



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Frederick Wachtel School

Public School 199

**1100 Elm Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11230**

Principal: Esther Spigel

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Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 199, The Frederick Wachtel School, is an elementary school which serves approximately 500 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 6 and is located in the Midwood section of Brooklyn. Almost half the student population is White, just under a third Asian/Pacific Islander, one-fifth Hispanic and a very small proportion Black. Approximately 6% are special education students in self-contained classes, including one kindergarten and two bi-lingual Yiddish classes. Almost all the school student population is Title 1 eligible which is significantly higher than similar and City schools.

Approximately a quarter of the students are English language learners, many having no previous school experience. In recent years, the neighborhood has seen a number of families arriving from the Ukraine, China, Pakistan, Russia, Mexico and parts of South America, resulting in a diverse student population. Approximately 15% of the students are from newly arrived families and are served by a large English language learner program. There is only one grade six class as many students are selected to transfer to special programs in junior high schools at the end of grade five.

Average daily attendance is 94%, which is slightly higher than similar and City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school benefits from strong leadership by the principal, who shares her clear vision with the school community.
- The school benefits from a very hard-working dedicated and fully licensed staff.
- There is equal value placed on all students, with high expectations of achievement according to individual ability which is made explicit to the school community.
- The school provides a caring and nurturing atmosphere where student lives are enriched.
- There is an open door policy with the principal and open communication between the principal, staff and parents.
- The school places strong emphasis on literacy, especially reading, which underpins all instruction.
- The building provides a safe, secure and clean environment for the students.
- The school provides opportunities for the development of independent learning and social skills, for example through the assembly and monitor programs.
- The school benefits from a superb library staffed by a qualified library teacher.
- The school makes strong and effective efforts to involve and encourage parents, with workshops tailored to the development of social and academic understanding.

What the school needs to improve

- Explore further opportunities for formal professional development.
- Expand the writing program across all grades and content areas.
- Continue to monitor and refine the blended English language learner program.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

The school has a higher level of students who have recently arrived in the country than similar and City schools. This means the program for English language learners is a priority and proves to be effective. Test results have consistently exceeded those of similar and City schools due to quality instruction. Central to the philosophy of public school 199 is the belief that reading is the key to a well rounded education. There continues to be significant budgetary investment in providing resources and interventions to ensure that each student has the opportunities they require to succeed. The school works in partnership with parents to enable students to develop the necessary social, emotional and educational skills to prepare them for the future. Each student is valued as an individual and a consistent positive reward focus nurtures self-esteem. As a result, students are happy to be in school and are eager to learn.

Parents value the education that their children receive at the school and are appreciative of the efforts made by the hard working staff. The school has an open door policy and strives to reach out to all parents. Parents are supportive of the emphasis the school places on regular homework, which contributes to student success evidenced by excellent standardized test scores. It has made Adequate Yearly Progress for the last three years in English language arts, mathematics and science.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The use of both formal and informal data to understand what students know and to measure progress has been usual practice in this school over a considerable period. The principal leads by having a clear picture of performance measured by a variety of indicators. The instructional committee meets regularly to review performance and progress. Within the school, comparisons are appropriately made across various groupings and by class and grade level. This enables analysis and understanding of factors, which contribute to continued achievement. Any discrepancies are also noted and suitable remediation decided. Such an approach of continual comparison has enabled the school to maintain high levels of achievement over many years in English language arts, mathematics and science. A range of standardized objective test results are complemented by teacher made tests and other data gathered within the classroom, such as running records and portfolios. This means that the teacher is also able to exercise professional judgment and expertise and take account of individual circumstances. The performance of English language learners is of particular consideration to public school 199 as they form a significant proportion of the student population. This group of students performs well overall due to the attention given to their particular needs by the school and the comprehensive programs in place to help them succeed. It continues to monitor and

refine the blended English language learner program. An analysis of results by groupings such as gender or ethnicity is not routinely conducted. However, the school carefully examines the performance of all students as individuals, of groups and by comparison with other schools in order to ensure it maintains high levels of performance. There is considerable expertise within administration and teachers in analyzing and utilizing data.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

There is a rigorous dedication to literacy and enjoyment. In order to achieve such a demanding and objectively measurable goal, teams devise and revise plans as required. This dovetails completely with the Comprehensive Education Plan, which details the school’s commitment to continual improvement and reflection in order to continue to deliver high quality instruction. Literacy, especially reading, is seen as crucial to success both in school and in life, so early intervention for individual progress is prioritized in this school to good effect. All content areas deliver literacy using a systematic approach. However the school is not complacent and intends to focus even more on improving writing skills which are already good. Detailed analysis of individual records and results enables the school to plan and implement swift intervention for students who need it. Teachers quickly recognize when a student may need additional support from services, whether for learning or emotional needs. The holistic view of the student, with constant sharing of information to ensure a consistent approach, results in a student population which is happy and achieves highly.

