

# Quality Review Report

## 2016-2017

**P.S. 091 Bronx**

**Elementary 10X091**

**2200 Aqueduct Ave.  
Bronx  
NY 10453**

**Principal: Meredith Struhl Nasjlett**

**Dates of Review:  
January 31, 2017 - February 1, 2017**

**Lead Reviewer: Marion Wilson**

# 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. 091 Bronx 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		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	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	<b>Additional Finding</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 Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	<b>Additional Finding</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 Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area	Rating
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults	Area of Celebration	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	Additional Finding	Well Developed

### Systems for Improvement

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	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	Proficient
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	Area of Focus	Developing

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The school's approach to culture building, discipline, and social emotional support is derived from their belief in educating the whole child. Structures are in place so that each child is well known by at least one adult who checks in with students on a regular basis.

### Impact

The clearly defined and implemented system for consequences and rewards has resulted in a safe and inclusive culture where student leaders are meaningfully involved in decision-making efforts. Having students improve their ability to self-regulate, work with others, and persevere through difficult tasks has led to fewer disciplinary incidents.

### Supporting Evidence

- All members of the school community made the decision to implement the *Responsive Classroom* program to support both teachers and students. During the large group student meeting, one student commented that although he misses going to the school store, he knows that he should follow all school rules and make good decisions because it will help him later in life. Students shared there has been a decrease in negative behaviors because they have teachers, guidance counselors, and other school staff who care about how they feel and help them to de-escalate negative behaviors. Teachers and students shared that the culture and tone of the building is more conducive to student learning and has improved relations between staff members. Incorporating monthly character education themes such as responsibility, respect, cooperation, kindness, honesty, patience, perseverance, and courage has resulted in minimizing recurring discipline issues.
- School staff ensures that teachers take time at the beginning of the school year to get to know their students on a personal basis and address their social-emotional learning skills. Teachers administer individual surveys to find out their students' likes and dislikes. Teachers have multiple opportunities to spend time with their students during interactions in their daily morning meetings and end of the day closing circles. Teachers shared that part of the practice at the school is to incorporate brain breaks throughout the day to allow students some down time to decompress and relax before returning to participate in rigorous learning activities. If students make poor choices, they are required to complete a behavior reflection form and write apologies for the infraction. As a result, there are less repeat offenders and a decrease in incidents including fights.
- School leaders and staff believe that character education should be explicitly taught to children while engaging students in a discussion around the book entitled, *The Little Book of Restorative Discipline for Schools: Teaching responsibility; creating caring climates*. A specific character trait is chosen each month and time is set aside to read the book aligned to the trait each Friday. A SAVE room teacher and an additional guidance counselor was hired to support the early childhood grades and address bridging the gap between students' academic and social needs. There are supports available in classrooms that include fidget toys, calming corners, velour objects, and other sensory and tactile resources to help students manage their behavioral outbursts. There are assembly programs on Fridays to acknowledge students who display the targeted character trait of the month, perfect attendance, and improved behavior. Student council members help to promote school pride and have many opportunities to meet regularly with school leaders to affect change across the school. Students shared that they want to act responsibly and self-monitor their own behavior because they want an opportunity to be a leader.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>5.1 Monitoring and Revising Systems</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and staff are developing a process to regularly monitor and adjust decisions affecting the instructional core. The school's instructional cabinet is working on creating a documented system to review policies in relation to their use of resources, effectiveness of teacher feedback, and quality of teacher teamwork.

### Impact

Although instructional cabinet meetings are held regularly, evaluation of teacher practices across all grades and subjects is inconsistent. While school leaders review data from observations, adjustments are not routinely made and there is uneven monitoring of the effectiveness of professional development trainings.

### Supporting Evidence

- The instructional cabinet consisting of both teachers and administrators meets on a regular basis. The agendas and minutes from these meetings reflect some discussion about curricula changes, pedagogical practices, and assessment results. While there is evidence to support these conversations are taking place in response to issues that arise, decisions made at the meetings are not monitored for their effectiveness. For example, one sample agenda revealed that team members discussed the revisions to curricula and identified standards that should be targeted. However, ongoing review to ensure that revisions teachers made were actually working was not in evidence. School staff shared that they are working on a template to develop greater coherence of policies between what is taught and how it is taught across all grades and subjects.
- School leaders are in the process of developing a system to memorialize important dates for check-ins with teacher teams to monitor the effectiveness of their work. The current system in place is for a member of the instructional cabinet to visit team meetings to support adherence to agenda items and progress toward school wide goals. However, these check-ins have not resulted in the progress necessary for all teams to function effectively. Similarly evaluation of professional development practices have not led to the necessary adjustments needed to support increased student mastery of the Common Core Learning Standards. School leaders shared that although they visit meetings, attend professional development meetings, and review the use of resources they are just developing a concrete system that will monitor and support the development of coherent policies and practices across all grades.
- There is a professional learning calendar and a recorded system for teacher observations. Although school leaders provide teachers the necessary resources including online subscriptions, site licenses, and outside consultants, they have not as yet developed a system to monitor the use of these resources to evaluate their effectiveness in promoting improved teaching practices. The school continues to reflect upon developing a spreadsheet tool so they can routinely track their efforts in relation to their desired outcomes and to increase the efficacy of teacher teams, allocation of resources, and the effectiveness of professional development supports.

