



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Francis J. Murphy Junior School

Public School 039

**71 Sand Lane
Staten Island
NY 10305**

Principal: Robert Corso

Dates of review: January 4 - 5, 2007

Reviewer: Louise Kapner

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

The Francis J. Murphy Junior School, Public School 39, located in the borough of Staten Island is a pre-kindergarten through grade 5 school serving 462 students, and has a higher proportion of students eligible for Title I funding than similar and City schools. The surrounding community is diverse as is reflected in the ethnic population of the school which includes 58% White, 5% Black, 23% Hispanic, and 14% Asian. Nine percent of students are English language learners. A further 4% of the students receive special education teacher support services in a pull out program. The attendance rate is 93% which is above City schools but slightly below similar schools. The school has a full complement of certified teachers.

The original building constructed in 1924 has undergone a number of up-dates over the years including a new wing with additional classrooms in 2001. The school was most recently identified by the local pastor of the Cross Roads Church to have the interior of the school painted and new floors installed. This was donated by the organization "Paint the Town" and completed over the summer of 2006. While the physical plant of the school is limited, with a small cafeteria and auditorium and no formal gym or library, it is extremely well kept and the principal maximizes the use of his building by using open areas to provide additional instructional support for the students.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal sets a very positive tone that allows the entire school community to view PS 39 as a collegial, collaborative, safe environment with high expectations for students.
- Available data and school generated data is used effectively in identifying the academic needs of students and to drive instruction.
- The principal maximizes the use of budget allocations to support all facets of the school's program.
- Teachers create learning environments that engage students and set high expectations.
- The use of smart boards and other technology is highly visible throughout the school and enhances the quality of instruction in the classrooms.
- Programs to support at-risk students are given top priority.
- Professional development is a key component to the school's program.
- Parents are welcomed into the school and are extremely pleased with the instructional program and school environment.
- Students are well behaved, attentive to learning and are happy confident members of the school community.
- The school maintains a positive relationship with community groups and after school programs run by outside agencies support the school's goals.

What the school needs to improve

- Analyze with greater care the data of student sub-groups to identify those students who may not have made appropriate gains or may have lost ground.
- Compare specific student standardized results year-to-year to ascertain impact of interventions.
- Compare results of PS 39 on standardized exams to similar schools.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

Public School 39 has made significant growth in the past 4 years as evidenced by the results on the standardized assessments. This trend coincides with the appointment of the present principal. These gains can be attributed to the emphasis on academic programming, high expectations, and instructional support for all students under the direction of a principal who is adept at maximizing his budget allocation and assignment of staff in a highly effective manner. The gathering and use of data is an on-going process and is instrumental in designing academic programs and professional development.

As a school with a single administrator, the principal is highly visible, involved with all aspects of the school program, and dedicated to creating a safe environment where all students reach their potential. This collegial, collaborative atmosphere was reinforced during my meetings with staff, parents and students, and as one student shared during our meeting, "This is a beautiful school."

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.

This school gathers detailed data on the performance and progress for school and students. While the principal makes use of available data, including results from the standardized assessments, and exam history reports generated from the automate the school website, the school generated data is much more extensive and utilized in great depth to drive instruction. The diagnostic reading assessment for grades kindergarten to 3, and the writing reading assessment profile for grades 4 and 5 are administered three times a year. The item skills analysis generated from these assessments allows the classroom teacher to differentiate instruction for each student and to identify those at risk of not meeting standards. Informal assessments by the literacy and mathematics coaches, results from the early childhood literacy assessment system 2 (ECLAS) and individual student assessments from Voyager, and pre and post mathematics assessments from Exploring Math, provide additional student-specific data. The New York State English as a second language achievement test data identifies English language learners to participate in an after school academy to receive additional support in small groups of no more than eight students.

Monitoring of student progress is on-going. Results from the assessments are analyzed and charted for each student. This provides up-dated and detailed understanding of the performance of each student throughout the school year. Each student has a profile sheet, students receiving academic intervention services have detailed plans identifying areas of need and services provided, and for those students now being identified as potential hold-overs, teachers will be completing detailed documentation as to the student's progress and specific areas that need to be addressed.

The principal is constantly reviewing the data of his school's achievement on the standardized assessments and created an extensive portfolio of information including longitudinal comparisons of year to year results. However, while the overall school's results on the standardized assessments show good gains over the past four years and are well above City schools, the results on the 2005 English language arts and science assessments show that the overall percent of students meeting the standards in all grades was slightly lower when compared to similar schools. Although the school is providing very well for each student as an individual, it does not yet sufficiently disaggregate student data from school/grade data to further assess the needs of groups of students.

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.

The highly detailed analysis of student achievement and progress is used to identify the instructional needs of each student and provide for appropriate academic programming. While PS 39 is a single administrator school, the principal has identified his mathematics and literacy coaches, his reading recovery teacher, and his special education teacher support service provider as his instructional team and together they help design and implement appropriate instructional programs. The extensive academic support for all students is commendable.

