



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Frederick R Wachtel School**

**Elementary School 199**

**1100 Elm Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11230**

**Principal: Rosalia Bacarella**

**Dates of review: May 12 - 13, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Richard D D'Auria**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Frederick R. Wachtel School is an elementary school with 507 students from pre-kindergarten through grade five. The school population comprises 2.4% Black, 18.5% Hispanic, 46.7% White, and 32% Asian students. The student body includes 23.53% English language learners and 7.5% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 93.4%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 65% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The new principal nurtures a collaborative community of learners where best practices are communicated and shared.
- The teachers and support staff are dedicated professionals who enthusiastically embrace continuous improvement in teaching and learning.
- The school successfully implements strategies to support improved student writing through the “Writers’ Workshop”.
- Multiple common planning periods facilitate the use of data by teachers to effectively plan their lessons.
- Teachers use diagnostic assessments to determine student skill levels and to address their specific needs accordingly.
- The school provides an enriched curriculum that includes opportunities in the arts, music and dance.
- The school collaborates with multiple partners, to enhance staff development and provide enrichment.
- Parents are welcomed and supported as active participants in the academic life of their children through workshops and celebrations of student work.
- The school provides a safe and nurturing learning environment where students are continually encouraged to achieve.

### What the school needs to improve

- Encourage and support the consistent use of standards-based rubrics as the basis for teacher feedback of student work.
- Continue to provide ongoing professional development and modeling to support consistent differentiation of instruction throughout the school.
- Further embed and refine the systemic establishment of interim student goals using objectively measurable benchmarks over time.
- Improve the analysis of student data to provide a clear view of the progress and achievement of different ethnic groups and other special interest groups.

## Part 3: Main Findings

### **Progress made since the last review**

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

### **Overall Evaluation**

#### **This school is well developed.**

The school has made a smooth transition to a new leader who supports a collaborative, multi-cultural school community. Since the last Quality Review, the school is responsive to trends noted in data and has implemented a Writers' Workshop model to support improved student writing. Professional development provided by a partnership with Accelerated Literacy Learning consultants and multiple common planning times each week help to improve English language arts performance of students. The school is pursuing strategies to better meet the needs of its relatively large English language learner population. One example is by implementing more push-in services that avoid the loss of content area instructional time. Multiple enrichment opportunities are provided to students, including ballroom dancing and musical theater. Parents are welcomed and supported to facilitate involvement in their children's education. Parents are encouraged as partners through Read Aloud Day.

Student work is recognized through activities such as celebrations of their original book publications. Teachers share model lessons and some have weekly discussions over lunch about professional articles and books. They have increasingly become a community of adult learners. The school's inquiry team is closely monitoring the progress of a target population of fourth graders. Teachers use interim assessments to track the development of student skills and they plan their lessons accordingly. While teachers modify their instruction to meet the needs of individual students, their expertise in differentiating is not yet consistent across the entire school. While interim goal setting is in place, it is relatively new and needs further refinement to be fully effective.

### **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 the student's progress over time.**

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

The new principal began by using available data to assess the schools' strengths and needs. Meetings took place with every teacher and staff development needs determined. The school uses a broad range of tools to determine the progress of all students. These tools include Early Childhood Literacy Assessment System (ECLAS), Acuity and other assessments, running records, student conferencing and student work. Teachers track and record the progress of their students. The school offers a unique special education bilingual Yiddish program that fulfills the needs of the community. These classes effectively use alternate assessments including portfolios of student work to gauge

progress. Structured curricula such as Foundations, Open Court and Wilson are strategically and effectively used to support special education students. The school determined the use of English as a second language as a primary factor affecting student progress. While performance differences between gender and ethnic groups are negligible, these analyses are preliminary. The school is transitioning more toward a “push-in” model to provide mandated English language learner services. In this model, trained English as a second language teachers support student learning in their content area classes. This model provides more effective support for these students than a “pull-out” model that is still partly in use. Administration monitors the progress of English language learners and notes that 25% achieve proficiency annually based upon the State assessment. The principal determined that this compares favorably with similar schools.

The need for improved writing skills as a component of overall English language arts performance was recognized. The school has worked this year to effectively implement a Writers’ Workshop model. Early results indicate the positive impact this model is having on school-wide English language arts performance. The school compares itself to and visits similar schools. Administration and staff look for effective strategies on these visits to incorporate them into their own practice. Multiple common planning periods each week facilitate ongoing staff learning and sharing of best practices.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.**

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

The principal shares goals through a weekly newsletter .Six-week student goal setting began in February with the academic intervention service and English language learner students. The establishment of learning goals for all students began across the school in March, but timeframes for achieving goals are not yet clearly evident in teacher records. The school’s inquiry team closely monitors a target student population who are not making sufficient progress. A variety of strategies, including supplemental after school programs, are successfully supporting them based upon preliminary test data. Instructional, intervention and pupil personnel teams engage teachers in collaborative discussions around student goals and their progress toward meeting them. Third grade teachers initiated mixed ability classrooms where students’ individual learning needs are met. This replaced a streaming model whereby students were grouped by ability level. The diversity of the mixed ability classroom supports the Writers’ Workshop model that the school implemented this year and the Readers’ Workshop that it plans to implement next year. Students are not yet actively involved in setting their own goals. The school does not yet make enough use of on-going assessment based on lesson objectives through the use of standards based rubrics by which students can assess their own learning.

