Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 74 Future Leaders Elementary School

Elementary 31R074

211 Daniel Low Terrace
Staten Island
NY 10301

Principal: Nicole Reid-Christopher

Dates of Review:
January 24, 2018 - January 25, 2018

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. 74 Future Leaders Elementary School serves students in grade K 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><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>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>Area of Focus</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>
</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>
</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>Additional Finding</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>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings

There are consistently communicated high expectations to staff regarding professionalism, instruction, and communication based on the school’s statement on academic rigor and how students learn best. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to college and career readiness to families.

Impact

As a result of elevated expectations, coordinated training for staff, there is a culture of mutual accountability between administrators and teachers. Parents are partners with the school to ensure that they are able to support their children’s progress.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders create an elevated level of clear expectations for all staff, which are evidenced through verbal and written structures for performance, teacher teamwork, and lesson planning. School leaders and staff created a comprehensive planning document that outlines the expectations for planning and instruction throughout the building. Staff members referenced the school’s statement on academic rigor which states, "Academic rigor happens when our students are able to learn challenging content, engage and expand thinking and actively seek answers with determination (LEAD)." The document outlines the evidence of the school community’s shared beliefs of what should take place in the classroom, which includes a detailed list of what effective teaching looks like and sounds like. During the teacher team meeting, one teacher commented, “I believe that knowing clearly the expectations, which are referenced during feedback sessions, helps me constantly improve my teaching practices. I also know that I will be supported by administration and my colleagues to ensure that I am able to exhibit the criteria.”

- School staff orchestrates many ongoing events for parents, such as parent-teacher conferences, parent information sessions and workshops, to partner and engage with families in learning about the high expectations connected to college and career readiness. Overwhelmingly, parents during the parent meeting shared the workshops, fairs, and events coordinated by school staff. Parents shared that they collaborate with the school to ensure they have a deepened understanding of the requirements for what it means for a student to exit a grade level. During the parent meeting, one parent shared, “I am familiar with what the new rigorous types of tasks that students are expected to do and be able to support their thinking and cite evidence.” Parents can offer input into the types of workshops that are offered to the school community to provide additional supports for student success. Parents feel that the school allows them to offer suggestions such as the year-end culminating celebration activity, initiative ideas on how money is spent, and the use of effective collaboration tools to ensure that all parents receive the same message.

- School leaders and staff work together in study groups, planning sessions, instructional cabinets and other professional collaborations to establish a culture of professionalism that results in high levels of communication and collaboration regarding a positive learning environment for students. A significant focus on students and adult demonstrating the habits of highly effective people is at the core of all conversations and interactions. Teachers receive extensive training on how to encourage student leadership in and outside of school. During teacher team interviews, the vast majority of teachers referenced the core beliefs criteria and said that she strives to provide multiple entry points for small group instruction. She said that school leaders and teachers help to coordinate professional learning sessions to support her efforts. Teachers feel fully supported through professional development sessions and from the feedback, they receive related to the Future Leaders Elementary School’s (FLES) statement on academic rigor.
Quality Indicator: 2.2 Assessment

Rating: Proficient

Findings

There is teacher created assessments, checklists, and rubrics aligned to the school's curricula. Most teachers check for understanding during lessons and allow for students to self assess.

Impact

While there were examples of actionable feedback to students, there were missed opportunities for curricula-aligned assessment practices to provide a clear portrait of student achievement and mastery. Teachers do not consistently make effective on-the-spot adjustments to meet all students learning needs so they are aware of their next steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers create assessments that are aligned to the Common Core and content standards in the curriculum. These choices are varied and deliver results on students’ reading levels and performance levels in reading and math. There are unit tests, pre- and post-assessments, exit slips, end of unit writing pieces, summative exemplar tasks, and homework that allows most teachers a chance to give students actionable feedback based on their work. During the small group student meeting, students shared that they receive a mixture of written and verbal feedback that is child specific for the most part. For example, on a grade 5 literacy essay, the teacher wrote that the students should watch their spelling and punctuation but did not mention feedback about the statement of purpose or focus on the students’ struggle with elaborating on the evidence. There were a few missed opportunities for students to receive meaningful feedback for their work without additional next steps or how could they could improve their work in the future.

- Students receive actionable feedback from teachers and have opportunities to self-assess, which most times help to improve their understanding of what is expected of them. However, there were missed opportunities for some students to receive meaningful feedback that would help propel them to the next level according to the rubric. Most students were familiar and could share how the problem-solving rubric helped them as learners with feedback from their teachers and peers. In a sample teacher created task, the teacher had a section for the daily learning target and a section where the student had to reflect on whether they met or did not meet the learning target and state the reasons. Students shared that the teacher reviews their submissions and then uses the information to place them in groups the following day, give them feedback, or pulls them to work with her on the carpet. This was not evident in the vast majority of classes or evidence reviewed.

