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. 239 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></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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</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>
</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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</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>
</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>
</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>
</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>Area of Focus</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Findings

School leaders consistently convey high expectations to staff through ongoing feedback and professional learning aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. The school consistently communicates expectations and offers feedback to families.

## Impact

Ongoing communication and support by school leaders around classroom visits support teachers’ understanding and awareness of expectations for teaching and learning. Communication from school leaders and teachers through newsletters and other strategies provide frequent opportunities for families to understand student progress towards meeting expectations.

## Supporting Evidence

- Review of faculty handbook reveals the sharing of high expectations around instructional design and delivery, grading policy, as well as professional responsibilities. Examples of items covered include expectations for homework, a preferred lesson plan template, and ensuring students have entry and exit points for each lesson. Additionally, expectations connected to creating a positive classroom environment include sample lesson plans connected to teaching students *superhero* traits such as being respectful, responsible, determined, and kind. Additionally, staff receives a weekly newsletter that includes information connected to schoolwide initiatives such as increasing opportunities for students to practice math fluency, key dates, and intervisitation to see strong instructional practices.

- Professional development supports teachers to meet high expectations connected to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. School leaders meet regularly to review observation trends and identify professional development needs. Teachers came to a quick consensus that professional learning helped them implement schoolwide expectations around questioning and discussions and student autonomy. For example, teachers are expected to ask high-level questions, known as juicy questions, which allow students to engage in a discussion. During the professional development session on juicy questions, teachers learned how to write high-level questions and strategies to break down questions for students. In addition to the professional development sessions on developing juicy questions, school leaders conducted non-evaluative observations to provide teachers with feedback on their juicy questions. A review of observation reports revealed teachers improving in the questioning and discussion domain of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

- Expectations connected to college and career readiness are shared with families through monthly newsletters, breakfasts with the principal, and parent workshops. Examples of workshops include, understanding the difference between bullying and conflict, reading strategies to support your child, and math strategies. The newsletter includes the current unit of study for literacy, math, social studies, and science, as well as strategies to try at home. For example, in a third-grade newsletter, families are encouraged to ask their children to analyze photographs as a primary source. A pre-kindergarten newsletter encourages families to use household items such as beans or pennies as counters to help students learn their numbers. Additionally, school leaders and staff communicate with families through different online platforms. One parent shared, and all present agreed, that she receives weekly information regarding her child’s progress that helps her understand how her child is progressing.
Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations such as vertical teams and grade-level focus groups. Teacher teams analyze student work for students on whom they are focused.

Impact

Use of an inquiry-based approach is developing across teacher teams. While analysis of assessment data has improved teacher practice, it has not yet resulted in progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers engage in professional collaborations that support schoolwide goals. Teacher teams across the school noticed a lack of student autonomy and ownership which led to each grade-level developing a project-based learning task. A review of meeting minutes reveals teachers on each grade-level team collaborated to develop these projects. For example, teachers on the third-grade team developed a common understanding of project-based learning before developing a task in which students collaborate with partners to conduct research and develop a new invention, inspired by nature, to solve a challenge someone with a disability may have. While, teacher teams collaborated around a problem of practice and developed a project aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, the inquiry approach in which consistent analysis of student work or assessment data is developing. For example, teachers used qualitative data such as classroom observations to drive the first cycle of inquiry on student autonomy and ownership.

- Teachers meet in vertical teams to review student work across grades. Vertical teams are comprised of teachers across all grades. One vertical team was observed identifying glows and grows and next steps after reviewing one sample of student writing from each grade, kindergarten through grade five. Teachers brought student work samples from students who had been identified as higher-performing students. Teachers came to consensus that the selected students in kindergarten through grade five all wrote strong leads and strong claims. Next steps included using a variety of transition words and continuing to focus on juicy sentences and questions. The structure used resulted in missed opportunities to analyze student work and assessment data at a deep, grade-specific level. Evidence that this practice has led to progress toward goals for groups of students is not yet evident. One teacher shared, and all agreed, that reviewing student work across grades helps them understand the expectations for other grades. There is some evidence of teachers’ instructional capacity being strengthened as a result of this work. For example, teachers adopted different scaffolds such as using sentence frames and anchor charts, as a result of professional collaborations. However, evidence that this practice has led to progress toward goals for groups of students is not yet evident. For example, the structure of reviewing student work for multiple grades during one meeting results in the same next steps for students across all grades, rather than specific strategies or skills connected to specific grade-levels.

