Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 029 Queens
Elementary 25Q029
125-10 23 Avenue
Queens
NY 11356

Principal: Jill Leakey

Dates of Review:
January 15, 2019 - January 16, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Lisa Reiter
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Celebration** to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Focus** to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as **Additional Finding**. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

P.S. 029 Queens 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>
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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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff through written memos and verbal feedback. School leaders and staff effectively communicate and successfully partner with families around next level readiness.

Impact
Communication and professional development around high expectations result in a culture of mutual accountability. Information sharing and communicating through written reports and an online program as well as through workshops allow families to support students in their academic progress.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders consistently message high expectations for improved teacher practice and achievement of school goals. Communication and accountability are conveyed schoolwide in the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP), classroom observations, and professional learning experiences. Teachers receive ongoing professional learning connected to key elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and teacher-identified needs. Teachers also engage in grade-level professional learning around a professional text that each grade selected. For example, the grade-three team chose *Math in Practice* as their text to enhance teacher practice and meet expectations around instruction such as using a discovery approach in math instruction. One teacher said, “As a team, we choose the text that will help us.” Teachers agreed that this supported their growth toward meeting expectations. Additionally, teachers received support around connecting the instructional focus to classroom practice.

- School leaders share high expectations with teachers via faculty conference notes, weekly calendars, and verbal feedback. Included in the faculty conference notes are connections to the Danielson Framework for Teaching such as expectations for designing coherent instruction. As an example, all lesson plans should reflect individualized, small group, and whole class experiences based on data. Teaches were all in agreement that they receive support to meet expectations. One teacher shared that she requested the principal co-teach a lesson with her to model a new pedagogical strategy that had been recommended in an observation. The teacher said, “This was one of the most beneficial learning experiences.” Another teacher shared that she requested school leaders conduct an additional non-evaluative observation so that she could receive more feedback. Furthermore, teachers hold each other accountable by creating team norms that included coming prepared to meetings. Thus, a culture of mutual accountability exists between school leaders and staff that results in teachers receiving training to meet schoolwide expectations.

- School leaders and staff members use phone calls, in-person meetings, newsletters, and an online platform to communicate with families. Additionally, teachers and families communicate via a school planner or home-school folder. Parents shared that this added layer of communication allows them to understand weekly progress. Families receive monthly newsletters that include strategies and skills for parents to practice at home with their child. Parents came to a quick consensus that school leaders and staff provide them with specific strategies to support their children. One parent shared that the teacher shares online instructional videos as a tool for both her and her child. Finally, one parent shared that she was provided with a strategy to tap out words to help her child with reading and spelling. As a result of this added support, the child has shown growth in reading. Parent workshops on key initiatives such as interactive read alouds, bullying versus conflict, and understanding the new social-emotional program are well attended. Thus, school leaders and staff successfully partner with families to support student program.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 2.2 Assessment | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers and students use rubrics and checklists that are aligned with the school’s curricula. Teachers’ assessment practices reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Teachers provide students with a compliment on what they did well and actionable feedback; however, it is not yet providing meaningful next steps to students regarding their achievement. There are occasional missed opportunities to adjust instruction to meet all students’ learning needs, and all students are not yet aware of their next learning step.

Supporting Evidence

- Students benefit from actionable feedback that teachers give to students. One student shared that he received feedback to incorporate more dialogue in his writing. He said, “I will try to add more dialogue next time. Instead of telling what is happening, I will use dialogue to show what is happening.” However, students were not able to articulate how the feedback they received from teachers has been meaningfully integrated into their work. For example, one student received feedback on a math task to “explain what you did and why you did it.” Furthermore, the language of the rubric indicated that the student had “made arguments with some correct reasoning.” Thus, the language of the rubric and feedback provided do not provide meaningful next steps that allow students to move to the next level. Additionally, while the use of rubrics was evident across classrooms, additional feedback directing students to a specific next step was missing in some content areas.

- Samples of student work products showed teacher-written actionable feedback. Some examples of that feedback directed students to “make sure text evidence supports your answer,” “include more dialogue,” and “add a strong ending.” Additional guidance or next steps were not included to ensure students were able to meaningfully implement the feedback on future assignments. Feedback on math tasks directs students to explain the process and create a model to represent the problem. While rubrics were provided to students on all tasks, written feedback consistently directing students to their next step was not yet evident. For example, in addition to the next step “add a strong ending” was an arrow directing the student to read the criteria for “ending” in the rubric as a next step. Additional, specific feedback that would allow the student to know his next steps beyond the language of the rubric was not included.

