Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 329 Surfside
Elementary 21K329

2929 West 30 Street
Brooklyn
NY 11224

Principal: Salema Marbury

Dates of Review:
November 30, 2017 - December 1, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Marion Wilson
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. 329 Surfside 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>To what extent does the school...</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>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>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 Culture

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4</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></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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<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>
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<td></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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</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></td>
<td>Area of Celebration</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></td>
<td>Additional Finding</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>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Additional Finding</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></td>
<td>Additional Finding</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>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Area of Celebration

### Quality Indicator:

| 1.3 Leveraging Resources | Rating: Well Developed |

## Findings

School leaders use technology, space, coaches, and instructional resources and other organizational decisions in a purposeful manner to support the school’s long-range action plans. Hiring practices are strategic to help with English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

## Impact

As a result of the well-coordinated school utilization of organizational resources, students create meaningful research projects, visual art displays, or dance routines. Hiring efforts lead to teachers holding themselves accountable for their students’ progress by promoting access to college and career readiness skills.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders strategically assign coaches and teacher leaders to help other staff members with a focus on school goals. There is a clear connection between the support provided by Teachers College consultants and an increase in the quality of teaching and improvement in students’ reading levels and student essays displayed in classrooms and on bulletin boards. The school has lead teachers and content specialists who help to redesign integrated curricula and the implementation of effective teaching practices. For example, the school strategically interviews, hires, and then program teachers who have experience helping students become more organize, disciplined in action and thought, and collaborate with each other. Many personnel have training on how to handle and deescalate problematic situations, which in turn promotes positive academic and personal behaviors. The principal shared specific examples of newly hired teachers to the school who have experience in other subject areas that help create interdisciplinary projects for students to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in research papers.

- Teachers are assigned to courses that leverage their strengths and expertise in teaching physical education, visual arts, dance, mathematics, and science. The administrative cabinet reviews each teachers’ profile to note details in teachers’ preferences, previous experiences, and track record of impact on student performance in order to match them with students who would most benefit from their teaching styles. Teachers and administration work together to assign teachers with expertise in working with special populations such as students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and high-achieving students, to maximize their learning experiences and meet college and career readiness expectations. As a result, the school is meeting goals according to state assessment metrics where targeted populations are making progress, hence closing the achievement gap for sub-populations.

- The school makes thoughtful decisions around the allocation of school funds, space in the building, the use of laptops, SMARTboards, and handheld devices. In addition, organizational partners are aligned to the school’s instructional and long-range goals and plans. There are strategic decisions made to meet students’ individual learning and behavior goals. Students are given uniforms to be able to participate in the athletics programs for healthy living. The school purchases a plethora of classroom libraries including non-fiction and fiction texts to support the school’s core reading program as well as titles aligned to the varied interests of all students. The school has dedicated spaces to ensure that their dance studio, simulated art museum, and gymnasium have state-of-the art equipment and materials to support students fulfilling their greatest potential. During the school visit, a diversity of students highlighted their visual art projects and choreographed dance routines that reflect the Blueprint for the Arts standards.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator:  | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Developing |

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Student work products reflect uneven levels of thinking and participation.

Impact

There is uneven engagement in appropriately challenging tasks and uneven demonstration of higher-order thinking skills for students with disabilities and English Language Learners in work products. There were missed opportunities for high levels of student-to-student discussions in classes visited.

Supporting Evidence

- Instructional student groups were not consistently organized or varied as appropriate to promote student learning. Teaching strategies and instructional tasks inconsistently met the needs of individual students and subgroups, such as English Language Learners and students with disabilities. There were missed opportunities for well-coordinated lessons to help students engage with challenging and rigorous materials and be supported during the lesson. In a third-grade self-contained math class, students were required to find products of three factors by using the associative property of multiplication. Students were not challenged and were filling in workbook pages without additional scaffolds or support. However, in a fifth-grade Integrated Co-Teaching English Language Arts (ELA) class, the lesson's objective was for students to get ready to read non-fiction text by revving up their minds and, in alignment with Common Core Learning Standards, to determine two or more main details in a text. The students worked on different articles selected by the teachers that had interesting content that students were engaged in and had question prompts to engage in discussion with their peers. Questions to promote reflective thought included, “How do you know this is an important detail? What text features do you notice in your book? How will this information help me?” Students were grouped according to their levels and were provided with post-it notes, graphic organizers, and highlighters to help them annotate the text as they were reading. This type of effective support and student-to-student discussions was not consistent in other grades and subject areas visited.

- Teaching practices include some use of scaffolded opportunities to help students make meaning and entry points into lessons. There were some effective use of graphic organizers, visuals, technology, imagery, and small group supports for students across grades, however there were missed opportunities that led to uneven engagement. In a fourth-grade math class, students were working on multiply two-digit numbers by regrouping. The teacher told students to speak about their work but instead they chose to work independently without speaking to their groupmates. Some of the completed work contained incorrect answers and some worksheets showed misconceptions in the computation process. Even though they had multiplication tables and other math manipulatives in bins on their tables, many were not prompted to refer back to these materials to help them preserve to solve the problems or check their work. As a result, discussions in classes remained primarily between the teacher and select students and did not reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

- Across some classrooms, teachers did not use higher-order thinking questions to help students access the content or task or support their learning. There were missed opportunities for questions to promote high levels of student participation, thinking and cognitive engagement in lessons, especially for English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Across most classes visited, effective use of multiple entry points was not evident and higher-order thinking questions were not part of the lesson or student discussion.
**Additional Finding**

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

The school leader and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, integrate the instructional shifts, and make purposeful decisions to build coherence. The curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and supports diverse learners.

