



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 199 Jessie Isador Straus

Elementary School M199

**270 West 70th Street
Manhattan
NY 10023**

Principal: Louise Xerri

**Date of review: December 16, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Daisy Concepción**

The School Context

P.S. 199 Jessie Isador Straus is an elementary school with 903 students from grade kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 14% Asian, 3% Black, 13% Hispanic, and 63% White students. The student body includes 3% English Language Learners and 13% 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 96.1%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
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	Additional Findings	Well Developed
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	Additional Findings	Well Developed
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	Additional Findings	Well Developed
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Focus	Proficient
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Celebration	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that strengthen teacher practice and promote implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) including instructional shifts. Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work including classroom practice.

Impact

Teacher teamwork develops school-wide coherence resulting in shared improvements in teacher practice and curricula and increased student achievement for all learners, including mastery of goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade 5 teacher team meeting, teachers examined a new school focus performance assessment called an “Open Response”. During this meeting, the teachers discussed student work from a math problem involving fractions. The problem ended with “You ran a total of $\frac{2}{5}$ miles.” Students needed to use pictures, words, number sentences to agree or disagree with this answer. The teachers had student work already labeled as “high” “medium” and “low” and had to provide evidence that the students understood fractions, had difficulty or did well with computations and explanation and noticed patterns. As teachers discussed the work, they identified that the students that had been labeled “high” had added an extra step when solving. While originally ruled as outliers, the teachers decided that this extra step demonstrated mastery and as a result, they would adjust both the instructional plan to teach this as well as the rubric to incorporate this new model of mastery.
- As a result of looking at student work in Math pre- and post- assessments and realizing their importance for targeting instruction, teachers on each grade created pre- and post-assessments for their *Everyday Math* program and also aligned all online support. This work enabled teachers to identify concepts retained and those that needed to be re-taught with modifications across each grade. A vertical look permitted teachers to support each other across the grades to make these adjustments. As a result, there was a 6% increase in math of students meeting or exceeding grade level. Additionally, the publishers of the *Everyday Math* program have used recommendations and findings from this school’s math meetings to inform the alignment of their program for New York City.
- Teacher teams inform curricular adjustments. For example, kindergarten teachers noticed that students struggled with letter formation and sound/symbol relationships and as a result Foundations was recommended and adopted for all kindergarten classes.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

School leaders communicate high expectations to the entire staff and have a system of accountability in place for those expectations aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. However, school leaders and staff do not yet successfully partner with families so that they understand how to support their children's progress toward college and career.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has a partnership with Teachers' College where teachers attend professional development sessions. In addition, the school also provides job-embedded training with a Teachers' College staff developer working with teachers on-site. Teachers are held accountable to this professional development through meetings with school leadership. School leaders have developed tiered professional development to differentiate learning. New teachers are in a separate cohort that allows them to ask basic questions as well as give them more exposure to foundational information such as setting up various classroom routines. A cohort of more experienced teachers focuses on strategies for conferencing with students in order to tailor instruction.
- In addition to feedback to teachers using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, school leaders meet regularly with teachers both individually and as teams to discuss goals and progress. School leaders communicate with teachers via email to follow up on work as evidenced by an open email from the principal to the Teacher's College staff developer and the grade 1 and grade 2 teachers that stated, "We are excited that grades 1 and 2 will be working on small group work as this will allow for a nice discussion during our vertical planning."
- Parents spoke about the high expectations for students at the school citing the recent addition of a computer-coding class. They also spoke about the upcoming January curriculum night as a time when they could learn more about the school's curriculum. They spoke about the parent newsletters that they receive about the upcoming units of study. One parent shared that he knows that *Everyday Math* has an online support for parents, but did not state how he used it. While parents understood the intent of the Common Core shifts such as multiple representations in math and non-fiction writing, they could not articulate ways in which they partner with the school to ensure student progress towards these expectations. When asked about other ways in which students are prepared for college readiness parents stated that the students knew how to collaborate.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, aligned with the school's curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. The school uses common assessments to track progress toward goals across grades and subjects, and to adjust curricular and instructional decisions.

Impact

Assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement so that all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, demonstrate increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses common assessments such as Measure of Student Learning (MOSL) Teachers' College Writing and Reading Project (TCWRP) pre- and post- assessments. Reading levels are formally assessed a minimum of four times per year and are the basis of instructional adjustments during the school year. *Everyday Math* unit assessments as well as beginning, middle, and end-of-year math assessments generate math data that is uploaded onto the *Everyday Math* online system, which organizes information based on mastery of CCLS. Additionally, all grade levels utilize a word study program, which assesses student spelling levels. A clear portrait of student mastery is captured through the performance-based assessment in the case of TCWRP and through *Everyday Math* unit assessments such as the grade 3, unit 4 assessment which measures more than 20 skills for demonstrating knowledge of decimals. These assessments are used to develop student goals which are tracked by both teachers and students.
- While school's TCRWP data tells faculty that almost 80% of the students are meeting or exceeding reading benchmarks, teachers noticed that they could increase mastery if they supported students' retelling skills. The school goal is to have 82% of the students meeting or exceeding reading benchmarks. To this end, teachers have created retelling rubrics for all grades as part of the school running records. This is meant to ensure that students have comprehension of the text. The principal stated, "If the student hits all the components on retelling then you don't have to wonder about the comprehension questions. We created these rubrics on all grades to ensure consistency across the grades."
- A look at the pre-assessment data for narrative fiction informed the teachers that a grade 3 unit did not include lessons on character traits and summary although they were touched upon in grade 2. As a result, the school decided to add lessons on traits, feelings and summary to the read aloud portion of their instruction in order to model this skill. Charts were also added to provide support. Additionally, the new *Everyday Math* problem called Open Response, allows students to try a problem and take an assessment on day 1, teachers analyze student work and on day 2 students are in strategic groups based on the previous day's data review.