- Grade-level teams met with school leaders to analyze assessment data for English Language Arts (ELA) and math. A review of meeting notes revealed that fourth-grade students struggled with computation and number sense. It was decided to implement additional fluency work on Fridays to support students in these two areas. A review of additional meeting notes revealed similar meetings were held with additional grade-level teams. Evidence that grade-level teams or vertical teams consistently analyze assessment data was not presented.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts with an emphasis on citing textual evidence. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and exit tickets.

Impact

Curricula promote college and career readiness for all students. All students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, have access to curricula and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricular documents across grades and content areas evidence consistent alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards and the integration of the math instructional shifts. For example, in a fourth-grade lesson plan, students were asked to apply the correct strategy to solving word problems and demonstrate a deep understanding of fractions and decimals by using grids to model the relationship between them. A fifth-grade lesson plan includes real-world problems for students to solve. Additionally, students include written explanations to demonstrate their deep understanding of multiplying and dividing fractions.

- Curricular documents include assignments evidencing the integration of the English Language Arts (ELA) instructional shifts. For example, a fifth-grade unit plan includes a literary analysis essay in which students use textual evidence to support their claim. A kindergarten lesson plan includes a task that requires students to use evidence from a read aloud and additional books to discuss the meaning of American symbols such as the bald eagle. A third-grade unit plan includes an informational essay that includes using evidence from sources. Additionally, there is evidence that across grades students are consistently writing argumentative essays in which they state a claim, cite textual evidence, explain the evidence, and include a conclusion.

- Teachers use assessments such as baseline assessments and exit tickets, to create student groups and identify supports to ensure access for all students. Teachers include an exit ticket in each lesson that informs planning for the next day’s lesson. For example, in a science lesson plan, the do-now question was revised based on the previous lesson’s exit ticket. Review of curricular documents reveals consistent planning to support ELLs and students with disabilities. The second-grade curriculum maps include supports for ELLs such as use pictures to make predictions, front load vocabulary words, and use various graphic organizers. A first-grade lesson plan identifies individual books for each student with a disability that is matched to his reading level. Additionally, the plan includes differentiated graphic organizers such as a circle map for certain students and a bubble map with sentence starters for other students. The inclusion of these supports ensures all students have access to rigorous tasks such as writing an informational essay on an animal or solving two-step word problems.
### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the belief that students learn best when provided with opportunities for discussion. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

### Impact

All learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, engage in challenging tasks and produce meaningful work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- In a fifth-grade math class, students worked collaboratively to solve different word problems using fractions and decimals. In one group, students discussed which operation, multiplication or division, was correct to find how much money would be earned. Each group had access to various math manipulatives that supported their learning. Students were expected to explain their answer both verbally and in writing. In a third-grade science class, students explored whether an object that conducts electricity will also attract a magnet. Students engaged in a turn and talk with a partner and then a whole class discussion. One student shared, “I think magnets do conduct electricity because magnets have electricity.” Another student then shared that he was not sure if all magnets could conduct electricity because opposites attract, such as north to south. The teacher then told students they would conduct different experiments to determine the answer. Therefore, across classrooms, students engage in discussions to produce meaningful work such as presenting an explanation to a math problem and exploring possible answers to essential questions.

- In a fourth-grade ELA lesson, students used textual evidence to support the main idea of a nonfiction reading on energy. Students discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using fossil fuel before writing a summarizing paragraph with supporting evidence. In a fourth-grade writing lesson, students were partnered based on their writing skill level and provided each other with feedback. For example, one student said, “How does this sentence support your claim?” She then suggested her partner find more evidence from the text. Another student explained to his partner that the conclusion he wrote does not match the claim stated at the beginning of the paragraph. After each round of feedback, students had the opportunity to revise their writing.

