

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Francis J. Murphy Jr.  
Elementary school 039

71 SAND LANE  
STATEN ISLAND  
NY 10305

Principal: Tracey Wright

Dates of review: May 22 - 23, 2012  
Lead Reviewer: Teresa Caccavale

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Francis J. Murphy Jr. is an elementary school with 537 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 4% Black, 23% Hispanic, 54% White, 14% Asian students, and 2% other students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 94.2%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has a coherent strategy of support for student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction, and organizational decisions (1.3)
  - o In an effort to support all students' gaining mastery of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) the administration has created a United Federation of Teachers (UFT) Teacher Center so that teachers are receiving additional help with an emphasis on data to ensure all students make progress. Professional development facilitated by the literacy and math coaches is helping to build capacity among the teachers through customizing and modifying the curriculum according to the CCLS. Additionally the school is implementing the Journey's literacy curriculum and providing support to teachers from a specialized literacy consultant to help teachers understand how to implement the program to improve students' comprehension. These strategic decisions result in increased teacher collaboration, implementation of the workshop model and small group instruction aligned to a balanced literacy approach of teaching, learning, and more authentic student work products.
  - o The school administration schedules time for staff to meet two to three times per week and during half-day professional development institutes implemented during the 2011-12 school year. Teachers take these opportunities to look at student work to inform lesson planning and meet school wide goals. In addition, special education teacher support services (SETSS), academic intervention specialist (AIS) and English as a second language (ESL) teachers, support English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs) with a research-based push-in model focusing on students' areas of challenge. Resources available to teachers and students include technology programs including i-ready, RAZ kids, Everyday math games, and Think Central. As a result all teachers have ample time to meet together to inform their planning for students and teachers are beginning to use the resources to differentiate the curriculum to support students' individual learning needs.
- The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals and student learning and emotional needs. (4.1)
  - o The staff is using the Danielson Framework to establish high expectations for student learning and achievement by focusing on the teacher's ability to manage instructional groups, so students become more independent and responsible for their own learning. In addition by focusing on questioning and discussion techniques, teachers are improving in the quality of questions they ask of students, thus furthering rigor of instruction and students gaining a deeper understanding of the subject they are learning. This was evident during classroom visitations by observing student and teacher interaction and students' perseverance and persistence in completing CCLS tasks.
  - o The principal uses data to identify trends and help teachers set professional learning goals. Teachers receive frequent feedback using short cycles of observation with a focus on student work supported with evidence found on the Danielson rubric. Teachers' review of the feedback with the principal provides opportunities for discussion, reflection, and setting of next steps. Teachers shared that the feedback they received from the principal and reciprocal dialogue

between teachers to be extremely helpful. Teachers are also grouped for differentiated professional development based on grade specific and individual teacher needs. As a result teachers are more reflective, leading to professional growth among staff to refine their classroom practice in order to support increased student performance.

- School faculty engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning. (4.2)
  - o Teacher teams meet weekly two to three times both on and across grades to modify and update curriculum maps based on challenges and successes of current lessons. Teachers discuss facilitated lessons based on pre- and post-assessments and evaluation of data helps to determine student needs and strengths. Teacher meetings show evidence of task planning, unit planning, and inquiry work. The teams focus on the workshop model to develop coherence of instruction for guided reading strategy groups and independent work. As a result, teacher teams are facilitating an understanding of student learning styles, and lessons are becoming more student centered and differentiated as evidenced by revisions to curriculum maps and teachers' lesson plans.
  - o Teachers use formative and summative assessments including Work Sampling System (Kindergarten), Diagnostic Reading Achievement Test, Acuity, ARIS, unit tests, conference notes, and teacher-made assessments, to create individual student goals and to provide a comprehensive view of students' progress towards the CCLS and to drive instruction. As a result teachers collaboratively are beginning to collect and analyze information about students they are focused on, which is beginning to result in improved teacher practice.
- School leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults. (1.4)
  - o PS 39's full time guidance counselor provides needed supports for students. As the chair of the Response to Intervention Team and a member of the pupil personnel team, and by meeting with "at risk" students, he is able to help students in their social and emotional growth and empower student leadership. Additionally he helps administration in the planning of special school wide events, and as a facilitator of Respect for All initiatives, he was a part of the Respect for All Week. Students created a peace garden in the cafeteria where each class contributed by writing and bringing a letter or positive message to the garden emphasizing the school wide effort that peace begins with each and every person.
  - o The attendance committee meets bi-monthly to discuss attendance policies, procedures, chronic absences, and next steps, following through with its belief that good attendance impact achievement. In collaboration with the school leadership team a decision was made to purchase school messenger, to notify parents of student absences and lateness, as well as remind them to bring in documentation for student absences. Daily announcements acknowledge all classes with 100% attendance for the day. Monthly drawings for tickets for Wagner football and basketball games, Carnegie Hall concerts, and Staten Island ballet performances are done as additional incentives for perfect attendance. Monthly bulletin boards are prominently displayed and list class percentages of attendance. Additionally students that have perfect attendance are given attendance awards on a monthly basis and any class with a

percentage rate of 99% receives a pizza party. As a result monthly attendance rates have been on an upward trend from an average of 94.2% to 95 %.

