to plan additional support including workshops, inter-visitations or in class coaching.

- Feedback from observations and peers were grounded in the areas identified in the instructional focus and goals for the year. Teacher feedback from workshops was summarized and used to guide the work of coaches, consultants, and professional development plans. Senior staff feedback provided to teachers uses checklists and rubrics. For example, a three-point classroom environment rubric was used to provide feedback on learning centers, library, word walls, proves charts, daily schedule, and other areas. The school leader also used a checklist to assess classroom libraries and shared the checklist as feedback to teachers. The principal conducts mid-year meetings with staff and notes are documented on a school created template. This information is summarized and shared with the team and used to guide further professional learning sessions for staff.

- Teachers participate in instructional rounds focused on problems of practice they identified. Five teams were formed to create independence in math inquiry, differentiation, discussions, engagement, and checks for understanding. Each team had a leader who coordinated visits and managed the team. Teachers visit the host classroom and using the Round Debriefing Protocol to provide feedback and reflection. Artifacts, videos of teachers from the rounds, and notes are stored in the community online drive. Team leaders collaborate with leaders and together they gather additional supports or resources needed to improve teacher effectiveness. Teachers shared their involvement and design of training sessions such as workshops on discussions in mathematics to active engagement during the workshop model. Professional development planning is collaborative and includes teacher voice. The plan is structured to align with the Framework for Great Schools, the instructional focus, and Danielson Framework for Teaching. Revisions to the professional learning plan are based on areas noted in student work, observation data, feedback from teacher rounds, needs assessments, and feedback from consultants.