## Additional Finding

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

Pacing calendars, lesson plans, and unit plans are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and learning tasks consistently provide opportunities for all students to have opportunities to utilize higher-order thinking skills.

### Impact

Curricula units promote college and career readiness for all students and support coherence across grades and subjects. Tasks afford all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, access to the curricula based on the Common Core Learning Standards.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have developed specific criteria for what it means to exit a grade for most subjects. Integration of the instructional shifts for both math and English Language Arts (ELA) is incorporated into plans and include connections with other content areas. Teachers utilize a common planning template, which helps build coherence across grades and subjects. These written documents include a section for the objective, lesson overview, standards to be addressed, questioning and discussion techniques, extension activities, and the various forms of assessments to be utilized throughout the lesson and the unit. This was evident in most plans using the school's adopted Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) program and other resource materials. In addition, teachers are able to access materials through learning progression charts to understand the expectations for the grade above and below. Plans require students to analyze, define, cite evidence, use CLOSE reading strategies, take notes, and make predictions and inferences.
- School staff design and plan units that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and students have multiple opportunities to work together cooperatively, discuss topics amongst themselves, and conduct research. Plans are based on the school's selected curricula and also incorporate additional resources to support the learning needs for all students. Students are able to interact with grade appropriate text and focus on key academic vocabulary. Plans revealed that students are given multiple opportunities to read both non-fiction and fiction texts. Math plans focus on conceptual understanding and mathematical fluency.
- Most curricula plans and academic tasks are inter-disciplinary and planned to help students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, think accurately and foster multiple means of expression, engagement, and representation of their work. Lesson plans are created with the intention to have students integrate skills and give students opportunities to solve real world problems across most subjects and grades. Tasks are planned to incorporate guided reading, independent reading, and the focus standards within each domain. Domains are aligned to non-fiction genres so students are exposed to rigorous content material. Student assignments regularly require them to produce written work products that demonstrate their understanding and their learning at high levels of cognitive demand. Supports and scaffolds contained in lesson plans include reading text aloud to students, providing tailored graphic organizers, use of varied manipulatives, referencing anchor charts, and providing sentence starters to aid students in completing tasks independently. Modifications also include giving students partially completed charts which help assist them with any writing and processing difficulties.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Across most classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the belief that students learn best when the whole child is educated. Students engage in learning tasks that provide multiple opportunities for students to make their thinking visible during instruction.

### Impact

Communicating learning expectations at the beginning of the lesson fosters engagement, provides for cross-curricular connections, and caters to the social and emotional needs of students. Across classes, students demonstrate high levels of thinking, and participation.

### Supporting Evidence

- Instructional practices, learning strategies, and outcomes are research-based and reflect the belief in educating the whole child. Teachers shared that administration consistently communicates expectations which encourages teachers to have more student generated questions and student led discussions which will help students take more ownership of their learning during class activities. In addition, the school also believes that technology should be used whenever possible to help students acquire 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning skills during classroom instruction. For example, in a science class, students used interactive whiteboards, laptops, and other tools in order for them to address the big question, "How does energy cause change?" Students investigated different forms of energy such as light, heat, and sound in order to analyze how these forms of energy could be transferred and transformed between one another. This investigation and discussion originated from the online research that students conducted the day before in the technology lab. During partner and group discussions, students had the necessary vocabulary prompts to support them in their conversations with peers as they discussed answers and provided evidence. Teachers also reminded students of different literacy strategies they could employ as they used various scientific texts and materials.
- Lessons and teaching documents provide the resources and tools to assist students in the learning process. Across grades and subjects students are engaged in thoughtfully timed and paced activities. In one math class visited, students were asked to read and solve word problems involving fractions using a number line. Students used discussion starters to help them talk through problems with their partners and were grouped based on their math ability and personality. Students shared that this grouping ensured that they are at ease with their partners and it help them feel confident about approaching a challenging task. Teachers encouraged and supported students throughout the lesson providing them with reminders regarding strategies they could use to solve word problems.
- Students are grouped according to achievement levels in order to build on their strengths. Students work with one another and refer to anchor charts or a previous lesson's notes to complete the task with minimal teacher direction. In one class, students were charged with reading about the adventures of Don Quixote and using the agreed upon strategy and checklist as they wrote a logical persuasive essay incorporating textual evidence. Before they wrote their essays, they were to engage in a group discussion considering whether Don Quixote's good intentions justified his resulting actions. During these group conversations most students pushed each other to go back to the text to provide evidence.



