NYC **Department of Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 169 Sunset Park

Elementary 15K169

4305 7th Ave.
Brooklyn
NY 11232

Principal: Eujin Tang

Dates of Review:
May 9, 2017 - May 10, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Audrey Madison

The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Celebration** to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Focus** to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as **Additional Finding**. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

P.S. 169 Sunset Park serves students in grade K through grade 5. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

Instructional Core		
To what extent does the school...	**Area**	**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 Finding**	**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 Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
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	**Area of Focus**	**Proficient**

School Quality Ratings continued

School Culture

To what extent does the school...	Area	Rating
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults	**Additional Finding**	**Well Developed**
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	**Area of Celebration**	**Well Developed**

Systems for Improvement

To what extent does the school...	Area	Rating
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products	**Additional Finding**	**Well Developed**
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	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection	**Additional Finding**	**Well Developed**
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
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	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and faculty share responsibility to meet high expectations for instruction, offering extensive professional learning and varied support for all staff. School leaders and staff effectively communicate and partner with families to support their children's progress connected to a path of college and career readiness.

Impact

As a result of extensive communication, collaboration, training and parent partnerships present throughout the school, a culture of mutual accountability has been established.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders determined the need to provide support to enhance teacher planning and implementation of lessons to better meet the needs of diverse learners. Teachers expressed the need to grow their capacity to provide multiple access points into lessons, with particular attention to English Language Learners, (ELLs) comprising 48 percent of the student population. As a result, two schoolwide goals, aligned to Danielson *Framework for Teaching* components 1e: Designing Coherent Instruction and 3c: Engaging Students in Learning, were developed to support the shared expectations for teacher growth. School documents reflect wide-ranging professional development (PD) and consultant partnerships to address the needs of teachers within the three different language programs for ELLs. Ongoing learning opportunities are facilitated by literacy and math coaches, consultants, content cohort leaders, school leaders, and colleagues. Additionally, across the school, the faculty is involved in collaborative action research, including collegial intervisitations in grade level cohorts, to develop pedagogy in support of their mutually determined instructional focus.

- Schoolwide PD in *Responsive Classroom* has been provided to meet another school expectation in support for students' social-emotional learning. Teachers and educational assistants attended either a Saturday or a summer session for an introductory overview. Several teachers attended a four-day summer training session, and committed to facilitate ongoing professional development for colleagues throughout the school year. Teachers utilize the professional resource, *The Morning Meeting Book,* collectively and independently. As a result, schoolwide Morning Meeting has been incorporated daily so that students build community, develop social skills, practice and apply academics, and enjoy learning. Educational assistants and school aides have also received training to apply *Responsive Classroom* techniques to their interactions with students.

- School leaders make extensive efforts toward communicating with families in three languages. During an observed Dual Language Parent Orientation session, all information was conveyed in Chinese, Spanish, and English, verbally with the use of interpreters and headsets, and visually through PowerPoint presentations, with opportunities for questions afterwards. Interviewed parents emphasize the help and guidance of the Parent Support Team, which consists of two parent coordinators and a community associate. All written communication, including progress reports, is authentically translated and translators are present at parent teacher conferences. Attendance at family workshops, including grade-specific literacy and math workshops and the *Responsive Classroom* workshop, has increased from 476 to 748 to date. Parent members of the School Leadership Team and Parent Teachers Association convey they have collaborative involvement in the development of school goals and have input in key decisions such as expanding the afterschool programs from four to eight months, and offering programs to all students beyond those targeted academically, including the Saturday Academy for ELLs.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	**2.2 Assessment**	**Rating:**	**Proficient**

Findings

Teachers use or create assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school's curricula as well as consistently check for student understanding and provide students with self- and peer-assessment opportunities.

Impact

Actionable feedback is provided to students and teachers regarding student achievement and teachers make effective adjustments to meet student learning needs. Still, feedback and adjustments are not consistently purposeful.