In addition to implementing strategies to meet individual needs, an after-school academic enrichment classes effectively support students in greatest need of improvement. As one student stated, “Teachers meet with students to talk about goals and the practice test and what you need to do better.” Parents indicate they engage in conversations with teachers around goals for their children and the progress they are making, particularly with the school’s focus on writing skills. One parent said “my children are excited about writing, are shown what is the right way and have goals without being stressed.” The school supports parents through workshops that enable them to assist in their own children’s learning. Parents share the needs of their child with the teacher, so a two-way dialogue takes place.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.**

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

The use of formalized interim assessment data across grades is relatively new. The school has successfully implemented the Writers’ Workshop in support of improved student writing and overall English language arts performance. Professional development has taken place to support the Writer’s Workshop curriculum. Although the school has good data on overall math performance, it strives to move all students even further in math and the school is phasing in the Everyday Math curriculum beginning in September 2008. The new Citywide science curriculum is in place with many hands-on experiences provided by science kits.

A “Music in the Brain” grant supported the purchase of twenty-five keyboards. A partnership with Learning through an Expanded Arts Program (LEAP) of New York University enriches the curriculum through integration of the arts. A part-time certified art teacher and a part-time certified music teacher provide an opportunity for all students to study music or art; the lower grades currently receive both. In addition, ballroom dancing, crafts and musical theater are supported through the after-school program, and they are working together preparing a production of “Fiddler on the Roof.”

The observation process provides a venue for professional growth and accountability. An academic assistant principal position, new for the school, supports additional instructional capacity building. Some teachers voluntarily participate in “lunch and learn” sessions around professional books on teaching and learning. Common planning time enables all teachers to reflect on their own practice. While efforts to differentiate instruction are evident in some classrooms, implementation is not yet consistent across the school. It was noted that standards-based rubrics are not used by all teachers in their feedback to student work. That process is an important first step in identifying student strengths and weaknesses to more effectively address them.

Students, parents, and teachers all describe the school as “family,” with all having mutual respect in a very diverse community. Attendance and lateness are closely monitored by the parent coordinator, who makes personal telephone calls to parents whenever students are absent or late. Parents appreciate the immediate notification they receive from the school.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

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

Administration uses the observation process as a tool to foster effective instructional practice. The new assistant principal who will also be involved with the observation and feedback on teaching is instrumental in the continued professional growth of the staff. The implementation of the Writers’ Workshop is a direct outgrowth of the analysis of data that revealed weaknesses in student writing. While intervisitation of teachers has traditionally taken place among newer staff members, it is fairly new among more experienced teachers. The fourth grade teachers more frequently visit each other since fourth grade is

the focus of the inquiry team's work. Other grade teachers are encouraged to visit each other by offering model writing lessons to colleagues.

The school has a part-time guidance counselor. This is not optimal in meeting the social and emotional needs of all students. The school compensates by holding weekly intervention team meetings to closely monitor all students referred to their attention. While newsletters provide constant communication with parents, the administration recognizes the need for a new parent handbook. The school runs smoothly and a safe, secure and nurturing environment is maintained. Partnerships provide parent support and have enriched the school's curriculum. The Council of Jewish Organizations provides free English as a second language classes to parents. Arts in the Neighborhood supports popular ballroom dancing. The school donates clothing, books and toys to the US Africa Children's Fellowship and students write "pen pal" letters to students at their sister school in Tanzania.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

Formal interim goal setting for students is a relatively new practice. While teachers document student learning goals in their data binders, the form used for this purpose was recently developed and the practice began in March of the current school year. This is a good start, but systemic practice is not yet developed. While teachers write interim goals, specific benchmark dates by which these goals should be achieved are not yet recorded. While the goals may be unit based, they are not explicit enough in terms of when they should be achieved.

The feedback provided to teachers through post-observation conferences and reports establishes goals for improving teacher outcomes. Administration further supports improved teaching and learning through continual conversations about instruction following "snapshot" informal visits and during staff development meetings and workshops. The voluntary "lunch and learn" teacher group uses professional articles for discussion about teaching practice. The principal often attaches these to observation reports and references them in observation reports where appropriate. Teachers are effectively using a wide variety of diagnostic tools, and flexible grouping based on skill strengths and weaknesses is evident in their planning.

School leaders closely track overall data patterns and articulate a clear vision for the future progress of the school based upon the information. Future plans are responsive to the needs of the school and include all members of the wider school community.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Frederick R Wachtel School</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				X	

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?			X		
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				X	

### Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				X	

### Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?			X		
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				X	

**Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?			X		
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>					X

**Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.**

To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?			X		
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?			X		
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					X

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>