Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 123 Suydam
Elementary 32K123
100 Irving Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11237

Principal: Arelis Parache

Dates of Review:
January 31, 2018 - February 1, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Lisa Reiter
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. 123 Suydam 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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</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>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 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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations around professionalism and the Danielson Framework for Teaching. School leaders and staff successfully partner with families toward understanding expectations connected to college and career readiness.

Impact

School leaders provide professional learning connected to schoolwide expectations, and there is a culture of mutual accountability connected to observation feedback. Weekly parent workshops, in addition to information sharing through verbal and written reports with families, support students in their academic progress.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders share high expectations with teachers via a staff handbook, which is adjusted each year to reflect current priorities and weekly memorandums. For example, the staff handbook includes expectations for using a balanced literacy approach, lesson structure, and classroom environment. Additionally, the handbook conveys expectations for student goal setting and using data effectively to plan lessons. Staff also receive weekly memoranda which include a focus for the week that is connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching such as providing scaffolds to support English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, providing opportunities for students to self-assess, and using higher-order thinking questions. Included in the memos are photos of best practices and examples and links to additional resources. Teachers came to a quick consensus on the value of receiving the weekly memo as one method of communication and support.

- In addition to frequent classroom observations with feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching, school leaders provide professional learning aligned with school-specific goals and teacher need. A professional development session held in September included a norming session on “Engaging Students in Learning,” a component of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional focus for the year. Teachers reported that the school leader encourages them to seek additional professional development opportunities that support their growth. Additionally, teachers arrange intervisitations to other classrooms as another strategy to support each other and meet schoolwide expectations. Teachers reported that this creates a culture of mutual accountability with their administrators.

- School leaders and staff members use phone calls, in-person meetings, letters, and an online platform to communicate with families. Families receive either a progress report or report card every two months to stay informed on their children’s overall academic progress. Additionally, parents receive weekly notices regarding what skills their children are learning for the upcoming week. One parent reported that this helps her understand what her son is learning. Parent workshops are well attended and include topics connected to college and career readiness such as using the scientific method, robotics, coding, and project-based learning. Parents also shared that they receive strategies to use at home with their children. For example, one parent shared that as a result of implementing the teacher recommended strategy of writing sight words on sticky paper and placing them around the house, her child increased word recognition by twenty-five words. Therefore, a successful partnership between parents and the school results in student progress toward goals.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings
School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts, such as text-based answers across grades and subjects. Curricula and tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact
Curricular development builds coherence across subjects and grades and promotes college and career readiness for all students. Faculty members adjust materials for students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs), however, are not yet consistently planning for the highest-achieving students.

Supporting Evidence

- Unit plans and lesson plans show consistent alignment with the Common Core and integration of instructional shifts. For example, in a grade-five math unit plan, students are deepening their understanding of dividing with decimals and place value through solving multi-step word problems. In a grade-two math unit plan, students are to apply their understanding of addition and subtraction strategies through real-world problems and explaining how they solve different problems. A grade-four math lesson plan, students deepen their understanding of multiplication, perimeter, and area by designing a restaurant.

- Curricular documents include assignments evidencing integration of the English Language Arts (ELA) instructional shifts. For example, lesson and unit plans include using nonfiction trade books to build knowledge and engage in text-based discussions and writing tasks. A grade-three literacy unit plan includes text on bullfrogs. Students engage in a discussion based on adaptations that help the bullfrogs survive. In grade-four literacy lesson plan, students read the “Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address” to build knowledge and discuss with their groups the influence of Native Americans. However, there are missed opportunities to integrate instructional shifts strategically. For example, while a kindergarten lesson plan shows alignment to the Common Core and includes academic vocabulary, the lesson plan does not include text in which students could build knowledge about the world.

- A review of lesson plans reveals planning and refinement of tasks so that a diversity of learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities have access to cognitively engaging tasks. For example, a grade-two lesson plan includes placing students in one of three groups and providing a differentiated task based on their group level. Students in the approaching level receive additional scaffolds such as base ten blocks and receive guided support. Additionally, ELLs receive a language support vocabulary card. A grade-three integrated co-teaching (ICT) lesson plan includes specific tasks for students in differentiated groups. For example, all students identify the main idea and supporting textual evidence. However, students in the green group will identify two adaptations; while students in other groups may only identify one and receive a sentence starter. While some lesson plans include evidence of planning for the highest-achieving students, this level of planning was not evident across the vast majority of lesson plans. For example, in a grade-five math lesson plan, it is unclear how the task is differentiated for students in the above-level group. Additionally, a grade-four literacy plan does not include differentiated tasks or supports. Therefore, curricula and academic tasks consistently reflect planning for a diversity of learners. However, differentiation for the highest-achieving students is not yet consistently evident.
**Additional Finding**

