Quality Review Report

2019-2020

P.S. 595
Elementary 12X595
700 East 179 Street
Bronx
NY 10457

Principal: Suheil Pimentel

Dates of Review:
November 6, 2019 - November 7, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Jorge Estrella
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. 595 serves students in grade PK through grade 3. 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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Area</strong></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 State standards and/or content standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by State standards and the 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>
</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>
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</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</th>
<th>Additional Finding</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| 3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations | Area of Celebration | Well Developed |

### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>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</th>
<th>Additional Finding</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| 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 | Additional Finding | Proficient |

| 4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate schoolwide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection | Additional Finding | Proficient |

| 4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning | Additional Finding | Proficient |

| 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 State standards | Additional Finding | Proficient |
Area of Celebration

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

Findings
The principal consistently conveys high expectations to staff, aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, via professional development (PD), one-to-one conferences, and detailed communications about quality instruction. High expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness are effectively communicated by school leaders and teachers to students and families.

Impact
There is a system of accountability that promotes effective partnerships with families, resulting in a culture of mutual responsibility that supports students attaining college and career ready skills, as well as equipping teachers to meet expectations on teaching and learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal articulates professional and academic expectations for teachers that are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the core values shared by the school community, “Family, Equity, and Joy.” All teachers receive a staff guide clearly outlining expectations and professional responsibilities around providing students with educational experiences and multiple perspectives through performing arts and hands-on learning. Additionally, the principal emphasizes the expectations via communications with all staff including emails, weekly notices, one-on-one conversations, a classroom environment checklist, and a detailed guide for instructional expectations by grades, subjects, and special programs. These expectations are communicated on an ongoing basis during discussions at regular teacher meetings, initial planning conferences, pre- and post-observation conferences, as well as professional development (PD) sessions. This results in a collective understanding and shared belief in high expectations for professionalism, pedagogical practice, and communication that creates a collegial environment of mutual respect, trust, and accountability between faculty and the principal.

- The school’s PD calendar reflects that teachers receive PD on running records and data gathering, integrating the workshop model into lesson plans, creating common assessments, and how to create an environment conducive to learning. Also, there are focused PD sessions on different domains of the Danielson Framework for Teaching as staff engage in intervisitations using protocols grounded in the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The principal holds teachers accountable to implement the strategies learned at PD sessions via formal and informal observations which result in targeted feedback. As a result of these mechanisms, there is a culture of mutual accountability, with pedagogues having a clear understanding of effective pedagogical practices and clear expectations of how to deliver instruction.

- The principal, teachers, and staff convey schoolwide expectations for student achievement throughout the school year, beginning with the “Meet the Staff Night” event at the onset of the school year. Teachers meet with parents to share the yearlong goals, expectations, and curricula. Parents of new students are given a tour of the building and provided pertinent information about the school and essential policies and procedures. Parents shared that they have opportunities to speak with teachers during parent/teacher meetings, at dismissal, via phone calls, the online grading platform, and notes home. They also shared that they are invited to have a “coffee with the principal” every two months. The principal, teachers, and staff offer workshops for families on State standards, New York State English Language Arts (ELA) and math examinations, and ELA and math testing strategies. Parents engage in walkthroughs so they are aware of what is being taught in the classrooms and the protocols related to the school environment. Parents are provided with opportunities to have input into their children’s education. Parents reported that they receive progress reports three times a year in addition to reports cards. As a result of effective partnerships with parents, they are aware of their children’s academic achievement and their paths for colleges and careers.
Findings

While some teachers are beginning to include tasks and classroom discussions that comprise higher-order thinking, such tasks and discussions were inconsistent across classrooms. Teaching practices are beginning to provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

Although some teachers skillfully integrate technology and the use of manipulatives into the lessons, in some of the classrooms visited the inconsistent implementation of multiple entry points into lessons led to uneven levels of student engagement and varying achievement of higher-order thinking and discussion by all students.

