



**Quality Review: Quality Review Report
Division of Academics, Performance, and Support
2012-13**

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

P.S. 199 Frederick Wachtel

Elementary School K199

**1100 ELM AVENUE
BROOKLYN
NY, 11230**

Principal: ROSALIA BACARELLA

Dates of review: November 27-28, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Isabel DiMola

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 199 Frederick Wachtel is an elementary school with 505 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 2.6% Black, 20.0% Hispanic, 46.7% White, and 30.5% Asian students. The student body includes 29.9% English language learners and 17.0% special education students. Boys account for 54.3% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45.7%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 94.08%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Curricula across all subject areas align to key standards and engage all learners providing opportunities for students to have access to rigorous tasks that promote higher order thinking. (1.1)
 - A thorough data analysis of student outcomes across grades, subject areas and student sub-groups is the foundation of curriculum development. By focusing on key strands of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), specifically text complexity, comprehension, informational and argumentative writing, number sense and problem solving, there is cohesion across grades and content areas as to what is taught. Scaffolds exist to ensure that all learners including students with disabilities, English language learners and high achieving students are engaging in content that is appropriately challenging and provides opportunities to make progress toward reaching and exceeding standards. Curricula clearly articulate skill development at each grade level, with an understanding that students must achieve learning targets in order to be on a path toward college readiness. Curricula embeds differentiated access points for student engagement through flexible grouping where all tasks align to the chosen standard and give all students appropriate entry to target specific skill development and formulate a clear path for every learner to progress toward the learning goal. Carefully designed questions, such as, “How did the author’s decision to have the character take that action influence the overarching conflict in the story?” in English language arts and Exemplar problems in math provide opportunities for students to think deeply about content. Across grades and subjects, all students have opportunities to engage in paired and class discussions that forge student thinking toward high-level concepts, leading to the formulation of ideas and arguments supported by facts. As a result, rigorous learning with continual opportunities to complete tasks that are cognitively challenging allows students to demonstrate mastery of skills on a trajectory of college and career readiness.
- Teacher pedagogy demonstrates consistent instructional coherence and effective differentiated practices that result in improved student performance across the school. (1.2)
 - Deep collaboration between teachers and administration results in instructional coherence across the school that is evident in all classrooms. A balanced literacy model of instruction permeates all content areas and is representative of a shared pedagogic belief that modeling followed by opportunities for students to collaboratively or independently engage in high-level tasks will result in progression toward reaching and exceeding standards. Targeted scaffolds, including readings and leveled questions, are included in all lesson plans with clarity of vertical progression of skill and content mastery. Currently, there is a school-wide focus on questioning and discussion as a pathway for students to demonstrate cognitive reasoning and higher order thinking. This results in student work products highlighting students’ increasing ability to create arguments as well as how students use texts to defend their ideas and opinions, as evidenced in multiple tasks across grades that show students making progress. After reading several non-fiction texts at appropriate grade levels on a specific topic, students across grades complete an argumentative essay that addressed an overarching statement that related to the content. For example, fourth graders, after studying Native American civilizations, created an argument analyzing the impact, if any, specific tribes had on the development of modern American society. In addition, classroom

discussions align to the school's goals of engaging students in high-level discussions. Close reading of texts results in meaningful discussions among students where questions such as, "How does the author's choice of words influence how you feel when reading this paragraph?" and "How does the information presented influence your thinking?" The use of Exemplars in math gives students weekly opportunities to engage in high level tasks that require use of multi-disciplinary skills in applying knowledge to solve a complex problem with several paths to completion, then articulate in writing the reasoning used in crafting their answer. An analysis of outcomes shows that a majority of students across all sub-groups advanced one or more rubric scores in the areas of reasoning and the ability to write comprehensive arguments to support their methods of solving problems. Students communicate that teachers are constantly pushing them to "do more, think more and say more." There is ownership among students relating to their work and their progress as articulated by a 5th grade student who said, "They give us everything we need, it is up to us to use it and push ourselves. We know what our goals are, we need to do the work and be proud of our learning."

- Leaders make effective, strategic organizational decisions that align with school instructional goals and support efforts toward improved student learning. (1.3)
 - Deep analysis of student learning and outcomes revealed that there were gaps in student mastery of skills in math relating to numeracy and problem solving. School leaders worked collaboratively with faculty and other stakeholders to discover and evaluate programs and teaching strategies that would best support student needs and made the decision to change the school's math program in addition to entering into a partnership with AUSSIE school consultants in order to support student achievement in math. These strategic decisions align to the school's overarching goals relating to math and students' ability to demonstrate reasoning, problem solving skills and numerical fluency. As a result, an analysis of formative data, student work product and tasks shows that students across all grades and sub-groups are improving their skills in math. Specifically, evidence demonstrates that all students are making strides in building numeracy skills and most students that are approaching the standard are moving from novice to practitioner level on extended response and Exemplar math tasks, demonstrating progress toward learning goals.
 - Strategic scheduling allows teachers to meet at least twice weekly in professional groups across grades and vertically to collaborate in inquiry and planning. Deliberately structured meetings have teachers use protocols to examine student work, identify gaps in learning and adjust curriculum and instruction. Teacher leaders act as the conduit of information between the administrative team and the grade and vertical teams ensuring that inquiry work is consistent and instructional practice is cohesive across the school. The teams work to develop curriculum and create high-level tasks that are inclusive of access points for all learners. This ensures that all students work toward the same standard and that planning is explicit with extensions and multiple entry points for specific sub-groups of students including English language learners and students with special needs. For example, a 4th grade math summative performance task required students to first understand the relevant information in a word problem, develop a plan to demonstrate movement, and explain their mathematical thinking. Prior to engaging in this assessment, flexible grouping allowed students to analyze the different steps in solving such a problem with targeted entry points that directly connect to student reading and math capabilities. As a result, all students are assessed at the same standard, but individual and groups of students have appropriate access points to perform the task. Coaches and administrators support the teams by assisting with agenda development, providing, professional development and guidance on evaluating

