



# **Quality Review Report**

## **2015-2016**

**P.S. 002 Alfred Zimberg**

**Elementary School Q002**

**75-10 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11370**

**Principal: Amy Goldman**

**Date of review: November 13, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Luz T. Cortazzo**

## The School Context

P.S. 002 Alfred Zimberg is an elementary school with 592 students from grade kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 20% Asian, 2% Black, 37% Hispanic, and 40% White students. The student body includes 16% English Language Learners and 14% 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 94.0%.

## 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>Celebration</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>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</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>Additional Findings</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

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

The school's choice of curricula is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data so that the needs of diverse student population are met.

### Impact

School leaders and faculty make purposeful decisions to ensure that curricula are Common Core aligned, thus promoting college and career readiness for all learners. The school's curricular adjustments, and embedded tasks that are cognitively engaging, meet all students' needs.

### Supporting Evidence

- The Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts are at the forefront of all the school's planning. In order to implement the instructional shifts in English language arts the school implemented the following modifications: 50%-60% informational/non-fictional texts were incorporated on the lower grades and 70% on the higher grades. Thematic units for Social Studies and Science were reviewed and assessed so that the questions would meet the rigor of the new Common Core with complex text and academic language.
- Based on teacher team inquiry and analysis of student work, teachers noticed that students had difficulty answering the intention of a question. Teachers created acronyms for students' responses that facilitate greater cohesiveness between the question and their responses. The lower grade teachers instituted (RAP) Restate, Answer, Prove; upper grade students are taught to (RACE) Restate, Answer, Cite, and Explain. Specifically, teachers in grade 5 are working on having students turn questions into thesis statements, while self-contained special education teachers have created questioning key rings for each student in order generate questioning amongst the Students with Disabilities (SWDs) as evidenced during the classroom visits.
- Staff aligned all pre-existing curricula to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and infused different programs and resources to meet the needs of the diverse student population. Resources, which serve as starting points for the work, includes the work of Lily Wong-Fillmore that helps build higher level thinking with a focus on academic language. In all classroom visits, the academic language work included strategies that look at ways to decipher the "3 Ls", language learning and literacy. The school's informal findings is showing that the academic language work is benefitting the lowest and highest achieving students to navigate complex text. For example, in a first grade English as a Second language class, students learned how animals use adaptation for survival. Students had access to the curriculum, as their teacher amplify their instruction, versus simplifying it. Students experienced success as they recall information from experiences, gather information from provided resources to answer the question: "How wild animals survive by identifying the characteristics of camouflage".

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

There is a universal philosophy throughout the school based on how students learn best that is aligned to the Danielson's Framework, however, the use of strategic extensions that foster higher order thinking varies across classrooms.

### Impact

School wide practices, including questioning and discussions techniques, turn and talks, scaffolds, and student-to-student interactions are evident across grades and classes. However; student work products are beginning to reflect high levels of student thinking and involvement.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school incorporates higher order thinking questions that provoke deeper classroom discussions (3B), and promote student questioning in all content areas. Based on data from New York State exams, as well as informal assessments, the staff saw a need for students to think more critically and answer higher order questions with greater accuracy. The school's instructional focus was set to meet this need, by aligning it to the highly effective column of the Danielson Framework (3b). Teachers have been sharing best practices that have students formulating questions and initiating topics of discussion. Some teaching strategies that align to this are charts defining the difference between literal and inference questions, individual question stems for each student, and strong visuals that guide students in answering high order questions. Teachers stop throughout the lesson and give students the opportunity to interject questions and/or engage in student driven conversations.
- The school has implemented a culture of data driven instruction whereby teachers conduct regular formative assessments that are analyzed and used to drive instruction. This data allows teachers to meet the needs of all students including English Language learners (ELLs) and Students with Disabilities (SWDs). Formative assessments observed during classroom visits included turn and talks with teacher observation checklists, questioning, clickers, slate boards, and self-assessment cards.
- Teachers plan lessons and use scaffolds to provide multiple entry points into instruction in response to students' needs, so that all students are engaged and have access into lessons. Through more pivotal type questions teachers bring out the content so that all students including English Language Learners (ELLs) and Students with Disabilities (SWDs), have an entry into the higher order thinking. Charts and tangible students' manipulatives also provide students with support in this area. However, lessons do not always challenge all students, particularly high performers, to their full potential in that assignments do not always include opportunities for them to demonstrate higher order thinking skills by having students formulate their own questions or initiate topics of discussion, thus limiting even greater learning outcomes.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

Teachers administer formative and summative assessments that are aligned to the CCLS and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. Teachers consistently engage in ongoing checks for understanding and consistently make instructional decisions that meet the needs of all students.

