



# Quality Review Report

## 2015-2016

**P.S. 049 Willis Avenue**

**Elementary School X049**

**383 East 139 Street  
Bronx  
NY 10454**

**Principal: Frank Hernandez**

**Date of review: May 18, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Clarence Williams**

## The School Context

P.S. 049 Willis Avenue is an elementary school with 689 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 0% Asian, 29% Black, 68% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 16% English Language Learners and 22% students with disabilities. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 91.9%.

## 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>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Celebration</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>Proficient</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>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. Teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment

### Impact

Classroom teachers provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs and students are aware of their next learning steps

### Supporting Evidence

- Students use self-assessment rubrics to document their understanding. They compare their assessment to that of the teacher and their peer's assessment to improve their comprehension and to become aware of their next learning steps. For example, in a grade 2 math class, students created a bar graph listing their favorite foods. Evidence of self, peer and teacher assessments was displayed for all students in the classroom to review. They displayed a "How did I do" rubric on the bar graphs. One student wrote: "I did a good job at my bar graph and data table" the student's peer responded: "You did a good job but you need to do better on writing". The teacher stated: "I really like how you used the data table to make your bar graph, try to use a ruler when making your bars. Edit your writing" Students also provided a narrative of the steps that they took to complete the bar graph.
- In a second grade self-contained class, students received peer feedback on a math lesson on measurement. The rubric was comprised of thumbs up, thumbs side way and thumbs down. Student understanding was assessed by having students ask each other the following questions: "Did this student use a strategy to solve the problem? Did this student chose to add or subtract, explain why, and did this student check the answer using another strategy?" Students ended their assessment by addressing a prompt that asked them to share what they liked and what they thought their peer should do to improve. The teacher summarized the assessment by sharing with the class that she noticed that some of the students had trouble explaining the idea of distance. This same method of assessment was evident across the classrooms visited.
- All grades use various writing rubrics, which address informational and short response writing. The short response rubric uses: Restate the Question, Inference, Detail, and Detail (RIDD). This is evident school wide as all subject areas have a writing component. In a bilingual science class, students were required to use RIDD to provide a short response for a question that asked students to explain how the different parts of a plant help it survive. In a third grade class the rubric addressed the various components of the informational writing process. A student's work indicated that he had achieved mastery in three of the categories while he showed improvement in the fourth. The teacher's feedback stated "Great job, I love the details and definitions, next time try to include transition words."

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and content standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

### Impact

The purposeful decisions regarding curricula made by the school leaders result in coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students. A diversity of learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, has access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged, however there is little evidence of those tasks addressing the needs of high-achieving students.

### Supporting Evidence

- A writing unit for kindergarten demonstrates modifications provided for students with disabilities and English Language Learners. The essential question addressed in the unit focuses on making reading and writing easier. English Language Learners will be paired with writing partners that can model English but also someone with whom they feel comfortable. Beginning English Language Learners will be allowed to write in their native language to express their ideas for the instructors review. Teachers will work with students with disabilities using scaffolds such as, academic vocabulary with pictures to help develop language. Students with disabilities and English language Learners will use anchor charts, checklists and personal word walls. These modifications were evident, but as yet, extensions for higher achieving students were not in evidence across the vast majority of classes visited.
- Across all grades teachers integrate the instructional shifts, specifically fluency in math. Teachers stated that the fluency exercise prepares students for assessments, improves student stamina and provides teachers with data document the impact. The plans for “Math Fluency Fridays” show that grades K-5 are given fluency practice the first five minutes of the math class on Fridays.
- A pacing calendar for second grade includes the skill and strategy of the day, the standard, resources used, how it will be taught and the assessments used. An example for second grade targeted the concept of author’s purpose. The resources employed are the Teacher’s College Reading and Writing Workshop, and the Magnets Work program. The map also states that graphic organizers will be used and includes focus questions to be asked. Assessments will involve rubrics that allow for self-assessment, and peer assessments. This type of map ensures alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards, coherence and attention to the needs of the students based on data.

## Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
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### Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best. Teaching strategies strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports and extensions into the curricula.

