Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 396
Elementary 10X396
1930 Andrews Avenue
Bronx
NY 10453

Principal: Nicole Tine

Dates of Review:
December 4, 2018 - December 5, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Jorge Estrella
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. 396 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

#### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<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>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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
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<th>Rating</th>
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<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>Proficient</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>Area of Celebration</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

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

School leaders, mentors, and grade leaders support teacher development, including those new to the profession, with effective feedback and next steps from frequent cycles of classroom observation complemented with instructional rounds and analysis of student work/data. Teacher feedback accurately gathers areas of strength, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact

Strategic cycles of observation and resulting feedback clearly articulates expectations for teacher practice and supports teacher development in alignment with teachers’ professional goals and promotes teacher understanding of their own pedagogical practice.

Supporting Evidence

- The three school leaders cycle through the teaching staff to conduct frequent cycles of observations to get an accurate picture of teachers’ strengths and areas of need, and to provide appropriate next steps and supports so that each school leader observes every teacher every year. Evidence from classroom observations and an analysis of student data is used to provide immediate, effective data-driven feedback to teachers through one-to-one conversations, followed by a reflection on the lesson observed, with next steps which are aligned to teachers’ professional goals. A teacher's observation feedback included, “Your students are still struggling to identify the correct skill or operation necessary to begin solving problems. You may want to use some lower-tiered tasks with your students to build this skill. I will return at the end of the week to observe your progress implementing these recommendations.” School leaders completed the first cycle of observations and started the second cycle, thus meeting their targets to provide frequent and timely feedback to teachers.

- Instructional rounds are rooted in the school’s culture of teacher peer support. To ensure a common language, the expectations and protocols used to conduct instructional rounds, school leaders provide professional development (PD) session to teachers. For the first cycle of instructional rounds, teachers focused on student engagement. Teachers received feedback from colleagues such as “Having your teaching points by the back of the room and not near the meeting area makes it seem that it is not for the students but only for the teachers or visitors.” Furthermore, school leaders ensure that new teachers have a mentor, receive targeted classroom-embedded support, as well as participation in schoolwide PD sessions. One new teacher shared that the multiple supports received from his mentor, colleagues, consultants and school leaders, have helped him evolve in the planning and delivery of instruction as well as build rapport with students. Another teacher shared that the multiple opportunities to provide and receive feedback is helping her work and reflect on the goals stipulated in her professional growth plan.

- To deepen their understanding of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, teachers shared that the protocols used in instructional rounds are effective to norm and calibrate teaching practices. Written feedback is grounded on thorough low inference notes and rationales that provide detailed evidence supporting the ratings. Observation reports include actionable feedback, reflection of previous observations, summary of the post-observation conversation and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, a teacher received the following feedback: “Make sure all students have the opportunity to participate in class and partnership discussions. One of your students was without a partner twice over the course of the observations.” Hence, specific feedback further informs and supports teacher’s pedagogy. Teachers also mentioned that previously, they were using videos to deepen their understanding of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. However, they all agreed that the protocols used in instructional rounds are more effective to norm and calibrate teaching practices.
Area of Focus

### Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy

**Rating:** Proficient

### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices consistently give all learners multiple entry points into curricula with a focus on one-one-one supports to further meaningful student work products and discussions.

### Impact

Teachers engage all students including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities in appropriately challenging tasks; however, high levels of student discussions and participation are not yet evident across the vast majority of classrooms.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms teachers engaged students in challenging tasks, such as reading texts to cite evidence and using academic vocabulary to explain solutions to problems. In an Autism Spectrum Disorder Nest fourth grade reading class, students engaged in analyzing what really drives a character to make decisions. Students were provided with graphic organizers, one-one-one support as well as native language supports and visuals for ELLs. Students were observed sharing thinking with each other and then with the whole class, using academic vocabulary and citing evidence from the book *A Treasure Chest*. In a fourth grade social studies class students were asked to identify and distinguish among photographs about environmental changes in China. Students were provided with graphic organizers to take notes on their findings. As a result, students were engaged in tasks that required higher-order thinking skills.

- Across classrooms, most students worked on differentiated tasks and in some cases with differentiated levels of support such as guidance from the English as a Native Language teacher, Nest teacher, and paraprofessional, as well as peer support, leveled texts and a variety of scaffolds. However, in some classrooms, students were unable to engage fully in tasks. In a fifth grade math class all students sat in groups, solving division problems. A few students struggled with the strategies to solve their division tasks, although the table captain offered some assistance, the students still did not grasp the concept and spent a few minutes idle waiting for support.

