Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 149 Christa McAuliffe
Elementary 30Q149
93-11 34 Avenue
Queens
NY 11372

Principal: Onalis Hernandez

Dates of Review:
May 16, 2019 - May 17, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Yolanda Martin
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. 149 Christa McAuliffe 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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
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<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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>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>
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</tbody>
</table>
## School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</strong></td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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## Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 1.4 Positive Learning Environment | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings
Teachers, support staff, and partnering community-based organizations share an approach to culture-building, discipline, and social emotional support that is informed by a theory of action. Furthermore, professional development (PD), family outreach, and student supports are strategically aligned.

Impact
There is a safe and inclusive culture supportive of the school’s goals that meaningfully involves student voice in decision-making through structures such as student government. The alignment of structures and supports results in the adoption of successful academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff create a culture of student support guided by their shared belief that student growth happens when they are valued, intentionally included in decision making, and when they receive social emotional supports to develop their full potential. Students have an active voice in the school community through student government, which includes a class representative from each grade. Student government participants make the daily school announcements, speak to their peers to build awareness, and make decisions on issues that affect all students. For example, students met with the nutritionist to discuss improving the school foods and was given an opportunity to make a change to the lunch menu. Additionally, first grade students expressed their concern about not being involved in the student government election process and as a result, for the first time this year students campaigned in the lower grades and students in grades one through five had the opportunity to vote. Practices such as these promote an inclusive school culture.

- The school strategically aligns professional development and student learning experiences to support effective academic and personal behaviors. For example, the staff received professional development on the impact of stress and trauma on students and participated in a book study using the text *Lost and Found* and incorporated the novels *Wonder* and *Invisible Boy* into the curriculum to teach determination. In addition, the school implemented the “Beautiful Me” program for fourth grade girls based on observations in the integrated co-teaching (ICT) class. The school also implemented frequent conversations between the school guidance counselors and administrators to build the self-esteem and confidence of girls in the upper grades. The “Beautiful Me” program included professional development for teachers on implicit bias and diversity and building the confidence of girls who struggle academically. The school, in partnership with the Parent Teachers Association (PTA), held workshops for families on managing stress and immigration. One family shared “I truly appreciated the workshop on immigration and knowing my rights. I felt safe to ask questions and supported knowing that they are not only just here for my child but the whole family.”

- The school community strategically aligns family outreach, resources, and professional development to promote effective academic and personal behaviors. The school hosts literacy night for all families where they conduct an annual book exchange to promote a culture of reading at school and at home. In collaboration with their community-based organization (CBO), the school implemented the Brighter Bites program that delivers fresh fruits and vegetables to the school where parents, students, and staff volunteer to provide produce to families in the community. The impact of this program has increased parent engagement and strengthened the relationships between the school and families. Currently, there are two hundred parents that are part of the program. One parent shared “Prior to participating in the program, I struggled with getting my daughter to eat certain vegetables, but now that her friends are a part of the program, my daughter is now eating kale and other vegetables. My daughter and I get to meet and connect with families that I might not have otherwise met.”
Area of Focus

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<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 articulated belief that students learn best when there is small group instruction, teacher modeling, and student-to-student discussions. Across classrooms student work products and discussion reflect high levels of student participation.

Impact

Students cooperatively work within small groups and high levels of student thinking and participation are evident across classrooms, but not across the vast majority. While student participation is evident across the school, student ownership is not yet consistently evident across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- During a fourth-grade math class, students worked in cooperative groups to solve real-life word problems using units of measure. Students in a fourth-grade English Language Arts (ELA) class worked collaboratively in their guided reading groups to identify how a character’s perspective changed. In a grade one class, students worked in cooperative groups in different literacy stations centered around phonics, comprehension through a roll and retell strategy, and a listening station where students listened to *Hop on Pop* and engaged in a discussion. While students were in groups across classrooms, there were examples where students were seated in groups but did not work cooperatively with their peers. For example, in a second-grade class, students were directed to complete a spelling assessment followed by a teacher-led discussion on bar graphs. Students were not asked to interact with one another and only responded to the teacher, thus limiting the consistently of students engaged in high level discussion with their peers.

- In a fifth-grade math class, after students created graphs on a coordinate grid using temperature, they used a protocol for sharing their process for using the data to create their grids. Students questioned their peers and answered follow up questions posed by their peers and the teacher. During a fourth-grade guided reading lesson, group leaders facilitated student-to-student discussions on how the setting and time period of a text impact the characters. For example, one group of students were reading *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* by Bette Bao Lord and discussing how the setting shaped the way Jackie, the main character in the text, dealt with challenges. One student stated, “I think the setting made him afraid to speak out and he had to hide the way he felt because of a lot of segregation happening then.” Students in the group then began to point out different places in the text where the main character Jackie was silent when he was upset about how he was being treated, thus demonstrating high levels of student thinking and participation.