- Across classrooms, supports were available for all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities. Some common scaffolds included different graphic organizers based on a student’s level of need, sentence starters, base ten blocks, and number lines. In a first-grade ELA lesson, all students, including ELLs, had personalized spelling lists that supported their individual needs. In a fifth-grade math class for students with disabilities, students worked in small groups to solve word problems. The problems were differentiated by the complexity of numbers, and some groups used fraction bars as additional support. Students were also provided a checklist of the steps used to solve the problems. As a result of these supports, all students were able to solve the two-step word problems. Therefore, consistent supports are provided that allow all students to engage in challenging tasks.
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

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and checklists aligned with the school’s curricula and district-wide grading policy. Teachers consistently check for understanding through conferences and questioning.

Impact

Teachers provide students with actionable feedback. Additionally, teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher-written actionable feedback. One example of feedback directed a student to explain the evidence she chose to support the claim. Other examples included highlighting a strong claim and directing the student to add more textual evidence, providing guidance to use more math vocabulary and two strategies to solve a problem, and to use the anchor chart on how to turn a fraction into a decimal as a support. Additionally, evidence of the use of rubrics by teachers and students across grades was evident on hallway bulletin boards, classroom displays, and in student work portfolios.

- One student reported, and all present agreed, that the feedback given by their teachers has a direct impact on improving their work. A fourth-grade student shared that earlier in the year she received feedback to explain her evidence instead of just listing it. She said, “If I explain the evidence, I’ll get a better grade. I’m still working on it, but I’m getting better at it.” In addition to teacher feedback, students provide feedback to each other. One student shared that this was very helpful especially in math tasks. Thus teachers provide actionable feedback that students use to improve their work.

- Teachers continually check for understanding throughout daily lessons through check-ins, conferences, and whole-class questioning. In a fourth-grade class, the teachers asked students why they chose a certain resource over another resource such as grid paper or fraction strips. One student explained she chose the hundreds grid paper because the denominator was large. During a third-grade ELA lesson, the teacher conferenced with several students and then directed the whole class to review their writing to ensure the events are in the correct sequence. Additionally, in a first-grade class, the teacher stated, “I’m noticing that we are not ending with the claim.” She then reminded students to use their checklist. Therefore, teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect effective adjustments to ensure students meet the day’s learning target.
Additional Finding

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

Findings
School leaders support teacher development with frequent classroom observation cycles. Prompt written feedback captures teachers’ strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact
Evaluative and non-evaluative classroom visits result in feedback that elevates schoolwide instructional practices and makes clear the expectations for teacher practice and the supports available to help.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Each rated item is supported with specific detailed evidence from the observed class to support the rating. Next steps for teaching improvements are included at the close of each observation report. School leaders discussed a strategy of observation cycle planning that targets teachers based on individual need and ensures each school leader observes each teacher at least once. School leaders also conduct non-evaluative observations that are followed up with verbal feedback. Additionally, school leaders in collaboration with teachers, conduct intervisitations that include post-intervisitation conversations with school leaders. The goal of this new practice is to ensure that best practices in one class become best practices in every class.

- 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, one observation report details how the teacher and her co-teacher implemented a successful co-teaching model and praised her for the differentiated content and process that were provided to students. The school leader then went on to recommend the teacher use more visual strategies to assist students understanding of regrouping. In another observation report, the teacher is praised for her development in using discussions in the classroom. Next steps for this teacher included adding a weekly self-assessment checklist for students to track their growth in discussions. A review of observation reports also revealed teachers are encouraged to visit colleagues to observe a best practice that they can implement in their own classroom.

- A review of observation reports reveals teachers successfully implement recommended strategies and demonstrate growth. For example, a teacher went from a rating of effective to highly effective in the component using questioning and discussion techniques after successfully implementing feedback that allowed student autonomy to lead a discussion on math strategies. In another set of observation reports, after implementing feedback connected to asking juicy questions and students justifying their answers, the teacher demonstrated growth in using questioning and discussion techniques as well. Therefore, school leaders consistently provide feedback and support that promotes teacher growth.