Supporting Evidence

- During classroom visits, some teachers used different methods to provide access to the curricula for the students. In a kindergarten Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) dual language math class, students worked in small groups learning how to count to 10 using manipulatives such as two-colored counters, two-colored cubes, two-colored sticker boards, and access to anchor charts. Also, teachers provide one-on-one support to students, use the interactive whiteboard with the document camera to demonstrate how to form tens. For Multilingual Learners/English Language Learners (MLLs/ELLs) and students with disabilities, teachers provide language supports and differentiated visuals as per students’ needs. However, this level of using multiple entry points to engage all students in higher-order thinking is not prominent in several classrooms, where teachers are using only one type of entry point or not addressing the different needs of students. Thus, some students have limited opportunities to produce high-quality work products.

- In a third-grade ICT science class about forces and motions, students watched a video clip about a floating high-speed train. The activity captured all students’ attention, and teachers then asked them to turn and talk to discuss their observations based on a guiding question, “How did the train move?” All students engaged in discussions about their observations and the reasons they believe the train moved. After they finished their discussions, teachers asked students to generate their own questions such as, “Why does the train float?”, “Where does it take place?”, “How does the train float?”, and “How can little magnets push the train?” Then students moved into groups where each student had a role within their groups. But, in a third-grade math class, students were working on division by grouping objects into equal groups. In few minutes, some students completed their task and worked over and over following the same process. Students articulated and demonstrated their work. As a result, some students are missing opportunities that would enable them to work to their full potential to generate high-quality work products towards their path to college and careers.

- Classroom visits revealed that teachers promote students' critical thinking skills through questioning, discussion, and academic tasks. However, most classroom discussions observed were between teacher and student. Group discussions tended to be limited and only observed in a few classrooms. In a first-grade dual language writing class, students were on the rug engaged in conversations with partners about something exciting that had happened to them. Students were observed taking turns to speak and actively listened to their partners. The conversations were in Spanish, and the teacher assisted with language supports for students to move on with their discussions. The teacher then engaged students in a whole-class discussion allowing them to explain their experience during the turn and talk activity. This level of engagement is yet to be implemented in other classrooms. In most classes observed, students had limited opportunities or limited time to process the questions and to articulate their answers. Most of the conversations observed took place between teacher and student, and this led to numerous missed opportunities for students to engage in high-level discussions.
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

The principal and teachers have implemented structures that ensure curricula coherence across grade levels, with lessons designed to align to State standards and incorporate rigorous tasks that reflect focus on college and career readiness skills for all students, including MLLs/ELLs and students with disabilities.

Impact

The use of multiple entry points allows all learners to have access to rigorous academic tasks that are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects, emphasizing rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal, teachers, and members of the instructional leadership team work collaboratively to create instructional planning documents aligned to the State standards and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* through the adaption of research-based curriculum in literacy and math. The principal and faculty have adapted the curricula to meet student needs and adjusted the unit plans based on student data and work, noting the refinements of standards addressed, time allotted, and alignment to other subjects. For example, the science and social studies curriculum are imbedded in content through English Language Arts (ELA) units. Decisions to build coherence are evident in the curricula maps and unit plans. The math curriculum maps and unit plans demonstrate essential questions with real-world connections, rooted in the State standards. In a first-grade math lesson plan about solving real-work problems, students are to answer, “What is the problem asking you to find?”, “What tool should you use to solve the problem?” and, “What do you need to do to solve the problem?” As a result of this cohesive curriculum, teachers are enriching students with the academic skills needed for college and career readiness.

- The principal and teachers have designed schoolwide instructional planning documents to build coherence across content areas. Teachers have selected a format for lesson planning, ensuring that all use the same components, including essential understanding, teaching point, language objective, State standards, error intervention, prerequisite skills, vocabulary, mini-lesson, higher-order thinking questions, independent work, differentiated work, and exit ticket. Unit and lesson plans are starting to emphasize high-level skills aligned with the State standards. For example, a second-grade reading unit includes a question that stated, “How can understanding cause and effect relationships help you understand the text?” As a result of coherence in the design of instructional planning documents, teachers are equipped to elaborate lessons that offer opportunities to learn life-long academic skills that prepare students to further their education towards the next level.