- Across the school, teachers check for understanding and adjust instruction accordingly. Teachers checked for understanding through whole-group questioning, conferencing, and using quick checks such as thumbs up or down. For example, in a grade-three math lesson, the teacher circulated through the classroom and checked students’ answers for two problems. Students then received a colored stick directing them to a station. One station provided students with a reteach lesson, while the other stations worked on division using equal groups and bar models. However, in another classroom, the teacher asked the students to self-assess how they were feeling in their book clubs. While students indicated they had positive feelings toward their book clubs, it was unclear how this practice ensures all students learning needs are met and that students are aware of their next learning steps.
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

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts, including text-based answers and fluency. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

The purposeful decisions around curricula help to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students. All students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricular documents across grades and content area reveal consistent alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards and the integrations of the math instructional shifts. Across grades, teachers use Common Core-aligned curricula to guide their unit and lesson planning. For example, in a grade-five lesson plan, students complete a math fact platter with equivalent fractions. Math fact platters require students to demonstrate fluency by showing numbers in multiple ways. Additionally, included in a grade-two lesson plan is a two-step real-world math problem that requires students to justify their thinking and represent the problem by drawing a sketch or model. Additionally, included in the lesson plan is that students will discuss their strategies and solutions in a small group, thus demonstrating a deep understanding of addition and subtraction.

- Curricular documents include evidence of the integration of the English Language Arts (ELA) instructional shifts. A review of ELA curriculum maps across grades reveals that reading and writing skills, such as citing textual evidence to support a claim are built upon each year. A grade-two unit plan includes tasks that require students to track how a character’s feeling change using text-based evidence. Additionally, in a grade-three lesson plan, there is evidence of tracking a character’s feelings and motivation using text-based evidence to support student claims. Finally, across curricular documents, there is evidence of students reading a balance of literary and informational text. Therefore, purposeful decision such as integrating citing textual evidence across grades is building coherence.

- Teachers use beginning or end-of-unit assessments, exit slips, and reading levels to create student groups and identify supports to ensure access for all students. Included in an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) grade-three lesson plan are small group lessons for specific groups of students. One group was designed to push students that were higher achieving while the other groups provided support as students identified textual evidence to support their claims on how the character in the story was feeling. Additionally, included in a grade-five math lesson plan are problem-solving groups based on the previous assessment. The lesson plan includes that students are heterogeneously based as a strategy for students to support each other. Additionally, included in a grade-five ELA lesson plan is a guided reading small group plan and two different graphic organizers that students can use based on their reading level. Finally, included in a grade-two math unit plan are supports for ELLs and students with disabilities such as a math vocabulary wall, vocabulary cards, small group instruction, and manipulatives. Therefore, all students have access to the curricula and can be cognitively engaged across classrooms.
# Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the belief that students learn best while engaged in student to student discussions and collaborative tasks. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

## Impact

As a result of the school's shared beliefs, students produce meaningful work products. Additionally, the design and delivery of instruction to include scaffolds for students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, allow students to engage in appropriately challenging tasks.

## Supporting Evidence

- The core belief that students learn best in an environment in which they are challenged with rigorous academic tasks that require collaboration and discussion and a safe environment in which to take risks was evident across classrooms. For example, in a grade-four classroom, students engaged in book clubs. Each group member had a specific role such as the discussion director or word wizard. In one book club a student said, “I agree with you because Bean was pretending to sprain his ankle to make friends.” Another student then invited a third student into the discussion to ensure all voices were heard. In a grade-five ELA class, students engaged in a discussion around a shared text. The teacher asked students to turn and talk with a partner about what is happening in the text. One student said, “Bongo is kind of judgmental. In the text, it says that the tree is too optimistic for an old tree.” His partner agreed and identified another page in the text to support the first student’s inference on Bongo being judgmental. The teacher then directed students to determine the author’s meaning in another part of the text through another turn and talk. The class ended with students working independently to think critically in their own books.

- In a grade-five math class, students worked in small groups to solve real-world math problems. Students shared different strategies they used as they worked collaboratively to chart their answer and write an explanation on how they solved the problem. One student said, “I still do not understand how you got that answer.” In response, a student explained that $\frac{2}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ are equivalent fractions, which helped the other student. In a grade-two math lesson, students were instructed to work independently, and then to try and solve a real-world problem using a 4-square graphic organizer. The graphic organizer included a space for students to sketch the problem or create a model. Students then worked with a small group to discuss their strategies and solve the problem. Finally, in a grade-four science class, students worked in small groups to investigate magnetic force. After completing the investigation, students sorted the objects and tried to determine why the magnetic force goes through some objects and not others. Collaboration and discussion across classrooms ensured students created meaningful work products.

- Across classrooms, students with disabilities and ELLs receive supports such as anchor charts, manipulatives, and leveled readings. For example, in a grade-three ICT ELA class that included ELLs, students who needed additional support worked in small groups with teacher support. All students were using evidence to support their claims on how the character was feeling. ELLs needing more support worked with a teacher to deconstruct a sentence that connected to a shared text and then inferring how the character is feeling. In a grade-four ELA class, the teacher worked with a small group of students on vocabulary and nonfiction reading, while other students worked independently on an online reading program and some students read independently. Additionally, student in each group had access to various scaffolds such as anchor charts, dictionaries, and graphic organizers. The inclusion of various scaffolds ensures that all students are engaged in challenging tasks.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

School leaders and teacher peers support the development of teachers with effective feedback and next steps from strategic cycles of observations that include school leaders observing the same teacher for two cycles. Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps.