**Impact**

The school’s curricula promote college and career readiness for most students and higher-order skills are planned across the grades and subjects for most students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Curricular documents reflect common essential elements that reference learning objectives, the Common Core Learning Standards, instructional practices, and assessment of student learning. The school focuses on the instructional shift of students having opportunities to cite evidence to support their thinking in both math and ELA. Lessons and units focus primarily on students text-based responses with a balance of non-fiction and fiction text through the Teachers College Writing Reading Program and GO Math! Similarly, for math, the school focused on operations and algebraic thinking as well as students being able to develop and deepen their conceptual understanding of complex mathematical concepts. For example, all written lessons include a section that helps to have students consider how math topics are related and feature strategy work instead of procedural equations. In other written documents, there were opportunities for producing clear and coherent writing appropriate to task and drawing evidence from literary information to support analysis, reflection, research, and academic vocabulary. In one plan, students had to interpret multiplication equations as a comparison, solve multi-step word problems with whole numbers using three operations, and assess reasonable answers using mental math and estimating strategies.

- In an effort to build coherence, teachers plan using a similar tool which includes similar elements regardless of the content area. For example, the template captures learning targets, understandings, knowledge, essential questions, skills, and assessment evidence. For example, teachers include the type of formative data they are using at the end of the lessons, including exit slips, conference notes, and their observations for lessons taught. Tasks incorporate students using different opportunities to find main idea and make inferences. Learning targets are student friendly language so that students knew what was expected of them by the end of the lesson. Units of study allow for additional phonics instruction for lower grades and additional time for academic vocabulary and comprehension supports for upper-grade students.

- There is a clear connection between the shifts and topics in subjects as teachers consider the time allocations for lessons, coordinated activities, and student groupings as they plan academic tasks. Teachers use Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* chart to guide the planning process around embedding questions that require higher-order thinking. In addition, teachers try to incorporate academic language to address the English Language Learners and leveled questions to address other diverse student learners. Essential questions are consistent in planning documents and are planned with appropriate levels of rigor to meet the needs of students. For example, a fourth-grade math unit on multiplying by one-digit numbers include questions such as, “How can you estimate products using rounding and determine if answers are reasonable?” and “How can we multiple using the standard algorithm?” In a science plan, students were asked “How does life in other cultures affect the customs in New York and surrounding areas?”
Findings

Assessments and rubrics are aligned to the school’s curricula across most subject areas. The school uses common assessments to determine progress towards individual student goals.

Impact

Written and verbal actionable feedback is provided to students and teachers regarding student achievement in core subject areas. Teachers use the results from Fountas and Pinnell, math performance tasks, and teacher-created assessments to adjust their lesson plans and instructional practices.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers design rubrics, progression checklists, and quizzes that are based on Common Core priority standards in the curriculum. These choices help to provide daily and weekly information to inform their teaching and provide feedback to students on their performance. Teachers assess all learning outcomes at the end of lessons and periodically throughout the semester to show which students are performing on, below, or above level based on the learning intentions. Students are able to articulate the reason why they received areas of strength or growth on math, science, or social studies assessments. In some artifacts, this information is captured in a section of the students’ notebooks and in their other classes, feedback is summarized in folders so that there is an understanding of the criteria for how their work will be judged. In the small student group meeting, students were able to speak about their next steps on improving their work.

- Most students receive actionable feedback aligned to the Teachers College curricula as well as teacher-created rubrics based on the Common Core and content standards. During the small group meeting, students shared work samples that included a grow and glow on their work and were able to explain to explain the teacher’s feedback. Students also shared that they receive verbal feedback when they conference with teachers or as they are completing classwork or doing an activity. One student shared the feedback on his math performance task on how to better use academic vocabulary to enhance his written explanation. Students made meaning of the feedback and were able to explicitly articulate how they applied this feedback to other work or subject areas based on conversations with teachers and written feedback in their notebook or on their work. One student shared, “I now think of using terms like numerator, denominator, and order of operations when writing out how I solved a word problem.”

- Most teachers design and modify common gradewide, curriculum-aligned assessments, rubrics and grading policies that address data-defined student groups. These tools help teachers track progress towards goals for groups of students. Teachers use information from the results of writing rubrics to revise time spent on particular units of study. In addition, when teachers realized that students were not provided rigorous tasks that matched the items on state exams, they worked to develop common assessments that mirrored the same type of critical thinking and problem-solving questions of high cognitive demand that students would encounter on standardized assessments. Teachers made efforts to ensure that their quizzes and tests required more rigorous thinking, such as having students write out to explain their thinking and include opportunities for students to complete constructed responses for math. Results from a variety of reading data sources, including Fountas and Pinnell, informed the school’s decision to focus more teaching time on foundational phonics and fluency skills, which resulted in an increase in direct instruction lessons to build students’ skills in these areas.
**Additional Finding**

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

School leaders effectively communicate elevated expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness and successfully partner with families. Teacher teams systematically communicate a unified set of high expectations for all students across the school.