- Lesson plans revised indicate that teachers plan strategies such as explicit teaching of vocabulary, differentiated tasks based on ability levels, auditory and visual support in the form of videos, pictures, and recordings to meet the needs of all learners, including MLLs/ELLS, students with disabilities, and higher achievers. In a kindergarten math lesson plan, MLLs/ELLs will have one-on-one reading supports for comprehending word problems and vocabulary support. Students with disabilities will work in small groups with modeling math videos, extra time, and differentiated graphic organizers so that they can elaborate their work products by drawing or creating illustrations. Higher achievers will show different ways to make 10 and complete problem-solving reading activities. As a result, students have multiple opportunities to engage in rigorous tasks that promote critical thinking and discussion that challenge and engage them.
Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 2.2 Assessment  
**Rating:** Developing

### Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the curricula. Teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

### Impact

Although teachers engage students in classroom activities to create rubrics, some students are yet to deepen their understanding of the purpose of using rubrics. Feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement is limited, and teachers inconsistently make effective on-the-spot adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal and teachers reported that the school is using State standards-aligned rubrics and checklists across contents and grades. They added that some of the rubrics used are part of the curriculum they use, and others are adjusted to the needs of the students. Furthermore, teachers stated that they incorporate activities in their lessons to create rubrics with students. For example, a rubric for math problem solving allowed teachers and students to assess work based on drawings, representation, word problems, and presentation. However, students reported that rubrics are not always used across subjects; they indicated that rubrics are used mostly in writing and sometimes in math. Some students were unable to explain how their work was graded or their next steps to make improvements upon their work. As a result of inconsistent use of rubrics, several students have limited opportunities to a better understanding of their progress towards their instructional goals and to get better grades.

- A review of student work products revealed limited actionable feedback and an inconsistent approach to offer next steps. Some student work was posted on hallway bulletin boards showing written feedback and next steps such as, “Great job telling your readers about what makes you wilt and bloom. Next time pay close attention to capitalization.”, or “I like how you asked a question. Next time elaborate your hypothesis and procedure.” However, student work presented indicated feedback such just grades, circled rubrics and marked with checks. Also, some students who presented their work with feedback did not articulate their next steps or were aware of teachers’ comments. By receiving inconsistent guidance or challenges to improve the quality of student work, students have limited opportunities to meet their instructional goals.

- In some classrooms, checks for understanding were partially evident. In a third-grade ICT science class, while students engaged in pair talk teachers listened to students’ responses and took notes on their formative assessment tools. Teachers valued those interactions and asked students to pose their own questions about the lesson. The students were then sent to work in groups based on their responses. This high level of effective practices for checks for understanding are yet to be implemented across classrooms. For instance, some teachers just circulated about the room without formative assessment tools, others had conferences with students but did not record students’ responses, and some teachers worked with targeted students in small groups but did not check on the rest of the class. As a result of inconsistent adjustments to instruction, student progress towards their learning targets is hindered.

- Across classrooms visited, most students were not given opportunities to self-assess their work with the use of a rubric or age-appropriate checklist. In some classes visited, students were observed using process charts displayed in classrooms to assess their work, and few bulletin boards displayed peer assessment work. During the meeting with students, they reported that in some subjects they self-assess, but were not able to produce any work product evidencing the practice of self-assessment.
Findings

The principal uses the frequent cycles of observations, analysis of student work, and targeted feedback aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to support teacher development and practice.

Impact

The use of effective practices to provide feedback to teachers and the use research-based tools and protocols for peer-to-peer feedback promotes professional growth, aligns with teachers’ professional goals, and makes the expectations for teacher practice clear, leading towards improved student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal developed a schedule for four cycles of observations informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* which are used to provide feedback to teachers. This feedback includes commendations and recommendations aligned to the instructional focus. In addition, the principal engages in learning walks targeting specific instructional practices and gives teachers targeted formative feedback. Thus, all teachers receive feedback from these cycles of observations. A review of the observation reports confirms that feedback captures trends in pedagogy for individual teachers that align with the expectations outlined in the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. One feedback report noted that the principal directed the teacher to visit a colleague during his math block on Thursday, complete a peer lab feedback, and invite the principal back next week to observe the implementation of checking for understanding and language development in the classroom. As of November 2019, the principal has completed the first cycle of observations and started the second cycle. As a result of consistent observation practices and effective feedback cycles for teachers, there are opportunities to improve pedagogical practice across the school.