Supporting Evidence

- Writing tasks in English Language Arts (ELA), science and social studies are consistently assessed using rubrics aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. Rubrics are attached to student work, with criteria highlighted or circled within the rubrics to indicate student performance levels on each rubric component. Teachers offer additional comments that articulate strengths and needs, some in the format of glows and grows. Highlighted criteria of an opinion/ argument rubric informs a third-grade student that she stated an opinion but demonstrated limited understanding of the topic. Teacher comments direct the student to write an introduction that has some vocabulary in it. Feedback for a subsequent writing piece indicates improvements of strong vocabulary and examples used to support her opinion. However, feedback is not consistently meaningful to help students express their next steps or advance their work. In some instances, attached grows did not offer clear comments to students. For example, comments such as, begin to work on past/ present verb tense, singular vs. plural nouns, run-on vs. complete sentences reflect information to guide teacher instruction rather than student next steps. In some examined student work, the exact same rubric criteria are highlighted over several writing pieces reflecting minimal growth over time. Some students performing above grade level did not receive additional feedback to move them to higher grade level expectations.

- Examples of the use of peer assessment were apparent in posted student comments for a first-grade animal unit and group math charts for a third-grade Context for Learning unit. An "Explaining Our Mathematical Thinking Peer Feedback Rubric" was utilized after math talk in a fifth-grade class. Students rate their partner's use of precise math language, explanations of their solutions and offer feedback that includes one star compliment and one step to improve. In another fifth-grade class, peer feedback was offered using a praise- question- suggest protocol to improve student infographic reports.

- Teachers employ a range of checks for understanding across classrooms to make instructional adjustments. In some cases, teachers circled the room listening to what students are saying, in other cases teachers met students in groups or conferred with individuals, and posed questions to adjust for student learning. However, missed opportunities for purposeful adjustments were apparent. During a third-grade math lesson, the teacher noticed a common misconception among students regarding the number of heads equaling the number of animals, which interfered with problem solving. The teacher paused partner work, posed targeted questions to guide the group toward understanding, then promoted continued productive struggle in partnerships. In a fourth- grade math lesson, although the teacher checked in with groups and made adjustments to meet individual student needs, the common misuse of the 8-foot-high walls for the first two parts of solving a problem were not addressed, resulting in incorrect solutions when applying knowledge of area and perimeter. In some instances, teacher notes for recording their assessments of understanding were not fully aligned to learning targets.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and faculty strategically integrate the instructional shifts and ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, while emphasizing higher-order skills coherently across grades and subjects.

Impact

There is coherence in curricula so that all learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, demonstrate their thinking in tasks that prioritize reading and writing across genres and deep conceptual understanding of mathematics to promote college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have established the use of *Core Knowledge Language Arts* (CKLA) in kindergarten through second grade and *Expeditionary Learning* (EL) in grades three through five, stating that these Common Core-aligned content-rich literacy curricula consistently provide students with opportunities to engage with complex texts. Based on a data review of State English Language Arts exams, teachers noticed that students were not performing well on written response questions and noted that neither curriculum includes extensive writing instruction. As a result, across all grades, with the support of literacy coaches, teachers added comprehensive writing instruction to both literacy curricula to extend students capacity to write across genres, and use textual evidence in discussion and writing.

- Across grades one through five, school leaders have strategically replaced one *GO Math!* unit with a Contexts for Learning unit of study to provide additional opportunities for students to deeply understand mathematical concepts, identify solutions, and make their thinking visible. With support from Metamorphosis staff developers, these Contexts for Learning units have enhanced mathematical practices across classrooms, encouraging more teacher facilitation and increased productive struggle for students in the *GO Math!* units. Coaches and math teams have made additional modifications to curriculum revising tasks that emphasize deep conceptual understanding, flexible use of core math concepts, rather than rote memorization of procedures.

- Planning documents reveal evidence of rigorous habits and higher-order skills. The reading and analyzing nonfiction (RAN) strategy is used across grades and content areas with all student populations, including ELLs and students with disabilities. Students are required to brainstorm what they think they know about a variety of topics, read to confirm and disprove prior knowledge, read to find new learning, information, and facts, and pose questions they wonder about. Literacy unit plans show integration with New York State Scope and Sequence for Social studies and expectations for Common Core writing. A kindergarten unit plan for neighborhood study indicates a culminating unit task to write an opinion piece and respond to the opinions of classmates through a class blog. A fourth-grade unit plan on Historic Richmond Town indicates that all students will write an informational essay that describes the life of a student in colonial times. Within an immigration unit, second-grade students read and explore primary source documents, conduct interviews, write narratives and informative/explanatory texts. Math lesson plans show that students are consistently asked to apply the Standards for Mathematical Practice, specifically to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them. Students in a fifth-grade bilingual class must compare, contrast and convert customary measures of mixed juice and explain their reasoning. Fourth-grade students in an integrated co-teaching class use knowledge of area and perimeter to design bedrooms with borders, and evaluate reasoning involving carpeting and paint.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