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Rigorous habits and higher order thinking are emphasized in curricula and tasks and embedded in a coherent manner across grades and subjects. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

All learners have access to and are cognitively engaged in curricula and tasks and are able to demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's choice, Teachers' College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP), builds on students' previous knowledge from subsequent years as students begin learning "good leads" in kindergarten and grow this skill each year to eventually become good introductions that grab the readers' attention and introduce a topic. Students work at their independent levels and tailored goals based on assessments. A review of teacher lessons demonstrated that all students, including specific groups, have independent goals and small group time is used to ensure that student work on goals is generated from conferencing and other assessments.
- A grade 5 social studies unit on Westward expansion displayed modifications based on student data as follows, "Debate partnerships are based on skill level to provide evenness in argument." Based on pre-lesson homework in which students had to list reasons and evidence using a T chart, students who had difficulty with organization were given a graphic organizer and those with demonstrated difficulty with complex, non-fiction texts were given glossaries. This unit was also fortified by the addition of multiple short non-fiction texts to provide students with multiple points of view needed for an argumentative essay.
- A review of the grade 1 science unit shows a blending of a TCRWP teaching point "Scientist design further experiments, based on lingering questions" and *Foss Investigation 1*. This non-fiction unit on Mealworms uses close reading strategies and text features, and academic vocabulary to launch a science investigation that is Common Core aligned.
- A grade 1 two-day *Everyday Math* lesson on Open Response includes a lesson designed by teachers using an interactive white board to support mental math and the shift of mathematical fluency by practicing a form of mental math where students have to visually identify number patterns without counting it similar to looking at a domino and recognizing the number by looking at the dots. Another lesson in this series spirals back and to have students reinforce math fluency by practicing numbers by 10 with the following math problem, "Find 10 more than 70, find 10 less than 70." Open response and mathematical fluency are embedded across all grades. Teachers meet to design interactive white board mini-lessons to address those needs identified in conferencing.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching strategies strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports and extensions into the curricula.

Impact

Tailored instruction is embedded across all classrooms so that all students are engaged in challenging tasks and can demonstrate high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership in discussions and student work.

Supporting Evidence

- All lessons begin with a mini lesson on an interactive white board to support visual learners, provide clear modeling for students and support kinesthetic learners who can come up to the board to manipulate information. For example, in a lesson on arrays students were able to see arrays as 5 rows of 4 chairs to arrive at 20 chairs. The white boards let students see the addition of another row and how the array changed. Using the white board for an interactive mini lesson is a school expectation and teachers were given additional planning time to be able to include this scaffold into their lessons. Additionally, many of the classes have a Phonak DigiMaster sound field unit that amplifies the teacher's voice so that no matter where the teacher is standing the teacher's voice can be clearly heard. This is based on school research that students will be more engaged if they can follow along clearly with teacher direction.
- In a grade 1 math lesson, students were engaged in a lesson where they had to deduct "the rule" in a math problem as follows: $5 + _ = 10$, $10 + _ = 15$. A student came up to the interactive white board and counted from 5 to 10. He then wrote the math sentence $5 + 5 = 10$, he then counted from 10 to 15, completed the math sentence and stated that the rule was 5. The teacher asked the student to think about what math strategy helped. The student replied, "It is like counting by 5's" The teacher changed the images on the white board and informed the students that the rule now is "plus 3" and gave the students the number 6 to start. One student shared that the answer was 9. When asked how he arrived at the answer the student said, "I knew that I started with 6 so I counted up by 3 because you said that was the rule and I got 9."
- In a kindergarten reading workshop lesson, the teacher was modeling, "How readers change their voices to show they understand their books." The teacher was modeling intonation during a shared reading lesson using a book, *Super Mouse*, by having students compare a flat reading with one that modulated the tone. Students then returned to their seats to practice on a self-selected book. At this time, the teacher conferred with a small group and her conferencing notes showed that she was working on the particular need for specific students. One student was receiving small group instruction on retelling, another in looking for sight words, and another student was working on predictions.
- In a grade 5 share out during a debate regarding the transcontinental railroad, students reflected on how their opponents had gone past the use of primary documents to additional information known from other areas. The teacher praised this use of transferring the information known from previous units and bringing it to bear on the debate.