Impact

Feedback to teachers from classroom observations elevates their instructional practices. Additionally, feedback articulates clear expectations, supports teacher development through differentiated professional learning, and aligns with professional goals for teachers as well as the instructional focus of the school.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Each rated item is supported with specific, detailed evidence. Included in each report are strengths and next steps that are aligned with teacher goals and the instructional focus. For example, one observation commends the teacher for implementing conversations in math using protocols from his professional learning book club. This connected to the school's instructional focus on developing critical thinkers. Additionally, school leaders plan strategic cycles of observations that include the same school leader observing a teacher for two cycles in order to see growth and provide targeted support. School leaders also meet with teachers at least twice a year to review progress in each domain and reflect on next steps. Teachers came to a quick consensus on the value of feedback provided by both school leaders and peers as having a positive impact on their practice. One teacher shared that she received feedback from a school leader on implementing math discussion protocols. As a result, in her next observation report she received a highly effective rating in the targeted category. Thus, these practices elevate instruction and promote the professional growth of teachers.

- Observation reports contain feedback that captures teachers’ strengths and challenges and include next steps so that teachers can improve their practice and impact student success. Next steps are connected to teachers’ professional goals. For example, one observation report praised the teacher for planning a lesson that included parallel teaching. This teacher’s goal included utilizing different methods of co-teaching to meet all students’ learning needs. Next steps are aligned to the component using assessment in instruction and suggest the teacher use a variety of feedback, including encouraging students to self- and peer-assess. The report ended by stating that the teacher can receive additional support from an instructional coach. In the following observation report, the teacher is commended for implementing the feedback and has moved from an effective rating to a highly effective rating in using assessment in instruction. Therefore, feedback provided to teachers is consistently aligned with professional goals and supports teacher development.

- Teacher peers support the development of teachers through peer observations and intervisitation aligned with the Danielson Framework for Teaching. One teacher shared that she received feedback from a peer to include visuals with new vocabulary as a strategy to support ELLs. Additionally, teachers conduct intervisitations among peers to strengthen their practices. Teachers completed an online survey indicating practices in their classrooms that they would like to highlight for colleagues. Peers then arrange intervisitations to support their own growth and provide feedback to peers. For example, one teacher received feedback from a peer commending him for the student-led discussion in math and suggested having students reflect on the discussion as part of the exit ticket. Consequently, teacher peers join school leaders in implementing strategies that promote teachers’ professional growth.
Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development
Rating: Well Developed

Findings
All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations that conduct action research and analyze student work products. A distributed leadership structure empowers teachers to positively affect student learning.

Impact
Collaborations within vertical and grade-based teams strengthen teachers’ instructional capacities, which has led to schoolwide coherence and increased student achievement. Teacher voice is integral to decisions and expectations that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Grade teams and vertical content teams examine student work to identify trends, curricular modifications, and support needed to increase student performance. Each grade-team has developed a long-term goal to support their work, along with a professional text. Furthermore, teacher teams’ goals and the corresponding professional texts align to schoolwide goals such as increasing student discussions in math as a strategy to build conceptual understanding. This has led to coherence across grades in using different discussion protocols in math. For example, the grade-five math team developed a long-term goal for students to engage in discussion-based learning to increase proficiency in explaining their answers. It was determined that students would benefit from using a peer discussion responsibilities chart, which highlights how to have a discussion in math, and sentence starters. The team reviewed student work from before and after introducing the chart and sentence starters and noted that 60 percent of students improved in their ability to explain how they solved math problems, which also demonstrates an increase in students’ conceptual understanding of solving math problems. One teacher shared that the peer discussion responsibilities chart was a new concept they learned about from the professional text her team is reading.

- The grade-three math team met to share their analysis of student work. Before the meeting, teachers on the team reviewed samples of student work from a colleague’s class and identified low inference details, strengths, and areas of growth. After each teacher shared, they discussed trends and patterns from the student work analysis. The team determined that students demonstrated conceptual understanding by retelling the problem without numbers using only words. The presenting teacher shared that students had received scaffolds such as sentence starters. As a next step, it was determined that the teacher would reduce the number of scaffolds given to students. Additionally, a review of grade-three team minutes revealed that the incorporation of a new strategy using math tiles to teach the distributive property led to an increase in student performance from 28 percent proficiency to 84 percent proficiency.

- Teachers play an integral role in decisions that affect student learning across the school. The math vertical team, which is comprised of teachers across grades and school leaders developed a math action plan that impacts mathematical practices across the school. Included in the action plan is an activity called fact platter that supports students’ fluency and is used across all grades. Additionally, teachers on this team developed bottom lines for each grade that aligns to each goal in the math action plan. Bottom lines include specific activities, and what evidence of those activities will look like. School leaders utilize the bottom lines while conducting walkthroughs of classrooms. Additionally, teachers develop and turnkey professional development for staff on key initiatives. For example, teachers led professional development on the social-emotional program the school implemented.