Teachers consistently apply a range of strategies and scaffolds in English and/or native language to offer multiple entry points into the curricula and engage students in productive struggle through questioning and discussion.

Impact

All learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities are engaged in appropriately challenging task and peer discussions and produce work products that reflect high levels of thinking and involvement.

Supporting Evidence

- Scaffolds in English and/or native language were evident across classrooms. In dual language kindergarten classrooms, teachers of English, Chinese and Spanish speak with animated expression, use visuals as well as choral and individual repetition to support acquisition in both languages. Labeled anchor charts, photographs, and bulletin boards are conveyed in both languages, consistently color coded in blue for English and red for the native language. Individual student drawings are displayed on concept charts, to reflect developing ideas and language for concepts such as stores, transportation, and animals within units of study. In a fifth-grade transitional bilingual class, math word problems were presented to some students solely in English and presented in English and Chinese for those that needed language support. Second-grade students responded in Spanish orally and in writing, in a transitional bilingual class. In classes for English as a New Language, teachers communicated to newcomers in native languages, and same language students were grouped together for work. Teacher assistants facilitated groups across grades, providing support in native language as needed.

- Across classrooms further evidence of multiple entry points for all learners was evident. Math toolkits were available for students to choose to utilize multiplication tables, customary measurement charts, place value charts, graph paper, a problem solving graphic organizer, markers. Students in a third-grade class used wipe boards, to demonstrate their problem-solving strategies and accessed their choice of tools including equivalent fraction strips. RAN charts capture evidence of student input regarding their prior knowledge, confirmed knowledge and misconceptions, new learning and wonderings. In a fourth-grade class, the teacher facilitated a group of students with disabilities who are approaching grade level, to use fraction strips to add mixed numbers at one station. On-level students worked at another station to draw and use models to change improper fractions to mixed numbers. In an integrated co-teaching class, three second-grade students accessed an online reading application to explore character traits in fairy tales. Teachers and educational assistants facilitated groups in other stations to write a fairy tale using a "Somebody- But- So- Then" strategy, or find the lesson or moral of a story.

- Opportunities for student-to-student discussion were apparent across classrooms. In an ICT class, fifth-grade student groups at one station collaborated to solve a Context for Learning task, using a problem solving graphic organizer to question each other and discuss what the problem asked them to find, what information they knew from the problem, their strategies and solutions. At another station, group members took turns to present drafts of their infographics about biodiversity in the rainforest and offer feedback based on criteria developed as a class. Presenters asked clarifying questions about the peer feedback received. Third-grade general education students discussed multiple strategies and explained their solutions by drawing pictures, number lines and fraction strips to model their mathematics.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and cohort peers support the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with effective feedback and next steps from the strategic use of the observation process and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to promote the instructional focus.

Impact

Feedback to teachers articulates clear expectations for teacher practice, supports teacher development, and aligns to professional goals for teachers, thus elevating schoolwide instructional practices.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders strategically conduct the observation process through the lens of their instructional focus on productive struggle, with expectations that teachers plan instructional supports that provide access for their learners and implement lessons to engage students in cognitively challenging learning activities. To ensure reliability of ratings across all administrators, school leaders tactically collaborate to norm their findings and agree on a cohesive way to give teachers feedback that is effective. Analysis of teacher performance, for individuals and across groups such as new teachers and teachers of the different instructional programs for ELLs, is used to determine needs for professional development and measure effectiveness of training provided. Cohort teams engage in intervisitation within their collaborative action research projects and provide peer to peer support. In one example, post-intervisitation feedback among a second-grade cohort focused on realistic time frames for student conversations, insights that students with annotated text had more to say, and determined a next step to create and use discussion cards across the cohort. Progress monitoring toward the instructional focus shows that the percentage of teachers rated effective and highly effective has increased in 3c: student engagement from 64 percent to 76 percent, and in 1e: designing coherent instruction from 67 percent to 85 percent.

