Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 049 Willis Avenue
Elementary 07X049
383 East 139 Street
Bronx
NY 10454

Principal: Frank Hernandez

Dates of Review:
January 29, 2018 - January 30, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Carlos Perez
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. 049 Willis Avenue 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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</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></td>
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</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>Well Developed</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 Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>Additional Finding</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>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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Findings

All teachers use rubrics, assessments specific to their subject area and common assessments. All students receive actionable feedback from their teachers, their peers and their own self-reflection evidenced through the post-it notes on their work products.

#### Impact

All students are provided with actionable and meaningful feedback leading towards increased mastery.

#### Supporting Evidence

- During classroom visits evidence of student self and peer reflection was observed on student work on the classroom bulletin board displays. Every assignment posted had an attachment where the teacher provided actionable feedback, the student reflected on his learning and a peer offered feedback. During the student meeting, students expressed their contentment with regularly receiving feedback from their peers. Many students expressed that getting opinions from their peers is “like having another set of eyes” and “someone else that can proofread your work.” One student said, “I like hearing what my classmates have to say about my work.” Teachers explained that having the students’ work go through three sets of reviews ensures that students have the greatest chance of producing their best work and receiving a rating of a three or a four on a task.

- Feedback that is actionable and meaningful to students was seen throughout the building and in all classes visited. Feedback to one student conveyed how well the student did in comparing Christmas to Hanukkah. Next steps included showing the student how to write a concluding sentence in order to sum up his thought. On a math assignment the student was commended for writing two word problems and solving a math equation by using two different strategies. Next steps to the same student suggested how they could have expanded their explanation and make it clearer the next time. During the meeting with students, all of them shared how feedback is useful and meaningful. They explained when they are home doing homework and have a question about something, they often look at their past feedback and realize that it usually answers their questions. A student explained that receiving feedback from the teacher makes them work harder.

- Throughout classrooms, teachers used several different methods to check for student understanding. During every lesson teachers conferenced with students while they recorded their findings using a checklist or made anecdotal notes. During a second grade math lesson, the teacher conferenced with students and recorded the data using a checklist. The teacher then regrouped students based on the findings from the conferences to address their needs. In addition, teachers use exit tickets to conclude all lessons and use findings to start the next day's lesson to target any student’s questions or misconceptions. In addition, teachers use color rings, thumbs up/down, and a wide variety of differentiated questioning strategies to assess student understanding and learning.
Area of Focus

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

Findings

All curricular documents are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (Common Core) and integrate instructional shifts. All units reviewed evidenced rigorous learning tasks.

Impact

There is curricula coherence across many, but as of yet not the vast majority of grades and subjects with respect to extensions for high level students to result in their accelerated learning.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of several planning documents evidenced rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills for English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. Many lesson plans detailed purposeful grouping of students in order to group students with those of the same ability level and or language capabilities. A first grade writing lesson identified students that would need additional support through conferencing with the teacher and the use of individual white boards. Additionally, most planning documents included pictures as a visual support for those students who are identified as visual learners. However, not seen across the majority of planning documents, were targeted methods that teachers would use for extending the learning of higher-level students to support accelerating their learning.

- A kindergarten lesson plan displayed components that led to a cognitively engaging lesson. The lesson plan’s student objective was to have students be able to identify characters in a story. Components of the lesson plan included the “I do, you do, we do” structure where the teacher models, allows students to work together and then work independently. Included were higher order questions such as “Why do you think that Peter is feeling sad when he sees his mother in his baby sister’s room?” A fourth grade math lesson included a fluency assessment section to evaluate the student’s addition, subtraction, multiplication and division skills. Planning also included the way the teacher anticipated student misconceptions such as the understanding of numerator and denominator. Additionally, the lesson plan included key academic vocabulary that will be needed during the lesson.

- An eighth grade science lesson detailed a variety of differentiation methods to be used during the lesson, such as the use of technology, visual support, auditory support and active student discussions. The lesson plan incorporated the use of everyday materials such as light bulbs, batteries, and flashlights. Additionally, the lesson required students to show their writing and reading skills. A fourth grade English Language Arts (ELA) lesson plan included several activities that required students drawing evidence from literary texts in order to support analysis. This lesson also included a variety of ways that the teacher planned to differentiate the lesson including sentence starters, graphic organizers, and annotating the text. However, it did not detail the way that higher-level students would be challenged or have access to higher tasks than other students.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the school’s belief that students learned best, when they engage in rich student discourse.