**Impact**

The school supports student progress towards elevated expectations by providing ongoing training and workshops to help families internalize the demands of the Common Core. Teachers provide focused and effective guidance and advisement supports to ensure that all students own their educational experience.

**Supporting Evidence**

- There is a well-coordinated system of communication between the school and parents. An overwhelming amount of parents shared that the school provides ongoing, clear lines of verbal, online, and email communication to them about graduation, college and career readiness and standards for performance. There are student-led conferences held in the spring where students lead the conversation about their strengths and areas of growth as a learner in relation to the Common Core Learning Standards. During the parent meeting, one parent commented that she learned how to do the ‘new math’ after her daughter showed an explanation of how she used a model to help her solve a multistep problem. Other parents readily chimed in to support that the school offers parent workshops, the sophisticated school website with a plethora of resources to support the implementation of Common Core-aligned materials, which they use to help their children complete projects, tasks, and homework. As a result, parents are well informed about their child’s progress on a regular basis and partner with the school to ensure continued success.

- Teachers and other staff members have clear, systematic structures, to help articulate student performance in relation to college and career readiness expectations. For example, during the large and small group meetings, students were able to articulate the trajectory between the subject matter they were learning in class with their chosen career path. One student shared, “I want to be a dance instructor when I grow up and being a part of the dance program helps me learn how to teach and how to become a better dancer.” Students made the relation to being a journalist presenting his or her perspective and backing up with they write or say with factual evidence like what their teachers require of them in social studies, mathematics, and science. Students review learning progressions and receive guidance and advice on their next steps with clear expectations for the subsequent school year when transitioning between grades. More students have auditioned and created portfolios to gain acceptance into elite gifted middle schools in the district. As a result, all students, including high-need populations, have a deepened understanding of what is expected of them to reach the next level in their educational journey.

- The school coordinates curriculum nights and parent-teacher conferences for parents to help them partner and interact with the school. During the parent meeting, families shared their experiences as students at the school or having children who have graduated and the direct integral role the school plays in helping them better understand the demands of the Common Core and next level readiness in middle and high schools. One parent shared that the school has high expectations for children at the school because the level of work that is given to students, for example in regards to research projects, debates, evaluating sources, and using sophisticated evidence to support their thinking, is comparable to work seen at the college level. Parents shared that they are empowered through online resources available to them and face-to-face parent interactions to support their children in meeting or exceeding the school’s elevated expectations for their children.
### Additional Finding

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

**Findings**

Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused. There are distributed teacher-leadership structures in place across the school.

**Impact**

Teacher team work typically results in improved teacher practice and progress towards goals for groups of students. Teachers have a key voice in major decisions that affect student learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Most teacher teams across the school participate in weekly data-dive meetings where they look at students’ assessment data and then make modifications to their teaching or lesson plans. For example, during a teacher team question-and-answer session, teachers shared that they noticed that the Teachers College unit did not provide enough structure for their students and lacked opportunities for students to participate in writing narrative responses. They also noticed that students’ writing was not coherent. As a result, they decided to incorporate different types of graphic organizers into lessons to help students organize their writing. Organizers like the four-square model were introduced and differentiated by grade. They also sequence lessons differently to ensure that they have enough time to spend on units and skills that students showed the most deficiency. As a result, teachers are improving their practice in designing coherent instruction for students in writing and in providing students with ample opportunities to increase the quality and quantity of writing across subject areas.

- Most teachers are provided with opportunities to serve as team leaders, mentors, and coaches to help make day-to-day decisions that affect student learning. During one of the teacher team meetings, teachers shared that they have a voice in hiring decisions, making changes to curricular materials, and in developing the format of their lessons. Teachers felt that their voices were heard when they shared with administration that some of the curricular resources were not working for their groups of students, thereby leading to changes in the materials that were being used. Most teachers shared that administration includes them in instructional cabinet meetings where they are able to share concerns and make suggestions to the instructional core and systems for improvement. As a result, the work of teacher teams has influenced overall improvement in students’ reading and math levels across grades with students making improvements by at least two levels between marking periods.

- Most grade-level teacher teams use and monitor a variety of student data, including state and local assessments, to inform the decisions they make to adjust their teaching practices. For example, teachers shared that after administering a mid-chapter checkpoint quiz, children were making mistakes because they did not have concrete multiplication skills. Teachers decided to spiral back to material covered earlier in the unit plan and revisit elements of chapter one of GO Math!. They also incorporated more models, examples, and supports to help students deepen their ability to apply multiplication skills to other related mathematical concepts. Teacher teams have noted student gains in being able to go deeper into texts and utilize strategies to restate questions, answer them in complete sentences, cite evidence from texts to support their answers, and explain how they arrived at the answer through the RACE strategy.