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

Across classrooms, teaching practices reflect the belief that students learn best when engaged in group tasks and provided with opportunities for discussion. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

**Impact**

Students across classrooms produce meaningful work products. Additionally, the consistent use of scaffolds results in students demonstrating higher-order thinking in work products and discussions.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In a grade-two math class students engaged in a turn and talk with their groups to discuss what strategy each used to solve a word problem. In one group, a student shared that the problem required subtraction because it stated that someone ate seven muffins and they need to know how many are left. He further explained his strategy was to make a chart. Another student shared the strategy of regrouping by explaining taking away from the tens column and putting them in the one’s column. In a grade-three reading class, students discussed a shared text on bullfrogs. The teacher asked one group to describe what they could infer from the frog’s action. One student share, “Maybe the frog was starving, and that’s why he was looking for food.” Another student added that the crayfish were in danger from the frog. After discussing with their groups, students used text evidence to identify the gist with supporting details of the book. Thus students completed meaningful tasks as a result of engaging in discussions.

- In a grade-five math class, students collaborated in groups to solve a multi-step word problem. In one group, students engaged in a vigorous discussion around whether their next step was to multiply or divide. Students came to the consensus that they needed to multiply because the problem stated it was a round trip, which means multiply by two. During a grade-four class, students worked collaboratively to research an aspect of Native American life and create an artifact. Students asked each other higher-order thinking questions as they completed the task. Questions asked between students included, “How is the ax related to the Iroquois?” and “In your opinion, why do you think the ax is most important?” Additionally, student work posted on bulletin boards included informative writing on the rainforest, literary responses, and numerous examples of multi-step word problems that included a written explanation. Therefore, across classrooms students produce meaningful work products, as evidenced through in-class work and also posted on bulletin boards.

- Across classrooms, scaffolds provide multiple entry points into the curricula for all learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities. For example, in a grade-three ICT reading lesson, students received differentiated graphic organizers. Students who required additional support had sentence starters and worked with a teacher. In other classrooms, scaffolds were available in a basket on the table for students to self-select if they needed the additional support. In a grade-four math and engineering class, students received differentiated packets to design a restaurant. One student also received sentence stems in both English and Spanish to ensure she could complete the challenging task. Examples of available scaffolds included a detail detector, checklists, and visual reminders of strategies such as CUBES: circle, underline, box (any math action), evaluate, solve and check. Therefore, all learners demonstrate higher-order thinking skills as evidenced by engaging in challenging tasks.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teachers and students use rubrics aligned with the school's curricula. Teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding.

Impact

Teachers' use of assessments and rubrics provide actionable feedback, in the form of glows and grows, to students. Additionally, teachers make effective adjustments, such as providing an additional mini-lesson, to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Samples of student work products show teacher written actionable feedback. Some examples of that feedback directed students to read and edit their work, checking for mechanics and grammar. Additionally, students are advised to develop a conclusion to summarize their writing, write an introduction that grabs the reader's attention, and include evidence to support their main idea. Written feedback in math advises students to use more math language to explain their thinking, use the CUBES strategy to solve word problems, and check that their model represents the numbers and strategy they chose. Thus, students receive actionable feedback from teachers that is aligned to the rubric.

- One student reported and all present agreed that teachers' written feedback is helpful. This student spoke about an example in which the teacher suggested a graphic organizer would help him add more details. This student also spoke about using the graphic organizer on his next project and receiving a higher score. Another student spoke about how teachers follow up on the feedback provided. Therefore, there is evidence that students implement feedback provided by teachers.