## Additional Finding

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

Assessments, quizzes, chapter tests, and checklists are aligned to the school's curricula. Common assessment tools are used to determine student progress towards goals across most grades and subject areas.

### Impact

Students and teachers receive actionable feedback on their progress and achievement in relation to the standards leading to improved student outcomes and teacher practice. The data from running records, math chapter tests, and standards-aligned reading tests result in teachers developing purposeful learning groups and making adjustments to lesson plans.

### Supporting Evidence

- The schoolwide assessment calendar indicates that teachers design common grade-wide performance tasks, revise rubrics, and create simulated examples for three cycles during the year. Teachers have spreadsheets to review individual students, whole groups, or targeted groups to determine progress towards goals. Results are then used to update and revise curricula plans and inform teaching strategies. Teachers reviewed learning outcomes and decided to incorporate additional resources from an online guided reading program with electronic books and quizzes to better support struggling readers. These supports provided students with a decoding strategy bookmark to use while reading. Similarly in math, after reviewing assessment data from different sources, teachers discovered that students needed more time to practice fluency drills while also being able to develop their conceptual understanding when solving math problems. For example, fifth grade teachers restructured lessons to spiral back and provide fluency drills to give students time to practice, which has helped students improve their understanding of place value when adding and subtracting decimals. As a result, a majority of fifth-grade students demonstrated improved performance on their latest math assessment.
- There are weekly, monthly, and periodic exams administered to provide teachers and school leaders ongoing data regarding student performance. Teachers regularly conference with students, write comments on their work, and provide actionable feedback to them on how they can improve their work to move to the next level. During a small group meeting, one student shared that while she was able to produce quality work, she didn't utilize the checklist and now makes sure she utilizes it before writing. She said that her writing has improved because her teacher keeps reminding her to use the rubric and address all criteria areas.
- Teachers review and analyze data from performance tasks and running records on a regular basis to obtain information on how students are progressing in relation to their learning needs relative to their individualized learning goals. A first-grade grouping matrix document revealed that most students had difficulty with understanding two dimensional shapes and subtraction. Teachers used this information to revise previously taught lesson plans to regroup students and then spiral back to the type of questions that presented the most difficulty for students. Information from writing baselines and midlines are used to refine learning activities and incorporate increased writing into their listening and learning activities. Templates for capturing notes and graphic organizers were created to support ELLs to ensure they included the important information from read-alouds into their writing pieces.



## Additional Finding

<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 teacher teams utilize a protocol to review student work and assessment data on a regular basis. Teachers have opportunities to share ideas and take on leadership roles throughout the school.

### Impact

Due to the work of inquiry teams purposeful learning groups have been developed across classrooms. Teachers have a voice in key decisions which affect student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- During an inquiry team meeting, teachers utilize a protocol to look at assessment data for targeted groups of students to analyze those practices that are effective. In addition they addressed what researched based strategies they were going to incorporate in their daily lessons. During the second grade teacher team meeting, teachers shared that their work has helped them to create personalized webs and graphic organizers to help students develop their opinion pieces. Teacher teams updated curricula and revised pacing calendars to spiral back to address those standards which students have not achieved proficiency. Inquiry work led teachers to adjust how they approached the daily writing block to ensure that the school's instructional focus was addressed.
- Teachers shared that during most meetings they find time to create, revise, and modify curricula. Analysis of multiple forms of data including student observations, math and reading performance tasks, writing samples, and results from running records provide the basis for their work. The fourth grade team looked at grade wide trends including strengths and weaknesses of targeted students on whom they were focused. Teachers noticed that most students were able to sequence key events, identify a character's feelings, and respond to literal questions. However, students still struggled with inferential questions, understanding figurative language, central theme and message, and author's point of view. Teachers updated curricula maps to incorporate additional inferential questions across subject areas and include more time for book clubs. As a result, teachers have strengthened their ability to teach close reading strategies, implement guided reading, and better activate students' prior knowledge before beginning a new text.
- Teachers feel that they have "voice." Former classroom teachers at the school now serve in leadership roles as coaches and cluster teachers to help support other teachers, select curricula, and promote positive teaching strategies. Instructional coaches organize staff retreats, make recommendations on the use of particular curricula resources, and participate in hiring decisions. During a teacher team meeting, teachers unanimously agreed that their recommendations for changes to the school's discipline policy were taken into consideration and implemented by the administrative team. Teachers suggested using the *Responsive Classroom* program to help promote more positive student behaviors. Continuous school improvement is taking place as a result of teachers actively taking part in developing programs and systems together with school leaders.