- The school's partnerships with families and outside organizations align with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students. (4.4)
  - o In response to prior year's Learning Environment Surveys there has been a continued focus on providing workshops that help parents to support their children's' social, emotional, and academic growth. Workshops include internet, Positive Discipline, Seven Habits of Healthy Kids, Department of Education data tools, technology programs to be utilized at home, homework help, and expectations/changes in the NYC exams. Family activities include bedtime story night, math fun night, two international nights, curriculum conferences during day and evening hours, English lessons for English as a second language parents, and theme dances. These events offer opportunities for the school community to come together, share their ideas and learn about each other. The data on the year-to-year Learning Environment Survey shows a significant growth in parent engagement.
  - o Afterschool clubs include a Virtual Y program, ESL program, and Test Prep Academy for Enrichment. Staten Island Mental Health Reading volunteers give students additional one-on-one tutoring in reading. There are also leadership opportunities for students, including Friday morning breakfast with the principal where students from multiple grades get to provide input on policies and instruction in the school. As a result there are many choices of support for students and families, as well as real world learning experiences during the day and after school.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Enhance the alignment of curricular and task development to involve diverse learners in rigorous tasks. (1.1)
  - o The faculty has put a lot of thought, planning, and effort into revising the academic curriculum and learning experiences to meet the higher expectations of the CCLS. These learning experiences, however, do not consistently call for students to engage in rigorous thinking and/or use higher order skills to produce meaningful work. Although literacy curriculum maps reflect initial thought to engage a diverse group of learners through basic extension activities, learning tasks are not refined using student work products, precluding assessing the level of cognitive engagement for all students, and implementing suitable curricular revisions and increased scaffolds. This results in missed opportunities to maximize students' engagement and leverage the curricular revision process for increasing outcomes, particularly for key student subgroups.
- Further develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best so that differentiated teaching strategies and challenging questioning are used to accelerate thinking and improve outcomes for all students. (1.2)
  - o Across classrooms teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curriculum and reflective of a set of beliefs about how students learn best, as evidenced by the paradigm shift to the workshop model approach to teaching. However, teaching strategies, questioning, and routines, inconsistently offer small group differentiated learning opportunities for students on an ongoing basis, including students with disabilities and ELLs as evidenced by uneven levels of student thinking, and in student work products and discussion.

- Increase the coherence and frequency of the assessment systems to support students learning on a regular basis and to evaluate the effectiveness of curricular and instructional decisions. (2.2)
  - o Teacher teams and most individual teachers use summative and formative assessments and rubrics aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards to inform lesson planning and instructional decisions. However, there is no cohesive and consistent approach across all classrooms in both literacy and math to evaluate each lesson or check for understanding in order to make immediate and purposeful adjustments to instruction to support all students. As a result, in some classes the lack of checks for understanding leads to some students not having a clear understanding of concepts and skills necessary to support their learning needs and help them reach mastery.
- Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups and students in need of additional support. (3.2)
  - o Some teachers have developed goals for students, however, there is no agreed upon timeframe for assessing progress and revising these goals. Although students who need interventions and enrichments have been identified based on data analysis, the goals set, based on this analysis, are not consistently aligned to the curriculum at hand. Therefore efforts to meet identified goals are not fully successful, thus resulting in diminished opportunities to leverage next steps to ensure ongoing progress towards mastery for individuals and relevant groups of students.
- Promote further development of systems to evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional, and organizational decisions, in order to make needed adjustments to increase coherence of policies and practices across the school. (5.1)
  - o Although the principal is developing structures to regularly evaluate and adjust the ways in which data is aggregated and organized with particular attention to the CCLS, there is no formal system in place, particularly in ELA and math, for analyzing information on student learning outcomes and trends across the school. The absence of a school wide system for data analysis does not allow for the effective identification of common achievement trends for all students, and hinders opportunities to make timely revisions towards school wide academic goals and action plans so that all students can attain growth toward meeting learning goals and achieving mastery.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Francis J. Murphy Jr.	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score		X		
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		X		
1..2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?		X		
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?			X	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X	
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?		X		
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?		X		
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?			X	
<b>Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X	
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?		X		
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			X	

**Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.**

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			X	
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X	
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X	
1..4 Integrate child/youth development, guidance/advisement support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X	

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

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?		X		
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?		X		
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?			X	
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		X		

**Quality Review Scoring Key**

<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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