- In some observed classes, there were missed opportunities to maximize student participation in discussions. For example, in a third-grade class, the teacher asked students the similarities and differences between two Cinderella fairy tales and proceeded with a discussion with individual students, without having students engage in a conversation among themselves. Additionally, during a second-grade class the teacher led a discussion based on the read aloud from the *Horrible Harry* series by Suzy Kline. However, the discussion was primarily between the teacher and student, with limited opportunities for students to engage in a student-to-student dialogue, thus missing opportunities to allow student to engage with their peers and increase student ownership.
Findings

Curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate instructional shifts by making purposeful connections between shifts and the Hallmarks of Advance Literacy. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks to promote college and career readiness.

Impact

Curricula coherence promotes next-level readiness for all students. Curricula and task across grades and subjects are planned and revised to allow students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, to have access the curricula and demonstrate their thinking through work products.

Supporting Evidence

- All curricular materials are aligned to the Common Core and content standards and show evidence of strategic integration of the instructional shifts and Hallmarks of Advance Literacy. Integration of the instructional shifts and Hallmark of Advance Literacy supports students' use of academic and high-utility vocabulary as well as writing from sources in ELA and across content areas, as evidenced in lessons and unit plans. In a fourth-grade lesson plan, students are asked study different mentor texts to identify similarities and differences and use the texts to support their examples. In a fifth-grade math lesson plan, students were tasked to use a line graph to display data and solve real-world problems using different strategies. The plan also included vocabulary scaffolds for ELLs' understanding of high utility words like scale, interval, and coordinates. In a second-grade lesson plan, students are to elaborate on their opinion and use text evidence to support to prove their point. Additionally, there is a focus on writing across the content areas and citing textual evidence, ensuring coherence across grades, and promoting the skills that support college and career readiness.

- Lesson plans include activities requiring higher-order thinking across grades and subjects, so that all learners, including students with disabilities, demonstrate their thinking. Furthermore, unit and lesson plans across grades evidence tasks that embed annotation skills and incorporate unit-specific vocabulary into non-fictional writing. For example, a second-grade unit plan reflects revisions to a writing unit to further students understanding of the features of literary essays. In a third-grade dual language lesson plan students were required to review text features to identify the main idea and record their responses on a graphic organizer to support their literary responses. Another example of teachers planning to ensure cognitive engagement for all learners, is a third-grade lesson plan that provided students with a variety of scaffolds like a mentor piece of writing, sentence stems, and a pre-teach on domain-specific vocabulary to support them with revising their informational writing books on Nigeria. Additionally, a kindergarten lesson plan asked students to create a song that solved an issue that they were concerned about and required them to include the problem and the solution. Across grades and subjects, curricula cognitively engage students.

- Curricula and tasks across grades and subjects include appropriate scaffolds and differentiated strategies to engage and challenge all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, to think critically. For example, students are provided with personalized writing took kits and word walls to support them with their writing. A review of a second-grade writing kit contained a personalized word wall with words like images, ecology, cousin, empire, and excited, along with a list of transition words to support their writing. Additionally, curricula are refined based on student data. For example, in grade two, the writing about reading unit was adjusted to support a reteach on connecting opinions to reasons and closing statements to ensure that all learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, receive the appropriate supports so they can demonstrate their thinking.
## Additional Finding

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<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 checklist that are aligned with the school’s curricula to inform feedback to students. Across classrooms, teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding.

### Impact

A variety of feedback to students from both teachers and peers using rubrics and checklists advances learning. Teachers’ use of in-class assessment practices and effective adjustments result in the delivery of instruction that meets the learning needs of all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use common rubrics in ELA across grades to provide students with feedback on their work. Student work samples across subject areas contain rubric-based feedback that provides students with glows and grows and next steps for improvement. For example, students received feedback on their American Revolution essay to be more descriptive in their writing and to do a grammar check. On science reports, students received feedback on their hypothesis and were encouraged to strengthen their research by adding additional research questions. In math, feedback focused on students checking their process for problem solving and questioned students’ explanation, thus improving students’ demonstration of understanding and mastery of learning outcomes.

- Students also engage in self- and peer assessments. For example, in a grade-three class, students provided feedback to their peers on their informational writing on Nigeria. Peer feedback provided glows and grows and encouraged students to check their spelling and add periods and commas. Students also conducted self-assessments of their writing and identified what they think they did well and what they would do to improve their next essay. For example, one student shared in their self-assessment that they enjoyed learning about Paul Revere and identified their improvement goal for their next essay, resulting in students being aware of their learning and monitoring their progress.

- Across classrooms, teachers checked in with individual and groups of students while they were engaged in turn and talk and class discussions. In a fourth-grade math classroom, after the teacher checked student work, students were redirected to check their answers by using the work backward method. In the lower grade classrooms, teachers used the thumbs up method and questioning and discussion approach to assess student understanding and to make the necessary instructional adjustments. Another example, during a third grade-writing lesson the teacher conducted a reteach after listening to student responses to identifying similarities and differences to a classic and modern version of Cinderella demonstrating the use of real-time student data to make in-the moment adjustments to instruction to support all students’ needs.
### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide training to the entire staff. Staff members provide ongoing communication to families about promotion, academic progress, and college and career readiness expectations for their child.