- Teachers consistently check for understanding and make adjustments when necessary. In a grade-two class, after students shared incorrectly defined regrouping, the teacher restated how to regroup and referred students to an anchor chart in the classroom for additional support. In an ICT grade-two class, the teacher identified a small group of students who needed an additional mini-lesson. Additionally, in a grade-three class, the teacher checked in with groups to assess their understanding of finding the gist in the text. In addition, students receive checklists across classrooms as a self- and peer-assessment tool. For example, a grade-five writing task includes a checklist for students to identify evidence of the following: if the topic was introduced, at least three sensory details, and a strong conclusion. The checklist also includes statements in which students identify evidence of transition words and dialogue. Students reported that the use of checklists helps them understand the requirements of the task. Additionally, teachers use ongoing checks for understanding to form student groups. Across classrooms, student groupings were posted in the classroom. Students came to the quick consensus that while most groups are constant, they do change when a student needs more support to complete the task.
Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision

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<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders support the development of teachers with four-week cycles of observation and provide effective feedback. Feedback accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

**Impact**

As a result of effective feedback from both evaluative and non-evaluative observations, teachers’ implement strategies that promote professional growth. Feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice and supports teacher development.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders conduct frequent observations for teachers they are assigned to support. The principal also conducts at least one observation for each teacher, and additional observations both evaluative and non-evaluative for teachers new to the profession or up for tenure. Each evaluative observation includes effective feedback utilizing the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Each rated item is supported with specific evidence from the observed class. For example, in an observation report, it stated that the teacher should use a checklist and adjust instruction after completing a check for understanding. The report includes a time the school leader will return to see progress toward implementing the feedback.

- Observation reports contain feedback that captures teachers’ strengths and weaknesses and is accompanied by next steps teachers should take to improve their practice and impact student success. For example, a teacher is praised in one observation report for providing a collaborative task in which students research an interdisciplinary topic and present findings to the class. Feedback to this teacher advises that the teacher provide higher-order thinking questions to further engage students in the research process. A link to an additional resource is also provided for the teacher. In another observation report, feedback to the teacher discusses using a partner strategy during student discussions to encourage all students’ participation. Additionally, the teacher is commended for using visuals, such as an anchor chart to support students and is encouraged to continue that practice. Thus, feedback continually supports teacher growth through clear expectations and additional resources identified for each teacher’s need.

- Teachers came to a quick consensus that school leaders conduct frequent non-evaluative observations and provide immediate feedback to teachers. One teacher shared that after a non-evaluative observation, the school leader suggested creating different graphic organizers as a strategy to meet all students learning needs. The school leader also provided a few examples as a resource for the teacher. The teacher reported that this feedback helped strengthen his practice. Another teacher shared that informal feedback was provided on using higher-order thinking questions, which has improved discussions in the classroom. It is evident that immediate feedback from non-evaluative observations elevates schoolwide instructional practices.
### Additional Finding

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

**Findings**

The vast majority of teachers engage in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations. Distributed leadership structures such as grade team leaders are embedded.

**Impact**

Systematic analysis of student data and work products has resulted in mastery of goals for groups of students. Teacher leadership plays an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Minutes of the kindergarten teach team reveal their goal for students to increase their sight word recognition by ten percent. The team identified students performing in the lowest third for each class as their target groups. Action plans identified strategies such as reading games, an online program, and sight word chants to support student growth toward mastering sight words. At the end of the first, six-week cycle, all classes saw improvement in sight word recognition and two groups exceeded the goal of mastering ten percent of the sight words. Teachers attributed shared strategies discussed at team meetings as strengthening their practice and leading to student mastery of sight words.

- During an observed grade-five team meeting, teachers identified different instructional strategies to implement to support student achievement toward understanding place value of decimals. Prior to the meeting, teachers analyzed exit slips to determine if previous reteach strategies impacted student understanding. The team stated that students showed improvement in reading and writing decimals in standard form. However, students struggled with expanded form and identifying the value of an underlined digit. The team agreed to use a place value mat, additional task cards, and an online program to support student achievement. One teacher demonstrated how the online program could be customized for the specific needs of students. The team will evaluate the impact of the additional strategies at the next meeting. The use of common strategies results in instructional coherence and increased student achievement.

- Within teacher teams, teachers serve as a resource to their colleagues in strengthening capacity and increasing student achievement. One teacher spoke about the valuable feedback received as a result of planning instructional strategies together during team meetings. One example was that the fourth-grade team, would provide visuals and introduce the CUBE strategy. Prior to collaborating with the team, not all teachers used common visuals. The impact of this work was ninety percent of students were able to complete two-digit multiplication problems. Additionally, a review of teacher reflection forms revealed teachers school-wide coherence and strengthened instructional capacity. For example, across grades, teachers identified graphic organizers, differentiated games, and close reading as strategies implemented to support student achievement. Based on the structured professional collaborations, in which teacher teams identify instructional strategies to use across the grade, there is schoolwide instructional coherence.