- Across most classrooms, teachers ask questions, observe students as they work, take notes about how students are participating in lessons. In most classes, students have opportunities to self-assess themselves in relation to the success criteria for the lesson. In one class, the teacher circulated throughout groups and pushed students not to simply answer the prompt but also push themselves further to articulate how they know and what made them come to that answer. The teacher took notes of what students were saying and how many times they participated. However, in a few classes, the teacher did not memorialize checks for understanding to make effective adjustments to the lesson. For example, in a science class, most students completed the assignment before time had to wait for others to finish. The teacher missed an opportunity to make on-the-spot adjustments to meet the needs of all learners and allow students to internalize and be aware of their next learning steps in most classrooms.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

Most written curricula documents are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards and opportunities for integrating fluency and problem solving. Rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills are consistently emphasized across tasks.

Impact

The school’s common lesson plan templates help to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students. There are scaffolds written into tasks to support English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities access challenging content.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricula choices are aligned to the Common Core and content standards. There are purposeful decisions to build coherence throughout the school using materials across the school. In addition, teachers coordinate the incorporation of focusing on instructional shifts like problem solving and fluency that are included in units of study. Curricula documents are housed in an online collaborative tool that is helping to further build coherence in planning. The school uses a Balanced Literacy and Mathematics model using Expeditionary Learning, ReadyGen, Teachers College Writing Reading Program, Fundations, Math Exemplars, and GOMath! There has been a focus on foundation skills in reading plans for kindergarten through second grade lessons.

- Rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills, such as students creating their own meaning, integrating skills intro processes, and real work problems are incorporated into tasks across most grades and subjects. There are opportunities for ELLs and students with disabilities to be able to take and support positions, identify multiple meanings, and apply prior knowledge to new situations. There was evidence of multiple entry points built into tasks and plans to support students so they have access to the curricula. In a math task, students had to show their reasoning and provide proof. It had sentence starters included on the task sheet, which read, “I showed my thinking on paper and used evidence.” There were symbols and definitions included to assist the students in completing the task using mental math and demonstrating the standards of math practice embedded on the worksheet. Teachers plan and incorporate graphic organizers, vocabulary, and picture cues on most documents to assist students and provide access to challenging content.

- Curricula and academic tasks across most subjects challenge a diversity of students to think critically about what they are reading, apply strategies for math and reading, and are cognitively engaged in learning. Written documents also include a balance of fiction and non-fiction leveled texts into most lesson plans across subject areas so that ELLs and students with disabilities have access to challenging content with built in supports. In a math lesson plan, the essential question was, “How can you model a division problem to find how many in each group?” The learning target for the lesson was, “I can use a model to solve division problems.” The task had visual cues and models for students to reference including model problems with explanations. Teachers ensure there is a school wide focus in the majority of planning resources to incorporate developing fluency and problem solving skills that was evident in written documents across most grades and subjects to help build coherence.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Pedagogy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings

Across most classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the school’s balanced workshop model approach to learning. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points for students into curricula.

Impact

Students produce meaningful work products based on having consistent opportunities to practice their work in small groups or independently. A diversity of learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities are engaged in challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in written work.

Supporting Evidence

- School staff believe that students learning challenging content, engage and expand their thinking, and actively seek answers with determination be defined as LEAD. Teachers and administrators articulate the use of success criteria aligned to learning targets that are presented to students and are incorporated into each lesson. Across most classrooms visited, teachers reviewed targets and the criteria for successfully completing the lesson or activity using the workshop model. Teachers also utilized checklists to use with student learning and wrote information on post-it notes throughout lessons. As a result, most classes included learning situations that helped students produce meaningful work products based on the lessons. For example, in a literacy class, students were to restate the question, answer the question, find evidence, and tell what the evidence means (RAFT) while writing essays. In a social studies class, students used graphic organizers to determine sequence of events of merchants in Africa. During the workshop model, students generated ideas and samples to help them when they were required to work independently.

- Teaching practices across most classrooms visited, focused on increasing engagement and accountability of learning for a diversity of learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities. In most classrooms, there was a laminated list of tips, hints, and notes to help students on their desks. Many students also referred to anchor or experience charts during lessons as a point of reference to remind them of skills or strategies they could use when they encountered difficulties. Items included definitions, strategies, visual displays, and models of what is expected for students. For example, in a literacy class, the learning target was, “I can interpret five big metaphors in Esperanza Rising and use them to determine themes in the text.” Students had examples, sentence starters provided by the teachers on the charts and their partners for support to help them complete the task. Most teachers use scaffolds, questioning, and other teaching practices to help struggling students access the content or task and be supported throughout the lesson.