### Impact

There is a culture of mutual accountability among teachers and staff. School leaders successfully partner with families to support student progress towards established high expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate high expectations through a document that details expectations for the school, including improving questioning and discussions and measuring progress through school walkthroughs. Additionally, school leaders communicate high expectations through monthly literacy newsletters and a weekly newsletter to staff that includes a section on best practices connected to a weekly instructional focus aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and instructional expectations. For example, one newsletter identified demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy and designing coherent instruction as the focus and highlighted strategies and examples of effective practices. Additionally, the school leaders have supported school improvement initiatives through PD sessions on curriculum design and lesson planning, the workshop model, the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, as well as for checking for understanding during a lesson.

- Evidence of a culture of mutual accountability was shared by teachers as they discussed the ways in which they support each other and respond to the needs of their colleagues. One teacher shared that she wanted to improve the facilitation of group discussions. After receiving a few names of teachers who were strong in facilitating discussions, she conducted an intervisitation for support. Several teachers came to a quick consensus that they have also visited a colleague for instructional support. Another teacher shared how she was new to teaching kindergarten and her colleague opened her classroom up to her and then came to visit her classroom to support her with implementing some of the practices observed. All teachers concurred that this support and accountability to help each other is a practice that is teacher-driven and a part of the culture of the school. Teachers also shared that they use an online platform to disseminate resources and share practices to support classroom instruction and teacher development. One teacher shared that if they attend an outside professional development session, they immediately share the information using the online platform and turnkey highlights during weekly professional learning sessions.

- High expectations are shared with parent through newsletters and during the weekly designated parent engagement sessions. Parents receive monthly newsletters with curriculum topics and reinforcement activities that families can do with their child. For example, a fourth-grade newsletter informed parents that baking is way to reinforce fractions. A second-grade newsletter provided families with strategies to support nonfiction writing like walking through the neighborhood with their child or having a discussion with their child on how to take care of pets to support them in their ability to recall information. The school also provides workshops for families. Several parents expressed gratitude for the school's continued effort to help them help their child. One parent shared that the school conducted a literacy workshops for families and provided them with a list of questions they could ask their child while reading. A math workshop showed them how to use the online program to help their child with math. One parent stated, "My daughter struggles. After a workshop I met with the teacher and I was provided with sight words and other tips. Recently, the teacher reported that my daughter is improving." Another parent shared that the school conducted a workshop for parents on managing stress. In addition, the school held a workshop on saving and preparing for college for kindergarten and first grade families.
### Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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#### Findings

Across the school, teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data, student work, and classroom practices. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

#### Impact

Teachers collaborations have led to coherence of practices and supports to meet the needs of all learners. Teachers have leadership capacity and play a role in decisions that affect student learning.

#### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet regularly to analyze data and look at student work to identify ways to improve teacher practice. The fourth-grade common planning team analyzed student work to determine next instructional steps for the support of students identifying the main idea and supporting details in their non-fictional short response writing. Specifically, students were tasked with writing a summary that identifies the main idea and supporting details of a non-fictional passage. Teachers found that while some students correctly identified the main idea, they had trouble aligning the support details to their main idea claim. They also found that students struggled with citing evidence from the text. Additionally, a common problem that teachers identified was that large number of student writing lacked details. In order to address this, teachers discussed possible strategies, such as explicit modeling and a reteach on main idea and supporting details using a graphic organizer. Teachers also agreed to provide students with additional learning opportunities with non-fictional and informational text in order to build their understanding of text features. While looking at student works samples teachers noted improvement in students’ ability to respond to text. A review of student work samples demonstrate progress towards increasing students’ ability to respond to literature and the use of common strategies is positively impacting teacher practice.

- In addition to the fourth-grade common planning team, evidence from other teams demonstrate that inquiry-based work is improving teacher capacity. The third- and fourth-grade math inquiry team agendas evidence data from benchmark assessments and adjustments to the current units and pacing calendar to allow additional opportunities for students to solve two-step word problems and fluency with subtraction, addition, and multiplication for students with disabilities and ELLs. Agendas and resources from ICT inquiry group, document conversations and the sharing of resources to support the different strategies and structures of co-teaching. One teacher shared, “Being a part of the inquiry group and visiting my colleagues’ classrooms has helped me with developing better transitions routines. The creation of the individualized writing toolkits has increased my students’ independence and now allows me to focus more time on students who need more intense support.”

- Teachers lead grade level common planning and content-based inquiry teams. Teachers also serve as content leaders on the instructional cabinet to support curricular decisions. For example, the math teacher leader and the special educational teacher leaders were instrumental in providing school leaders with data and feedback from teachers that supported the change in the school’s math curriculum. Additionally, teacher voice has been involved in the decisions about schoolwide and content specific professional development topics. Teachers are surveyed at the conclusion of the school year, during their initial planning conferences, and throughout the year about their professional learning needs. For example, based on the data gathered from teachers’ initial planning conferences and planning sessions with grade leaders, school leaders created a professional learning cycle on checking for understanding during lessons that was teacher facilitated, thus ensuring that teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect teaching and learning across the school.