### Impact

Teachers use ongoing checks for understanding, deliver actionable feedback, and make effective adjustments to curricula and instruction so that students are aware of their next learning steps.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are increasing student performance based on instructional practices that focus on results of formative assessments that drive instruction. For example, in a second grade social studies classroom, the students analyzed text by comparing and contrasting urban and suburban communities. The teacher had the students use hand-held devices to respond to a question regarding a characters perspective. Similarly, in a grade 3 social studies class, students utilized slate- boards, and clickers to respond to the focus question “How are Cultures alike and different?” Across all classrooms, teachers check for understanding by using questions, turn and talks, slate-boards, rubrics and observations during the active engagement and independent portions of the lesson.
- In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) English Language arts class, students engaged in an activity to determine author’s purpose. Students were asked to choose if the author’s purpose is to entertain, inform, and/or persuade. Students held their mini “A-D’ response flip cards for teachers to take a pulse of the class and record their observations on running records sheets. Teachers used data collected during the active engagement piece to determine students’ flexible grouping and support individual learning through differentiated activities.
- In a self-contained 4/5 class, the teacher used Universal Design for Learning (UDL) a multi-modality approach to allow all students access into the lesson. Some of the strategies used included: Promethean interactive hand-held devises, manipulatives, leveled texts and graphic organizers. Additionally, the teacher was able to target instruction to meet the needs of all the students by providing the students with self-assessment tools such as color-coded cards that they show the teacher to express their level of understanding.
- Teachers monitoring of student understanding during lessons was visible and continuous. In every lesson, teachers were observed taking the pulse of the class and making frequent use of strategies to elicit information about individual student understanding. Furthermore, during the student meeting students articulated that they are given many opportunities to self-assess and work as partners with their teachers to implement new strategies to accomplish their next steps. When asked about a specific next step comment on a writing piece, a student stated, “My next step is to include more sensory details to describe the setting and characters in a story”. As a result, according to teacher’s checklists, there has been a 70% increase in student writing.

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

School leaders and staff partner with families in communicating expectations connected to a path of college readiness. Teacher teams have a clear culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of expectations for all students.

### Impact

Structures that support high expectations, assure a culture of mutual accountability among staff members. As a result of team members' critical interventions and on-going provision of feedback and advisement, students have ownership of their own learning and are prepared for the next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- In the parent meeting, every parent was able to speak about the ongoing feedback to families in the form of newsletters that outline curricula and assessments. Interim progress reports outline student progress and next steps for parents to support their children. Parent workshops aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, and Family Fun Night, brings all the stakeholders together to learn and share together around the explicit needs of students, are further evidence of the school's exemplary connections with families. Furthermore, parents stated that through email and open communication that involves the administration, teachers, students, and families, they are able to work with teachers to support their children at home.
- Teachers received the Teachers Handbook at the first staff conference, highlighting the school's instructional goals for the year, based on Advance data from last year which concentrated mostly on Danielson's Component (3b) as a vehicle to component (3c). The school continued this concentration by making this the focus of their first Professional Learning Cycle. Subsequently professional development sessions support this cycle by exploring strategies, charts, and manipulatives that help teachers implement strategies with regard to the school's instructional focus. A review of the school's professional development calendar indicates that the teachers are currently engaging in Professional Learning Cycle II, which focuses on developing strategies to increase student engagement (3c). Intervisitations and buddy teachers are assigned to help teachers grow in areas of Danielson specific to them. Teachers are made aware of these areas during post observation feedback sessions that include actionable feedback and next steps both verbally and in writing.
- Staff is held accountable by having administrators conduct formal and informal observations that are followed up with timely and specific feedback. This feedback is based on evidence aligned to the Danielson rubric in order to identify their professional strengths and weaknesses. On a more regular basis, daily walkthroughs into classrooms are conducted whereby administrators give teachers a verbal "Glow" or "Grow."
- Administrators ensure that teachers provide ongoing feedback to students regarding their progress by conducting formal and informal observations that check the implementation of Danielson's components, especially (3d). Some evidence includes: use of rubrics, turn and talks, checklists, conference notes, questions and discussions, unit assessment, performance tasks, and written feedback to students noticed on students work as "glows", and "grows" or next steps.

<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

Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have a voice in school-wide policies that affect student learning across the school. Additionally, shared leadership has yielded a culture where teachers feel their opinions are valued, thus empowering them.

### Impact

A focus on strengthening teacher's instructional capacity, shared responsibilities, and shared leadership, is resulting in school-wide instructional coherence and increased student achievement and progress.

### Supporting Evidence

- During the teacher team meetings, teachers explained that they promote the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts by following the inquiry model based on student work analysis. In order to guide their work through the inquiry process the school utilizes a template that was collaboratively designed based on input from the entire teacher staff. As the inquiry work progresses, the administration meets with each teacher team and ensures their conversations are around Common Core alignment and complexity, as evidenced by a review of Teacher team documents.
- Teacher Team collaborations support school goals in that the teams strategize best practices to help students achieve. Included in this are effective practices such as formative assessments (Danielson 3d) so that teachers can perform checks for understanding during a lesson or unit in order to guide instruction. They have also incorporated checklists and rubrics into their inquiry work that allows students to self-assess. Teachers stated that their capacity is being strengthened and there is school-wide instructional coherence as evidenced by the data obtained from Advance which shows growth from the beginning of 2014-2015 school year, and students are showing growth on benchmark and periodic assessments as the year progresses.
- Teacher teams established clear next steps based on patterns observed in assessments and student work samples and set individualized student plans based on need. For example, during a fifth grade meeting, the presenter described the task, the strategy, targeted CCLS, desired outcome and current student performance for four students. Teachers referenced their analysis of the October assessment results, whereby they noticed a common thread for a group of students by looking at the item skills analysis delineating students needed additional support in quoting accurately from the text, when drawing inferences from a text. The team agrees on a new strategy for this group of students to use boxes and bullets for organizational purposes. Teachers shared that they use formative and summative data to make decisions, supported by the administration about adjustments to curricular and unit plans. Teachers meet regularly to discuss classroom practices, assessment data, and work for students they are focused, resulting in shared improvements in teacher practice, and progress towards goals for groups of students. Students articulate their goals and can articulate why they are in a particular group as evidenced during classroom visits and the student meeting.