Early grade intervention is a priority for the principal. The full time reading recovery teacher works one on one with lower performing students and with small groups of students in the first grade. This highly intensive program includes student specific interventions, pre and post assessments, and is congruent with classroom program. The individual education plan teacher provider implements the Voyager program and works in first grade classrooms for additional support. Each grade has an academic intervention teacher who works with identified students both in and out of the classroom, and one period a week meets with the teachers from the grade to discuss interventions and progress of targeted students. A list of students receiving special education teacher support services is shared with the computer teacher so she can provide these students with needed intervention. Foundations, a phonics program for kindergarten was identified as a need by one of the teachers, and is now part of their program. English language learners receive services during the day and in an after school academy three days a week. A Saturday academy for students in grades 3 to 5 provides intense instruction in literacy and mathematics in small groups of no more than ten. Teachers from the school staff this program and thus come with a familiarity of students and school programs. The smallness of PS 39 allows for a very positive tone and collegial collaborative teacher to teacher interaction.

There is tremendous support for student learning and for each other and conversation often centers on student learning. The impact of these interventions showed a school-wide increase of 5% on the 2006 English language arts exam. However while the 3rd grade made significant strides and attained a 97.1% on the mathematics exam there was an overall school decline of 9%. There is a need to review the extensive interventions in place and their impact on specific student achievement. Parents are highly regarded and they are kept very well informed of the school's goals and high expectations. They in turn view the school, principal and teachers in a very positive manner.

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.

The school has a well developed curriculum and not only uses the mandated programs but uses extensive supplemental instructional programs to ensure that the needs of all students are met. Teachers are part of the process of identifying and ordering materials, and the choice of programs is guided by the needs of the students. A well equipped teacher resource center houses extensive materials across curriculum areas and grades and is visited by teachers who borrow the materials. Students are fully engaged in classroom activities and each classroom has a smartboard that teachers utilize during teaching. This focuses the attention of the students immediately and has made learning fun for them. The proficiency of the teachers using this tool is of a very high level. Teachers buddy up to ensure all students’ needs are met. The implementation of these programs is evident throughout the school and is viewed positively by the students who feel they are learning something new everyday and feel challenged. This love of school is reflected in the 94% attendance rate and an attendance banner is awarded to classes to signify good attendance.

Budgeting decisions are driven by instructional needs and are reflected by small class sizes, part time teachers for intervention services, music and art itinerant teachers, computer teacher, coaches and other staff positions. Additionally, modifying the budget to allow an allocation from the highly qualified teacher monies into per diem gives the school the flexibility to hire substitutes so classroom teachers can participate in full day professional development.

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 leadership and management of the school are of a very high quality and the principal is well respected by all. School procedures are communicated to all, allowing for a smooth running school. Selection of staff is reflective of the high expectations the principal has for his school. The school has a full complement of certified teachers, some of whom have transferred into this school and are valued as key instructional team members. Teachers who work on a part time basis providing academic intervention services, and have shown a high level of quality instruction, are added to full time positions as they become available. Other positions are filled by teachers who come highly recommended.

Staff is familiar with best practices and instructional programs and they use the available and school generated data to drive instruction. Professional development is on going and is reflective of teacher needs. Lunch and learns are scheduled by the coaches and teachers attend on a voluntary basis. Attendance is very good. All day workshops organized by grade, and provided by the coaches, are centered on key instructional needs and programs. Classroom teachers are able to attend as the principal provides for coverage by substitute teachers. Teachers expressed that they feel extremely supported by this on-going training and by each other and feel comfortable asking for help. Teachers do visit each others classroom to share ideas and best practices, but the school

is aware that this practice should be developed further. The principal is very aware of the skills of his staff and provides additional support for those teachers who may need it.

Youth service providers provide needed counseling and support for all students mandated and at risk. A pupil personnel team meeting every two weeks is another venue through which students are identified for additional help. The after school programs operating in the school and run by outside agencies are supportive of the school's goals and provide additional homework support and recreational activities for the students.

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.

The principal is always revisiting the progress the school and the student population is making to meeting standards. His attention to instructional programming, school organization, and student needs is evident. The Comprehensive Education Plan is a collaborative effort by a team of teachers and parents and is monitored and revised throughout the year, as needed. Interim assessments of student progress are used to evaluate student progress and programmatic changes are made accordingly. The Saturday academy program will shift its major focus from literacy to mathematics after the administration identified that some students did not make sufficient progress in the English language arts exam in January. When the school identified that a number of students admitted in the 3rd grade from a local private school required additional support, additional time was added to the 3rd grade academic intervention teacher's schedule.

Potential holdovers have been identified for additional help and parents have been invited in to meet with teachers. Student portfolios are also reviewed to monitor progress and revise interventions as needed. Materials are ordered as programmatic needs are updated and teachers are provided with professional development in using them. Teachers are very much a part of the success of this school and feel comfortable sharing ideas that will enhance the program. The commitment by the principal and staff to ensuring a safe and successful school environment for all students is very evident.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Francis J. Murphy Jr. School (PS 039)	∅	✓	+
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