High expectations are shared with parents and students, with policies and procedures to ensure the safety and security of students strictly adhered to. A stringent homework program is in place, with daily reading at home also a requirement. These strengthen the learning partnership and accelerate learning. The school makes strenuous efforts to involve parents in the learning partnership. They are fully involved in the process of helping students achieve their potential and make the most of the wide ranging opportunities available at the school. Parents appreciate the open access to the staff and the efforts of the parent coordinator. Through a varied program of workshops which addresses issues relevant to the neighborhood community and with creative ways of encouraging attendance, a good level of parental involvement is achieved, parents saying the school is “like a family”.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

Although the school is exempt, the instructional programs and teaching strategies in use are designed to maximize student performance and are based on thorough analysis of statistical data. Staffing and scheduling decisions are similarly effectively linked. Building on solid foundations of practice used already, such as conferencing, the school has also embraced the workshop model of instruction. This synthesis provides students with a clear framework and set of expectations and enables teachers to readily differentiate according to need. Within all content areas teachers feel accountable for improving

student outcomes and their own ongoing professional development. Support is tailored toward the same end. Teachers also feel that the budget is sensitively handled correspondingly, being invited to have a 'wish list' for resources which is usually able to be fulfilled. They work in a well resourced environment with an excellent library.

Making explicit the various steps, skills and processes of, for example, literacy, mathematics and science development, means that students feel secure and are empowered to evaluate their work and that of others. At the same time they build sequentially the skills of critical thinking, analysis and self reflection which equip them to become responsible future citizens. Students are fully engaged with the learning process in all content areas. A system of rewards promotes good attendance, which is a high priority, and recognizes individual achievement. Weekly assemblies on a variety of themes enrich the life of the school, fostering self esteem and promoting a sense of pride and responsibility. The associated involvement of outside visits and visitors, exemplified by the recent visit of a children's author, is another notable feature which engages students. These programs contribute to the excellent behavior of the students and mutual respect of all members of the school community. Students feel able to trust staff, including the support team who devise strategies alongside teachers. All the staff are knowledgeable and demonstrate care for the individual. Students feel they belong, are valued as an individual and feel able to ask for help or voice concerns. They want to come to school and would like it cater for higher grades so they could remain as part of the nurturing family of public school 199.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The principal actively appoints new staff who are in tune with the school's philosophy, are willing to learn and able to contribute to the high standards achieved in the school. Attention to detail, such as in the use of data to improve instruction and to maintain a stimulating and organized classroom, is considered alongside the demonstration lesson and interview process. As the principal leads by example in establishing the expectation of lifelong learning, staff are collaborative, reflecting upon practice and being supportive of each other. The school has tried to compensate for the loss of after school professional development time by finding opportunities within the school day, as well as attendance on externally provided courses. It continues to address this challenge creatively, using the strengths and experience of the staff through peer support, inter-visitations and mentoring.

Maintaining the high levels of achievement and ensuring the school runs smoothly underpins the principal's day. She visits classes both formally and informally whenever possible, knows students individually, and is ably supported in meeting her rigorously high expectations by her cabinet and all the dedicated staff who work at the school. She knows her staff well and has a detailed knowledge of their strengths and areas for development. The principal is well regarded for her strong leadership by parents, staff and students and her receptive manner is appreciated. There is a low staff turnover rate, which demonstrates commitment and aids continuity.

The emphasis placed on tolerance and respect contributes to the calm atmosphere within the school. Musical links with other schools and exposure to the City's cultural and recreation opportunities, through trips to theatres and zoos, for example, also enhances the quality of student education.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

Fostering a sense of self-esteem in every child and equipping them with skills for later in life is fundamental to the Comprehensive Education Plan and the benchmark for all planning and decisions made in the school. High expectations and academic achievement are stressed within this 'traditional' school, which places particular emphasis on literacy and mathematics. The school is a child-centered environment, shown in the impressive display all round the building, but has exacting expectations. Accordingly, data is used sensitively to tailor individual programs according to need and geared to setting the child up for success. Personal and social development is also fully addressed throughout the school and especially through the assembly program. Engaging and systematic technology and science instruction, exemplified in the science fair preparation, prepares students for the future.

The school is a listening school where all voices count and where there is a pervasive message of care throughout. Teachers have the student's best interests at heart. They are willing to flexibly revise and adapt plans for individuals and groups in response to observation, assessment and data, trying new initiatives if it will improve outcomes for students. The school has maintained high levels on standardized tests, but is not satisfied. It continually seeks to revise practice and plans with effective structures in place for monitoring and revision in order to maximize student achievement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Frederick Wachtel (PS 199)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score			X

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 			X
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students* 			X
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 		X	
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.			X
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.			X
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.			X
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X