- During meetings with teachers, they reported that the principal ensures that teachers observe their colleagues via intervisitations or mentoring visits. This peer-to-peer structure allows teachers to share best practices, learn from each other, and exchange feedback. The school is part of a National teachers' mentoring program, wherein new teachers are offered targeted assistance to grow in their pedagogical practice and receive feedback from mentors using tools and protocols to engage in peer-to-peer feedback activities. Teachers and mentors use a collaborative conference guide to provide feedback to mentees; this tool is rooted in the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Also, some teachers visited other schools. For example, one language teacher shared that last year, he was scheduled to teach a dual language class; as such he expressed his interest to visit another school using that bilingual education model. His request was granted and was able to visit colleagues from other schools implementing teaching strategies in a dual language setting. These supports have promoted trust, greater collegiality, and collaboration across grades, as reported by the principal and teachers. As a result, teachers receive feedback and are offered opportunities that support strengthening their pedagogy.

- Teachers shared that during common planning sessions they receive feedback from their colleagues and coaches, while new teachers receive differentiated support from peers, coaches, and the principal. At the beginning of the school year the principal held one-on-one initial planning conferences with all teachers. In these sessions, they look at student work and data, outcomes of observations and identify teaching practice goals. For example, one teacher goal states, “My professional goal this year is to focus on differentiating instruction for all learners in my classroom. My focus will be to support below grade level students with appropriate scaffolds and modifications to guide them towards mastering grade-level standards, and to extend and enrich problem-solving for students on grade level.” As a result, there are opportunities to identify and provide targeted support to individual teachers in reaching optimal levels of performance to accelerate teacher growth and improve student achievement.
Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development

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**Findings**

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations that foster the development of teacher capacity. Distributed leadership structures are in place with mentors as part of the New York City Department of Education teachers’ mentoring program and have a voice in the decision-making process of student achievement.

**Impact**

The teachers’ active participation in ongoing professional collaborations results in teachers sharing pedagogical practices that improve their instructional capacity and in teachers having a voice in decisions that impact student achievement.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The principal ensures that all teachers participate in horizontal and vertical collaborative professional teams that meet five times a week horizontally and one time a week vertically. Teachers use this collaboration time to engage in norming and analysis of student work through inquiry practice, development and evaluation of common assessments, and implementation of schoolwide instructional practices. In these teams teachers also make decisions regarding delivery of instruction, analyze data, and effectively create target groups and differentiated lessons to address learning gaps seen in student work. During Monday PD, teachers and other staff members work collaboratively with instructional coaches and the principal to ensure that teachers are providing rigorous instruction. Teachers have opportunities to engage in inquiry-based professional collaborations that result in schoolwide instructional coherence and increased student achievement. Teachers reported that their engagement in professional collaborations foster collegial relationships and increase their instructional capacity to improve student achievement.

- During the third-grade math team meeting, teachers used pieces of student work to assess strengths and weaknesses with multiplication. Teachers followed established protocols to facilitate their discussions. After the independent review of student's work products, teachers indicated that students were able to use the distributive property but faced challenges to understand word problems. Then, teachers discussed instructional strategies to address areas of concern such as implementing differentiated instruction by providing visuals, manipulatives, and one-on-one support. Teachers also agreed to create heterogeneous groups where higher achievers support students who still need help mastering their multiplication facts. Teachers also suggested that the activity have the teacher check for students to ensure they engage in meaningful conversations. In addition, review of additional teacher team meeting agendas and minutes revealed that teacher teams engage in inquiry-based work. Teachers reported that through teacher meetings, they provide and receive collegial feedback on their lessons and design lessons based on findings from the student’s outcomes.

- The principal ensures that teachers have opportunities to take leadership roles in the school and have a voice in schoolwide decision-making regarding curriculum, instruction, school culture, PD, and schoolwide activities. The school also has mentors trained by the New York City Department of Education mentoring program, who are assigned to support new teachers to the profession and new to the school, as well as struggling teachers. During the interview, teachers shared that they play a key role in curricula decision making, lead initiatives for school environment improvement, participate in the hiring process, offer professional development, and engage in intervisitations. Teachers shared that they have made contributions to the implementation of the social-emotional schoolwide learning initiatives. For example, a second-grade teacher attended a PD on social-emotional learning and practices in the classroom. She then turn-keyed what she learned to the rest of the faculty, specifically the purpose for and how to set up a Peace Corner. As a result, all classrooms have a Peace Corner for students when they need to engage their minds and release their anger.