- Across classrooms, student work products reflect high levels of student thinking and participation. During a majority of observed lessons, students were engaged in productive conversations using accountable talk stems and citing evidence from text. However, in some classrooms, teachers tend to engage the same students in discussions while others remained quiet during the time of the classroom visit. In a fifth grade Integrated Co-Teaching math lesson, the teacher gave the student sitting in front of the whiteboard demonstrating division problems. The teacher only addressed the students who were next to the board and participated, while other students did not have a chance to participate in the lesson. In a second grade science lesson the teacher was explaining tectonic plates, using visuals and a kinesthetic approach to engage students. However, when questions were posed to students, the teacher did not allow enough time for students to process the questions and rushed through the lesson. As a result, some students missed opportunities to demonstrate high quality work and make their thinking visible.
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 and academic tasks are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts while consistently emphasizing higher order skills across grades and subjects.

Impact

Curricula and targeted practices such as vocabulary development and *The 5 Practices of Mathematical Discussion* are designed to build coherence and promote college and career readiness and rigorous habits for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty use the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) curriculum across the grades complemented by phonics programs and a literacy platform that provides access to a vast digital library. In math, the school is using a combination of math workshop and *GoMath!* supplemented by approaches from the text, *The 5 Practices of Mathematical Discussion* which engages students with challenging tasks that builds academic vocabulary and problem solving skills. *Passport* is used for social studies and Full Option Science System for science. In addition, the New York social emotional learning benchmarks are included in the curricula. Teachers regularly meet to collaboratively plan, look at student work, and discuss curricula to monitor coverage and coherence in delivery. Lesson plans incorporate the workshop model across grades and subject areas which include a teaching point, questioning and discussion and vocabulary development.

- Instructional planning documents evidenced that students engage in using academic vocabulary, textual evidence to support claims, multi-step problem solving, fluency, and reasoning skills. For example, in a second grade unit plan, students will add and subtract within 100 using strategies based on place value and explain why addition and subtraction strategies work. In a third grade opinion writing unit, students are to provide reasons to support their opinions and write a concluding statement. This integrates the instructional shifts and promotes college and career readiness for all students.

- Instructional planning documents in all content areas incorporate academic tasks with multiple access points and scaffolds to meet the needs of all learners including ELLs and students with disabilities. For example, science and social studies planning documents incorporate the use of visual aids, tiered vocabulary word activities, a variety of graphic organizers, sentence strips, and leveled text to provide access to all students. In a kindergarten writing lesson, the teaching point was, “Writers use sight words to build sentences in order to make a pattern book.” Students will use baggies of sight words to make different sight word sentences. A science lesson plan includes the use of manipulatives to simulate tectonics plates.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula. Teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

The use of rubrics and formative assessment practices implemented across classrooms results in data driven feedback, student self-assessment, and teachers equipped to make timely adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Both teachers and peers provide students with actionable feedback. For example, to provide feedback to peers, students use a form where they tell the writer something they liked, ask the writer a question, and give the writer a piece of constructive criticism. Students spoke about using rubrics in every assignment, which provided them with the performance expectations for what they are to accomplish in their tasks, projects, and writing or math work. Students stated that a rubric is given to them before assignments and using them helps to understand what is required to get a good grade. A second grade informative writing rubric guides students to introduce a topic, use facts and definitions, organize, provide a conclusion, and implement proper grammar and mechanics. A fifth grade math rubric includes problem solving, reasoning and proof, communication, connections, and representation.

- Reviewed students’ work products revealed that teachers provided actionable feedback. An example of feedback in math stated, “Great use of labels to stay clear and organized. Next time try to include a visual model,” in writing, “I love how you used one of our ‘hook’ strategies to bring in the reader. You need to add more detail to clearly show the reader the situation. For example, what ride were you on?” Students also demonstrated facility with actionable feedback and understood their next steps to improve on the next task. Bulletin boards inside and outside the classrooms demonstrated student work with rubrics, tasks and actionable feedback with next steps. In the early grades, rubrics, checklists and next steps are in student-friendly language and most include graphics.

- Across classrooms, teachers use several approaches to check for understanding including questioning throughout the implementation of lessons, hand signals, color-coded cards, and one-on-one conferences. For example, in a first grade literacy class, the teacher monitored students’ progress while the students worked in pairs by recording students' responses and reassigned partners, then the teacher focused on students who were having difficulty accomplishing the tasks. This effective level of implementing checking for understanding allows teachers to make effective adjustments to meet learning needs.

- Students have opportunities to self-assess and reflect on their work during the lesson and at the end of the lesson. For example, students were observed using color-cards or hand gestures requesting support when they struggle with tasks. In most classrooms, students complete exit slips reflecting on their learning targets for the lesson. Students also added that they use checklists to reflect on their work which is used when they have one-on-one conferences with the teacher.
Findings

School leaders effectively communicate high expectations for learning to staff, students, and families, and implement varied support systems in order for all to be accountable for outcomes.

Impact

Effective systems to convey high expectations with the supports to achieve them has led to a culture of mutual accountability for all members of the school community. The school’s successful partnering with families equip parents to support their children’s progress toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Professionalism and high expectations are consistently emphasized to all faculty via PD sessions, newsletters, emails, text messages, weekly teacher team meetings, through discussions at regular lead teacher meetings, Initial Planning Conferences, and middle and end of the year conferences. The Staff Handbook is used by school leaders to convey high expectations. It is used to offer teachers guidance about expected teaching practices aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and school operating procedures. School leaders also communicate high expectations through frequent cycles of observation and feedback. In all of these venues, school leaders and teachers discuss schoolwide goals, instructional priorities, gather feedback on teacher strengths, needs and next steps to ensure a consistent and cohesive message, language and pedagogy focused on the gradual release of responsibilities. The 2018 School Survey shows that 95 percent of teachers say that the principal makes clear to the staff her expectations for meeting instructional goals.

- To meet these high expectations, school leaders and lead teachers designed in five to six week cycles of PD sessions including topics such as planning and preparation, creating an environment of respect and rapport, questioning and discussion techniques, and assessment in instruction, all aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. PD sessions also support the implementation of schoolwide initiatives such as the school core values grounded in respect, ownership, curiosity, kindness, integrity, never giving up (ROCKIN), Community Circles, Restorative Justice and implementation of the Nest program. After PD teachers complete surveys offering feedback to school leaders about the quality of the session. School leaders ensure implementation of practices shared at PD sessions during observations, as well as during non-rated instructional rounds. These practices promote a culture of mutual accountability among stakeholders.

- School leaders and teachers share schoolwide expectations for student achievement throughout the school-year beginning with the “Back to School Night” and during ongoing parent engagement events and meetings, parent teacher conferences, classroom publishing parties, the Parent Handbook and the school website. Communication systems include teacher/parent notebooks and correspondence through online grading and one-on-one meetings during parent engagement time. Parents commended the school’s communication of expectations and mentioned that they always know about their child’s achievements and progress towards meeting their instructional and social emotional learning targets and the areas they need to address to meet or exceed their academic goals. One parent reported, “My daughter is doing much better in math, since she has a dedicated teacher for the subject.” One parent added that their participation in the “Math Family Fun Day” has helped them better understand the curriculum and provide stronger support their children. As a result of these supports, the school’s partnership with families has contributed to students’ progress towards college and career readiness. The 2018 School Survey shows that 98 percent of teachers say that staff regularly communicate with families about how they can help students learn.
Findings
Teacher teams use an online platform to share files and systematically analyze assessment data, classroom practice, and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused. Embedded distributed leadership structures enable effective teacher leadership.

Impact
Teachers’ systematic analysis of assessment data and student work results in shared improvements in teacher practice as well as shared leadership so that teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence
- Teachers use progression rubrics to assess student tasks and academic growth, to ensure that students are improving and demonstrating mastery in different content areas. School leaders and teachers created an assessment tracker posted on an online platform for teachers to keep track of assessments data. This tool allows teachers to disaggregate data for item analysis and to monitor progress by class, grades, subjects or sub-groups of students. In a third grade writing class, all students were at a mastery level on their informational writing task, which was represented based on their abilities to select an expert topic including several facts they knew about the topic. To ensure ELLs accomplish their informational writing task at mastery level, they used graphic organizers, vocabulary cards, visuals and one-on-one support to represent facts by sketching pictures. Another group was jotting down key words to help draft and higher-achievers selected expert topics and started drafting in their writer’s notebook. As a result, teachers are demonstrating progress in their ability to analyze how they gather information, reflect, plan, and implement lessons so more students master their learning targets.

- The third grade teacher team analyzed student work and opinion writing assessment data using the opinion writing learning progression rubric focusing on level 2 students that they would like to push to a level 3. Teachers determined that most students were scoring 2.5 or above in overall organization. Most of the students were struggling with elaboration, lacking sentences to explain each reason. The team discussed instructional strategies such as teaching models using mentor text to show elaboration, a checklist that is specific to adding details, an elaboration chart with transition words and teaching points using personal stories to make it more engaging. Teachers reported that having weekly meetings to analyze students’ outcomes and pedagogical strategies have helped in developing the next instructional steps for their students. The results of the baseline from September 2018 to November 2018 show that students with disabilities are scoring on or above grade level and are showing a 14 percent increase in reading levels.

- School leaders effectively designed structures where teachers and staff play a critical role in decision-making regarding curriculum, instruction, school culture, PD, and schoolwide activities. Grade leaders facilitate common planning and inquiry work, review common assessments and curriculum, lead PD, and coordinate instructional rounds with school leaders. The school also has mentors who are assigned to support new teachers to the profession and new to the school, as well as struggling teachers. A mentor and a model teacher who is also a Math for America Fellow, created a math lab-site and is working on one-on-one mentoring in six week cycles for new and/or struggling teachers in math. Teachers shared that they have made contributions to the implementation of the social-emotional schoolwide learning initiatives. Teachers play a critical role in the hiring process and are also key decision makers selecting instructional materials. The 2018 school survey shows that 90 percent of teachers say that they have influence over the selection of instructional materials used in classrooms.