student work and curriculum development and effectively evaluating data, resulting in cohesive planning and a high level of teacher accountability. Across all classrooms, students consistently demonstrate elevation in their ability to think critically, as evidenced in discussions and in their ability to explain their learning and produce work products in all subject areas that show advancing academic achievement.

- School leaders support a high level of pedagogy through effective evaluation of instruction aligned to a researched based framework for teaching, resulting in strong teacher practice that positively affects student learning. (4.1)
 - School leaders are extremely explicit in their expectations for pedagogic practice. Administrators expect teachers to employ the workshop model of instruction in order to provide students with multiple opportunities to be deeply engaged in cognitively challenging tasks that demonstrate high order thinking. All teachers collaborate with supervisors to set pedagogic goals that align to the school's overarching goals and individual competencies determined by evaluation along a rubric connected to a researched based framework for teaching. Frequent cycles of observation measures progress toward reaching pedagogic goals and teachers receive effective feedback that details next steps for improving instructional practice. School leaders continually analyze data from observation cycles to understand teacher skill and impact on student outcomes. Professional development plans for the school and for individual and groups of teachers align to data and result in improved teacher practice. The culture of the school is one of professional learning, where teachers articulate feeling extremely supported by administration and have full recognition of how their practice influences student learning. Consequently, an analysis of formative and formal observation data, as seen in written reports and evidenced in classroom visits, indicates growing competency among teachers in using high level questioning to engage students in meaningful discussion, thereby moving the school toward reaching its overall goals.
- Teacher teams work collaboratively to engage in inquiry work that deeply studies student learning and influences instructional strategies, resulting in improving student outcomes. (4.2)
 - Every teacher is part of at least one teacher team that engages in collaborative inquiry work that closely monitors student progress along specific skill sets and evaluates the effectiveness of teaching practice on student outcomes. The work aligns to the overall focus of engaging students in reading complex texts, high-level discussions and informational and argumentative writing. Through this work, the CCLS are embedded in each unit of study. A core instructional team comprised of supervisors, coaches and teachers, including instructional leads, meet weekly to analyze student work, disaggregate student and teacher data and receive professional development that aligns to the CCLS and methods of inquiry work. The teachers on the team take on leadership roles and collaborate with administration to make instructional decisions. For example, evaluation of math outcomes indicated that students were not making progress in numerical fluency and problem solving. A study of instructional strategies led to a change in the math program and a collaborative decision was made to use enVisionMATH across all grades. The work of this team is then turn-keyed by the instructional leaders at grade level meetings. Because of this work, there is observational data showing the implementation of visual supports, technology and manipulatives as effective strategies designed to engage English language learners and students with disabilities at higher levels. Students are working with more complex texts, demonstrating increasing ability to answer more cognitively challenging questions and communicate their thoughts effectively in several genres including argumentative and technical writing. Specifically, data aggregated from student writing tasks across

grades indicates that on level students demonstrate accelerated progress in formulating organized arguments and in their ability to defend positions using several resources and that all students are making at least one level of progress along the writing rubric in targeted areas that align to individual learning goals.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the practice of offering students feedback to ensure that every student has a clear understanding of expectations and the next steps necessary to make accelerated progress toward learning goals. (2.2)
 - The school has effective practices in collecting and analyzing data from student assessments to understand the strengths and areas of improvement for the school, classes, individual and groups of students. School leaders and teachers diligently track progress and have clear methods of aligning data outcomes to instructional choices and curriculum development. However, the practice of providing students feedback is not consistent, inasmuch as it is actionable but not necessarily meaningful in assisting students to understand how to reach learning goals. Some teachers are very adept at ensuring that feedback to students is age appropriate and specific, resulting in a clear understanding from students on what their next steps need to be. Conversely, some feedback, for example, "proofread for use of commas and spelling," is not meaningful in the sense that it does not give students a clear understanding of what specific steps and learning needs to take place to make progress toward the learning target. This results in some students being unable to articulate what they need to do differently to demonstrate increased mastery of the standards.
 - Teachers consistently use formative assessments throughout lessons to gauge student learning and to adjust practice to affect student progress. Students engage in turn and talks, and provide exit slips as a process to articulate their learning. The use of post-it notes allows students to assess their own learning and communicate with their teachers so that appropriate modifications are made. For example, a third grade student, in reviewing a piece of writing along the checklist wrote on her post it, "I have a lot of commas, I'm not sure if I need them." Currently, some teachers do not consistently aggregate the data garnered from on-going checks for understanding in such a way that articulates the progress of specific sub-groups, including English language learners and special needs students so the adjustments to instruction in real time and in future lessons do not always correspond with their needs. As a result, some student sub-groups are not always clear as to their next learning steps, thus hindering potential for academic progress.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: P.S. 199 Frederick Wachtel	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score				X			
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?				X			
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?			X				
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
3.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
Systems for Improvement							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?				X			
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?				X			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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			
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 the CCLS?			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed