



# Quality Review Report

## 2015-2016

**P.S. 015 Patrick F. Daly**

**Elementary School K015**

**71 Sullivan Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11231**

**Principal: Peggy Wyncs Madison**

**Date of review: November 18, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Debra Freeman**

## The School Context

P.S. 015 Patrick F. Daly is an elementary school with 456 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 2% Asian, 30% Black, 51% Hispanic, and 13% White students. The student body includes 6% English Language Learners and 28% students with disabilities. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 91.8%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The school leader consistently communicates high expectations and provides ongoing training to ensure they are met. Teachers and the school leader effectively communicate high expectations for all students and their families toward a path to college and career readiness.

### Impact

Teachers hold themselves accountable for their students' progress and successfully partner with families to ensure that all students are making progress toward academic expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers shared that the principal communicates expectations at the opening of the school year and in monthly staff newsletters that include positive feedback and reminders for achieving the expectations she communicates. For example, in the November staff note, the principal acknowledged teachers' effective use of "clear evidence to support report card data" during Parent Teacher Conferences, and reiterated the expectations for all meetings, "to review student progress in meeting their goals." Additionally, she expects to see students working in small groups, and that classrooms are print-rich and organized. This was evident across all classrooms. Included as well was a reminder that professional time be used for student-centered learning cycles such as identifying areas of need, establishing goals, and to implement, evaluate, discuss and analyze.
- The principal created a buddy system for all teachers in their first three years of teaching. The professional development calendar indicates that all teachers engage in ongoing professional development in curricula planning, Universal Design for Learning, and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teachers spoke to the support they receive in developing curricula and in using data to inform instructional support for students.
- Parents shared that they meet with teachers weekly for support with helping their children at home. One parent stated that she did not understand her son's math homework. When she communicated this to his teacher, the response was immediate – the teacher partnered with her, clarified problem-solving strategies, and, as a result, the parent feels confident in providing the necessary support at home. Another parent stated that her daughter's summer assignments helped her to understand the importance of allowing her daughter to grapple with math problems independently. This, she shared, "was modeled for me by her teacher."
- All parents said they felt welcomed in the school given the principal's "open-door policy." This is the second year that the parent and community led Friends of P.S. 15 Committee is in place. Additionally, parents shared that they volunteer to be Learning Leaders who provide individualized instructional support and one-on-one tutoring to students in classrooms. The school provides workshops for parents that focus on academic expectations and supporting students at home. For example, second-grade parents learned how to break down the steps to solve word problems, and websites to use with their children at home. One parent stated, "We create an army to fight for all the children here."

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

### Findings

Teachers use common assessments to determine student progress towards goals across grades and subject areas. Teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

### Impact

Teachers thoughtfully adjust curricula and instruction so that all students demonstrate increased mastery. Although students self-assess their work, this practice is not yet consistently evident in all classes to ensure that all students are aware of their next learning steps.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal shared that the school administers *Fountas* and *Pinnell* assessments three times a year and teachers collectively use this information to determine appropriate independent and instructional reading levels. This also enables teachers to strategically group students for targeted small group instruction. If a student has not reached a Level F on this assessment, the school administers the *Early Childhood Assessment Battery* to target pre-readers for focused support.
- The ongoing and purposeful use of student-friendly rubrics and checklists to accompany projects, in-class tasks, and student work products were in students' hands, attached to student work, on classroom walls accompanying student work and, in several classrooms, taped to desks. Students shared that this helps them to assess their work independently, and they were readily able to discuss their progress. Teachers refer to the checklists when checking in with students throughout lessons. This supports students' awareness of what it means to progress to the next level. For example, one student shared, "I have to make sure not to lose [the reader's] interest" and another said she is learning how to use text evidence in her writing. However, this reflective stance was not always evident across classrooms.
- All teachers maintain data binders that include reading level trackers, conference notes, letter and sound pronunciation records, and math and writing assessments for their students. Teachers shared that this consistent tracking system informs their practice. For example, minutes from the fifth grade team meeting revealed that their discussion of guided reading group strategies was based on the baseline reading assessment data. One teacher shared that the focus on student progress and data analysis crystallizes for her what she will need to re-teach. Additionally, in order to be clear on what students understand before beginning a project, teachers surfaced students' prior knowledge to get a window into the adjustments needed to meet the needs of all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.
- In the fourth grade, students were struggling with mathematical word problems. The team minutes reviewed noted that teachers wondered whether this was because of computation, fluency, or reading comprehension. They decided to get clarity from students who were struggling. They learned that students needed clarity on how to approach the problems. The teachers created a five-step checklist that identified steps for solving and comprehending a word problem. These charts were on display in the two math classrooms visited.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

All teachers engage in inquiry-based collaborations that strengthen their practice and focus on Common Core aligned curricula planning and revision. Teachers are an integral part of decision-making in concert with school leaders.

### Impact

School-wide instructional coherence is evident in every classroom so that groups of students consistently meet targeted goals. Teachers play an invaluable role in instructional decisions that positively affect student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- The first grade team has been focusing on a targeted group of students' progress in phonemic awareness and retention. During their team meeting, they shared their students' progress captured on tracking sheets. For example, one student showed minimal letter recognition and would need continued work, while another teacher shared that of her seven targeted students, five had achieved mastery. This led to a discussion about the students who had mastered the skill because of the strategic and ongoing instructional focus and those who would need more support. The teachers referred to a common text to arrive at the next step, the decision to move students to the next level with a focus on blending and rhyming.
- After the fifth grade team analyzed assessment data, they realized that that they would need to shift their instruction by developing exit slip questions to assess comprehension. Additionally, implementing the Number Corner program was a shared decision led by teachers in collaboration with the school leader. According to teachers, exposure to model math language helped students learn to decompose numbers.
- In the minutes reviewed, the second grade team's inquiry question, "In addition to *Foundations*, how can we expand our word study period to better meet students' needs?" led to the team's research into potential strategies. Teachers created differentiated centers to target specific skills or deficit areas for their English Language Learners, their students with disabilities, and to predetermine student groups. The third grade teams' inquiry question was determined by analyzing reading assessment results. This led to a deeper focus on teaching theme and main idea.
- Teachers lead professional learning at the school. On Election Day, teachers facilitated professional development workshops in *GO Math!*, non-fiction writing, and the use of reading trackers.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### **Findings**

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers align their practices to the curricula and reflect the school's belief that students learn best when they interact with each other on challenging tasks. Student work products and robust classroom participation reflect high levels of student thinking.

### **Impact**

All team and school level discussions are grounded in the instructional shifts, and informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Students' work products and lively peer-to-peer discussions reflect thorough ownership of their learning.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Students in every classroom worked in pairs or in groups with a sense of independence and accuracy, checking and supporting each other, and engaging in continuous discussions about their work. Students in one math class were partnered based on their multiplication fluency and used dice to practice this skill. Students readily articulated why they were paired and what the teacher expected by the end of the activity. An extension activity that raised the rigor by doubling the numbers on the dice offered an additional challenge.
- In a third grade science class, students were deeply engaged in dissecting a regurgitated owl pellet. Students recorded their findings on a graphic organizer that included visual representations of key scientific words to ensure access for all students. Students participated with great interest; one student held up a jaw, exclaiming, "Look what I found!" Students recorded summaries of their data analysis and wrote reflections about what they learned.
- Teachers worked with great urgency in a self-contained classroom where students were sounding out letters, reading texts from a computer screen, or working one-on-one with an adult. All students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, were encouraged to read or speak aloud. None of the children in the room had opportunity to give up, or to wait for the teacher to provide the answer.
- In a fifth grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math class, students were required to determine the appropriate operation to use to evaluate word problems to accommodate 132 guests for a dinner, or 100 students on a senior trip. In pairs, students created floor plans. Every student in the class was actively engaged in planning and, if they were stuck, relied on each other to step back and rethink their solution. None of the students called the teacher over for guidance and they supported each other and were deeply engaged in the process.
- During the student meeting, every student presented project-based research work products for which each was proud. They each said that the work required gathering evidence, planning for final work products, checking in with each other, and recognizing that the projects required time to complete.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### **Findings**

The school's Common Core aligned curricula reflect a strategic focus on the instructional shifts and the arts across all content areas and grades. The school-generated design of curricula and tasks are collaboratively refined based on student work and data.

### **Impact**

The curricula across grades and content areas provide instructional coherence that prepares all students for the next level. Individual and groups of students are consistently engaged in cognitively challenging tasks.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The school's *Magnet* curricula features project-based learning tasks as early as kindergarten, and were evident in all unit plans and classroom tasks. In a third grade social studies class, for example, students engaged with an informational text to gather facts about different countries. This was the first step in an extended research project that required planning, in collaboration with peers, and culminated in an evidence-based writing product. Students shared the challenge and commitment necessary to produce high quality work.
- In a kindergarten through fifth-grade unit, students study the plight of the Canadian geese and identify migration patterns. This requires students to study Canadian geography, climate and ecosystems in order to apply their new learning to the impact on humans and the Canadian ecosystem. In grades 3 through 5, students study the life of plants and animals in distinct water worlds. Students work in self-selected collaborative research groups and transform the hallway into an underwater world. The culminating work products reflected high levels of student thinking and cognitive engagement.
- When students struggled with reading comprehension teachers revisited their curricula to include several mini-lessons to address retelling. They generated targeted cue words such as first, then, next, and after to support students. In one unit plan, the teacher refined her driving question from "How can we bring our family stories into the classroom?" to "How can we share our family history through a museum display?" This served to provide greater clarity on what students would achieve by the end of the unit. Additionally, when teachers created station tasks, groups were formed based on data gathered the day before. Students engaged in either dictation and encoding, reading and drawing, or decoding words.