Impact

Students take part in rigorous student discussions and produce meaningful student work products that evidence high levels of thinking and student ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- During a fourth grade math lesson, students were engaged in group discussions. Students shared which strategy they felt most comfortable with when solving a specific equation. During discussions the use of accountable talk stems and academic vocabulary were continually in evidence. During a first grade ELA lesson, students engaged in conversations where they responded to questions by citing text-based evidence. For example, while responding to a classmate, one student was overheard saying “On page 44, I noticed that they both help each other from danger.” Responses such as this were consistently heard across classrooms that were visited. Students regularly displayed ownership of their learning.

- During a first grade dual language class, students displayed full ownership of the lesson. Students knew where to find their word banks to assist them in group discussions and answering their partner’s questions. Students were able to work in their groups collaboratively while the teacher offered additional support to those students that required it. All classrooms visited displayed systems for student autonomy that promoted students to take ownership of their learning. During a second grade literacy lesson students worked in predetermined groups and engaged in high levels of discussion, students answered each other’s questions, and used assessment rings to inform the teacher when the group needed further clarification. Evidence of teachers acting as the facilitator and students leading the lesson was apparent across grades, most notably through the class and group discussions where students took charge and led the learning.

- During a fifth grade lesson, students were actively engaged in group discussions related to using models to divide whole numbers and unit fractions. Throughout the lesson, students used accountable talk stems when responding to their peers. For example, one student said, “I agree with John because there is a dividend.” During a fourth grade ELA lesson, students read portions of literary texts and analyzed characters based on their actions, words, thoughts and feelings. When asked what they were working on, all students shared responses such as, “I am taking quotes from the text and analyzing them using this graphic organizer.” During their conversations students were able to share quotes by citing the pages and specifically how those quotes helped them to analyze the characters in the book. During a fourth grade science class, students investigated the phenomenon of electric currents in circuits. Students worked in groups and were able to investigate and ultimately successfully operate a small motor using a battery.
Additional Finding

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

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high instructional expectations connected to college and careers to the entire school community. Teachers engage in lesson studies highlighting teaching expectations.

Impact
There is mutual accountability between teachers as seen through practices such as lesson study initiatives, ensuring the expectations for pedagogy are met. Teachers, parents and school leaders support student progress toward successful achievement of goals.

Supporting Evidence

- High expectations are presented to the school community at the start of each school year. School leaders communicate to the staff the upcoming year’s expectations and goals. Additionally, all staff receives a staff handbook that clearly articulates all of the expectations associated with the Danielson Frame for Teaching and other aspects connected to the school’s instructional focus. For example, the principal shared many memoranda regarding bulletin board displays. The principal reminded the teachers of a previous memo that was sent to them clearly outlining the schoolwide rubric for bulletin board presentations. Teachers shared that they are fully aware of what is expected and are given the support throughout the year to have them realized. They also expressed their commitment to the goals to ensure students are given the best educational experience possible.

- All parents expressed having complete knowledge of how their students are performing and what they can do to support their children at home. This begins as early as pre-k with a workshop that empowers parents on being their child’s first teacher. The workshop educates parents on how important their support is at home and what they can do to help their children with their first experiences in school. In addition, there is a curriculum night at the beginning of the school year for all parents. Parents receive information on all curricula, the local assessments as well as state assessments by grade. During the parent meeting, all parents expressed the excellent communication they receive from the teachers and school leaders. Parents explained that the school sends out benchmark reports after every assessment to inform them how their child performed compared to prior assessments. Parents often take advantage of being able to sit in during their child’s classes. One parent stated, “I can go into my child’s classroom anytime I need in order to see his progress.” Many parents shared feeling like a “partner” with their teachers, which allows them to keep close tabs on their child’s achievement.

- Teachers have displayed a mutual accountability with expectations especially those associated with the Danielson Framework for Teaching. This was most evident in the teacher initiated lesson study where they support each other with respect to the vision for instructional expectations. During the teacher meeting, teachers explained how they implemented lesson studies in order to improve their practice and offer students a wide variety of options in their lessons. For example, one of their goals was to improve questioning strategies across all grades. Several cycles of lesson studies focused on higher level questioning strategies and as a result has improved teacher questioning skills, which is, evidenced teachers’ Advance ratings.
### Findings

There is mutual support between school leaders and teacher peers in the development of all teachers and evidenced in the schoolwide practice of intervisitation. Feedback to teachers is actionable, and the implementation of recommendations is time monitored.

### Impact

All feedback to teachers articulates clear expectations for teacher progress aligned to teacher goals.

### Supporting Evidence

- All teacher goals are created using the Measures of Teacher Practice (MOTP) and student data from state and classroom assessments. School leaders meet with teachers at the start of the school year in order to reflect on the previous year and set goals for the current school year. School leaders regularly refer to teacher goals during formal and informal observation conferences and through the written feedback they receive in their observation reports. In addition, all teachers have mid-year conferences with a school leader in order to discuss progress towards their goals and make adjustments based on assessment data. Professional development (PD) sessions align to individual teacher needs as they surface from cycles of observations. During the teacher meeting one teacher spoke specifically how her goals are “Regularly discussed during post observation meetings and referenced in observation reports” which helps to meet instructional expectations.

- Teacher observations are prioritized based on teacher need and areas that need to be addressed. For example, all new teachers are observed by two administrators at the same time in order for school leaders to norm themselves and offer new teachers as much actionable feedback as possible. School leaders offer all teachers feedback that is timely and actionable along with a precise timeline for implementation. For example, feedback to a teacher praised the teacher for the use of peer and self-assessment. In addition it conveyed the need to offer actionable verbal feedback to students during all future lessons. The observer reminded the teacher to use the school's literacy coach as an additional support. The feedback included a return visit within the next two weeks to “monitor the implementation of the aforementioned expectations.”

- All observation reports reviewed evidenced feedback to teachers that captures strengths, offers clear and concise next steps and was aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Feedback on one observation report offered feedback regarding identifying student misconceptions. Specific misconceptions were outlined for the teacher and possible methods to address them were included. A variety of resources were provided, including recommending a meeting with the math/science instructional coach or the school leader for “continued assistance and support.” The report concluded with an expectation for implementation within two weeks when a return visit was scheduled.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

All teachers are engaged in professional inquiry-based collaborations using a data analysis protocol. Distributed leadership structures, such as each teacher facilitating inquiry meetings are embedded across the school community.

Impact

There is strengthened teacher instructional capacity as well as curricular coherence across all grades and subject areas. Teacher voice plays an integral part in all decision making throughout the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher collaboration has increased dramatically because of the teacher teamwork. During the teacher meeting, all teachers shared how their doors are open to everyone in the school at all times. Teachers go out of their way to meet with each other even when they are not obligated to do so. One teacher stated, “We even meet during our lunch time, this is how well we work together, we look forward to working with each other.” This has led to teachers developing a “Best Practice Guide” that they use as a reference in all of their instruction. Teachers and school leaders firmly believe that this camaraderie has led to increased student achievement, especially in the area of writing. Data indicate that there has been an overall increase in student’s short response writing. Teachers are seeing most students receiving at least one point on their responses, where historically, they would receive a zero out of two possible points. In addition, over the past two years, overall state ELA scores have increased by 25 percent.

- Teachers engage in leadership roles through a variety of ways. Each grade has teacher leaders that work closely with school leaders and offer teachers support. In addition, teachers are part of the school’s instructional cabinet and have voice in schoolwide curricular decisions. Teachers lead inquiry cycles where they use the Data Analysis Protocol. Each teacher throughout the school year will facilitate the inquiry meeting. During the teacher meeting they shared that they regularly turn key information they acquire while attending off campus PD. They believe this positively impacts their colleagues and allows them to be leaders as well. School leaders believe the various leadership roles of the teachers led to increased student achievement. There has been a 15% overall increase in state math scores over the past two years.

- All teachers take part in teacher team meetings that use the data analysis protocol as the main guide for inquiry. Teachers meet weekly in their respective grades and across subject areas. At these meetings teachers analyze instruction and curriculum focusing on the inclusion of a wide variety of entry points and differentiation for all students. Teachers look at student groupings to ensure that all students are grouped based on skill level. Student work products and assessment data is used to make adjustments to the curricula throughout the school year.