### Impact

Teaching practices are informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts, as well as by discussions at the team and school levels. All learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- In a grade 4 social studies class, students were studying life of immigrants in the 1800s and 1900s. In small groups, students discussed the process immigrants' experienced when arriving on Ellis Island. During the discussion, students engaged each other using "glows and grows". One student stated: "I like the way you gave details from the text, next time give more details and include more facts." Students also stated how the topic related to their personal lives. In another small group a student stated: "I can relate to this topic because my mother was not born here and it was different coming here." Another example was observed in a grade 5 social studies class. Students were working in small groups discussing what influences shape nations. Teachers used varied levels of questions based on the *Depth of Knowledge* protocol. Questions were used to push thinking and have students engage in discussions.
- All classes visited were student-centered. In a second grade self-contained class, the teacher utilized a workshop model that required modeling the lesson for students. The objective was "I can determine if I need to add or subtract to solve measurement word problems with the same unit." Students used exit slips that demonstrated student work with a peer-assessment stating whether or not they agree or disagree with their peer. Students also shared their work during whole group. Scaffolds included base ten manipulatives, an anchor chart with visuals for measurement, and graphic organizers.
- There is careful attention to ensuring that all students engage in appropriately challenging tasks. In a grade 2 social studies class, the objective was "I can describe a series of historical events." The teacher used a "Jigsaw" discussion strategy, a cooperative learning model that requires students to be inter-dependent of each other while working together to solve a problem. These groups were broken up into two major groups, an expert group and an educator group. The expert group discussed: "how did the creation of a Constitution change history?" The educator group then responded to the question in writing. It was clear that high levels of learning were taking place when one of the student's in the second group shared with the class, "The creation of the Constitution changed history because if we didn't have a Constitution we wouldn't have freedom, for example people have the right to travel." The student cited the Bill of Rights from the text to support his point.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff. Expectations are communicated to parents and ongoing feedback is provided, connected to a path to college and career readiness.

**Impact**

School leaders provide training and have a system of accountability for high expectations and offer ongoing feedback to help families understand student progress toward those expectations.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The Principal sends out a weekly newsletter to staff, which includes an instructional focus that lists expectations for classroom teachers. A January 2016 Newsletter stated the following: “continue to look at evidence of effective planning and preparation, evidence of the workshop model.” Further impact of established expectations is seen in the classrooms that utilize the workshop model and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. A May 2016 newsletter stated: “Everyone will be held accountable for addressing these expectations and are expected to seek the support necessary to grow and develop professionally.
- School leadership provided copies of a classroom observation form that is aligned to the *Danielson Framework for Teaching*. In the observation, under domain 3, which has a focus on questions and discussions, the principal’s comment for improvement stated, “While the teacher may use some low-level questions, she needs to pose questions designed to promote student thinking and understanding.” Other feedback included suggesting the use of debate as a means of an effective teaching practice for student engagement and learning. The Principal stated: “A debate is also a great activity to allow students to share the knowledge they have learned.”
- School leadership has provided a calendar of events leading up to college and career day. September events included building college community banners; while January held a college and awareness day, with a student council visit to Fordham University in March. The principal also provided a parent invitation for “Students Pathways to Success” in January. Parents were exposed to college preparedness and college resources.
- Across classrooms, teachers communicate college and career readiness to all students. Teachers require students to write essays on what college and career readiness really means. A grade 5 student, in a 12:1 self-contained class stated: “I want to learn more about college because I want to learn more about science so I can learn more about what scientists do.”

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have built leadership capacity.

**Impact**

Structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards including the instructional shifts, strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers. Teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The teachers of the math and science department provided an agenda for “Diving into Data.” The focus of the meeting was to target specific standards based on data from a simulated math exam that provided an item analysis. The standard centered on solving two-step word problems using the four operations. The team incorporated a KNOW chart: “What I know, what I need to know, the operation, why this operation and is this reasonable?” The team also provided work sheets such as “tips to help you do your best”, and resources such as *Motivation Math Workbooks* and *EngageNY* to be incorporated into the units and lesson plans.
- School leadership and teachers use professional learning inquiry groups. These groups meet monthly. Teachers select three workshops to attend. In an April workshop meeting, teachers chose from areas of instruction including: classroom management, *Depth of Knowledge* protocol use in literacy, differentiated instruction in writing and supporting English Language Learners in the content areas. At a team meeting, focused on literacy, writing and support for English Language Learners, the teachers planned to utilize practices they learned from their attendance at these workshops.
- Teachers participate in the School Leadership Team. Representatives from various departments including bilingual, special education, and technology are members and were elected by their peers or volunteered. The team is responsible for developing the comprehensive education plan, (CEP). They have supported a dual language initiative as well. The team provides monthly initiatives for students such as “Movies with the stars, and Ice cream with the stars.”
- The grade 4 math and science team shared that they discuss strengths and weaknesses of their students, adjust pacing calendars, discuss data, and examine student work during their meetings. The team developed a protocol for examining student work. The worksheet consisted of next steps for the teacher and students, a reflection and a debriefing. The group’s main goal is to move a group of students that they share towards proficiency. They have implemented various steps to reach this goal. The team increased the amount of word problems in lessons to build on literacy skills; used graphic organizers to help explain concepts; and developed incentives to foster students to attend Saturday school. They shared that they are optimistic that the math scores for their lower performing students will improve as a result of these initiatives.