- School leaders held initial planning conferences with teachers to set professional goals, aligned to components of Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional focus. A non-tenured teacher set goals to improve capacity to provide additional tools to differentiate instruction and improve small group instruction, in alignment with 1e and 3c. Feedback in one observation report indicates both components were rated developing, with rationales that include specific examples and references to student work. Next steps referred to previous observation feedback stressing the need to utilize a template for lesson planning, reminding of access to previously provided effective samples. The observer offered further support to plan together and stated suggestions to differentiate the lesson. A subsequent observation report, reveals an improved rating for both 1e and 3c to effective, with feedback indicating multiple references to coherent planning that aligned learning activities with the instructional outcomes, including differentiating for ELLs, thus increasing engagement.

- Meaningful feedback to facilitate teacher growth across performance levels is evident in classroom observation forms. An observation report for a teacher who has grown from developing to effective practices reflects that the teacher has incorporated feedback from previous observations, such as applied new learning from professional development involving questioning formulation techniques into her lesson. Additional evaluator notes further state the significant progress made in achieving goals of the improvement plan and offers next steps with examples to help students build on each other's ideas. Comments for a teacher with highly effective practices, reflects that next steps are to plan methods to turnkey the exceptional planning and classroom management skills to colleagues.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

Teachers are engaged in collaborative action research in grade level cohorts and develop solutions for a problem of practice identified as common trends for their team. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Professional collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, strengthening the instructional practices of teachers. Teachers build leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders express they have focused their attention on building autonomous teacher teams across the school. All teachers meet in cohorts with colleagues from their grade during a weekly professional learning period. Twenty-two teachers facilitate teacher teams as cohort leaders. School documents articulate the structured inquiry process and expectations for cohorts to engage in collaborative action research and make instructional decisions that increase student learning. Cohort leaders guide their team to identify a problem of practice related to productive struggle, with alignment to math or literacy. For example, a second-grade cohort examined student writing, noting that students were not using text-based evidence when answering questions. Teachers then developed their action research question, "What's the thinking students need to do in order to write more organized well-supported informative pieces?" Teachers explicitly taught lessons on how to organize details and facts, highlight and annotate text, use evidence from text to support their claim, which resulted in the majority of students writing longer, more elaborated pieces. As a result of intervisitations, one fifth-grade cohort decided to use the Four-Corner problem-solving organizer and utilize rubrics for math discourse and peer-assessment to rate explanations of students' thinking. Teachers examined their sample data sets and determined the next steps to explicitly teach the expectations for math conversations. Through collaboration, teachers are strengthening their capacity to analyze student work and incorporate research based strategies into instruction. One teacher personally spoke of the shift in practice, "As part of the cohort team, I grew so much, as if a door opened."

- During an observed fifth-grade cohort meeting, teachers engaged in their second cycle of inquiry, focused on analysis of student work from a narrative pre-assessment. Teachers shared that their first cycle research question posed, "How can we promote students' ability to determine and elaborate on themes through writing using evidence from text?" Data comparing pre- and post-assessment results for 86 fifth-grade students reflect growth from 35 to 78 percent of students able to determine theme and use evidence from text to elaborate. Ten of those students are ELLs, with growth from 10 to 70 percent. Nine students with disabilities showed growth from 11 to 44 percent.

- School leaders have established opportunities for teacher leadership. Four classroom teachers applied and were hired as literacy and math coaches and meet weekly with the instructional cabinet to guide curricular and instructional adjustments. Each cohort leader is a literacy or math lead teacher and works in collaboration with the coaches to promote vertical coherence in reading, writing, and math instruction. For example, utilization of the reading and analyzing nonfiction strategy was initiated in second and third grade cohorts and expanded across grades and content areas through discussion and analysis among literacy-focused cohort leaders. As committee members, teachers have taken the lead in providing professional development to colleagues and conduct surveys to monitor the effectiveness of training.