- Teaching practices observed include opportunities for students to engage in learning experiences such as working in small groups or partners that could assist each other. There were effective use of graphic organizers, visual displays, auditory anticipatory sets, imagery, technology, and academic vocabulary supports available for students to complete activities. Teachers checked for student understanding and even provided alternate ways for students to understand the criteria associated with them being successful in the lesson. In a fifth-grade math class, students used dry erase boards to determine whether a number is a factor of a given number. Students were provided with the academic language to help them unlock the problem, as well as a visual model displaying a similar sample problem. Students were also provided with multiplication charts, displays on the smartboards, and other supports to help them complete their activities.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Findings**

There is a coordinated effective system for professional development for teachers based on the results from frequent observations. Feedback to teachers accurately captures their strengths, areas of growth, and required next steps for improvement.

**Impact**

Effective and actionable feedback to teachers from observations about designing engaging instructional activities for diverse learners includes clear expectations for teachers practice and supports their development. Ongoing, weekly and monthly professional development sessions help to strengthen teacher growth and development.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across observation reports reviewed, teachers receive next steps, which align to the school’s goals and focus and most teachers are showing improvement in key focus areas. There is a plan of action that is coordinated with an action plan of support through intervisitations, peer or administrator support, and professional development sessions. Groups of teachers are showing improvement in utilizing effective teaching practices over time and are connected to student learning outcomes as discussed during period meetings focused on student performance, where teachers must provide examples of student progress and mastery. In a sample report reviewed, the school leader pinpointed that the lesson should have greater clarity and have a student friendly learning target. The report also encouraged the teacher to gradually release control through the workshop model which encourages, “I do, we do, and you do.” The majority of feedback to teachers is focused, captures their strengths, and offers opportunities for additional visits, supports, and follow-up professional learning sessions.

- Teacher feedback helps to inform professional development supports for new, struggling, and developing teachers that include work done in groups, partnerships, and grade levels. There was evidence that the professional development plan is modified in response to trends and noticings from observations and informal walkthroughs. For example, in a school create observation template reviewed, the school leader included questions for reflections and next steps for the teacher to focus on to improve their instruction. The feedback stated, “You utilized our paraprofessionals well during the lesson and implemented the use of literacy centers well in your classroom. Next time, please consider having students self-assess their work in each center to give you a clearer picture of their understanding of the work they completed. This way you will know how to adjust, reteach, or accelerate activities for your students.”

- Most teachers can articulate how teachers collaboratively develop goals, which are aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teachers can share specific examples of how feedback from administration has elevated their ability to plan open-ended questions and allow for more student-to-student discussions and where students are meaningful engaged in lessons rather than be complaint. Teachers articulate that they receive next steps such as watching videos, visiting colleagues who demonstrate competence and expertise in certain key components and can view model lessons. In a sample feedback report, the principal wrote, “I shared, A Guide to the Common Core Writing Workshop, with you and for you to review chapters four through seven in alignment with expectations for the mini-lesson. I encourage you to refer back to this work and see me for further assistance.” In subsequent feedback reports, the principal commented on how the teacher has improved in planning and preparing for writing lessons based on this feedback.
Findings

Teacher teams consistently analyze performance data from teacher created assessments and running records for groups of students. There are distributed leadership structures in place across the school.

Impact

The work of teachers’ teams typically results in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students. Teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Most teacher teams effectively monitor and review a variety of student data including the results from chapter and unit tests, running records, performance tasks, to inform their instruction for reading groups. Teachers also decided to incorporate more technology supports into their lessons to increase access to content through videos and tutorials for students to increase engagement because of the gaps in the data they noticed after reviewing the results from teacher created quizzes and tests. Teachers also looked at how much students were writing to explain their thinking on math tasks and decided to include a section on all math problems found in the GOMath! book to ensure that students were writing across subject areas.

- Most teacher teams analyze student work during Data Days and during team meetings that help them to adjust teacher practice and create goals for students in their classes. After teachers noticed that student fluency was not improving for early childhood students, they decided to supplement the school’s core reading program with intensive guided reading and literacy skills blocks to help improve students’ reading comprehension and fluency levels. During teacher team meetings, analyzed rubrics, performance tasks, and student work samples are looked at, to create action plans for students to improve. For example, fourth grade teachers could show that students increased their use of meaningful dialogue in their writing pieces because of them looking at in-class assignments and the rubric language. Teachers included more mentor texts for students and explicitly modeled how students could incorporate dialogue in their work. Teachers also use teacher team meetings to self-assess themselves and the goals they have for helping students improve.

- During the teacher team interview, most teachers can identify distributive leadership structures that are in place including grade leaders, mentors, and coaches that help to make decisions about lesson planning templates, and the creation of a school-wide document outlining what instruction should sound like and look like across the school. Teachers also shared that they can decide how to teach and what to teach in response to their students’ learning needs with support and approval from administration. The professional development team meets and works with administration to issue professional learning surveys, create sessions based on teacher preferences and interests, and help to model and train teachers on how to use effective teaching practices such as using exit slips and success criteria to judge the effectiveness of lessons.