

# Quality Review Report

## 2018-2019

**P.S. 173 Fresh Meadows**

**Elementary 26Q173**

**174-10 67 Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11365**

**Principal: Molly Wang**

**Dates of Review:  
April 16, 2019 - April 17, 2019**

**Lead Reviewer: Lisa Reiter**

## 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. 173 Fresh Meadows serves students in grade PK 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>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 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>Area of Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## School Quality Ratings continued

<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Rating</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</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 Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Rating</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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	<b>Area of Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</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 Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

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

Consistent use of high-quality assessment practices offers a clear portrait of student mastery. In addition, teacher practice consistently reflects the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding.

### Impact

Assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers' assessment practices result in effective adjustments to meet all students' needs, and through student self-assessment practices, students are aware of their next learning steps.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers provide students with meaningful feedback through glows and grows. Additionally, students provide their peers with feedback that is also implemented in future tasks. One student stated, and all agreed, that teacher feedback is helpful and improves their work. Teachers also provide feedback to students throughout the duration of a task, such as an essay, that can be applied immediately. For example, one student shared that he received feedback to incorporate more expert words into his brochure while writing the first draft. The student went on to explain that he added more expert words into his final draft. Furthermore, he received more feedback on his final draft to edit for grammar and punctuation. As another example of meaningful feedback, a grade-four student shared that after reading her teacher's feedback to grab the reader's attention, the student read other students' examples of strong introductions to improve her own writing. Examples of additional feedback from across all grades included, "I like the way you wrote an explanation of your mathematical thinking. Next time try using tens and ones to jump on your number line," and "Include at least two facts or evidence from the research you are reading." Thus, there is evidence that actionable and meaningful feedback that creates a clear portrait of student mastery is provided to students across the school.
- Across the school, students use rubrics, learning progressions, and checklists as self-assessment tools during the completion of work. Examples of completed checklists and learning progressions, along with students' reflections on their next steps were posted on classroom walls, hallway bulletin boards, and in student work folders. Furthermore, students actively use their self-assessment tools to create action plans. As an example, in a grade-five class, the teacher instructed students to create an action plan of their next steps using feedback from their "I do this sometimes or never" columns. As another example, students in a grade-three math class have individual checklists based on their goals. One student shared that her checklist included using two strategies to check if her answer made sense. The consistent use of student checklists has resulted in students being aware of their next learning steps.
- Teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of checks for understanding, which are used to make effective adjustments and inform student groupings. For example, in a grade-five math classroom, the teacher used a standards-aligned checklist to assess student progress as they completed various math problems. This data was used to inform student groupings in which students collaboratively solved math problems. Additionally, during a grade-two English Language Arts (ELA) lesson, after the mini-lesson, the teacher provided an additional strategy lesson for a small group of students after noticing they struggled to select a text that they could use to research. Also, in a grade-one science class, the teacher circulated and conferenced with students. She asked one student to explain why the sun was in both columns. Taken together, teachers make effective adjustments to meet students' learning needs and students are aware of their next learning steps.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders support teacher development with frequent, though not yet strategic, evaluative and non-evaluative classroom observation cycles. Prompt written feedback captures teachers' strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

### Impact

Evaluative observations result in written feedback that promotes professional growth. While feedback to teachers makes clear the expectations for teacher growth and supports available to help teachers meet them, the feedback is not yet consistently aligned with goals for professional growth.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct evaluative and non-evaluative classroom observations every three to four weeks, and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Each rated item is backed with specific, detailed evidence from the observed class to support the rating. Next steps for teaching improvements are included at the close of each observation report. As an example, one teacher received feedback to implement learning centers. The teacher shared that this feedback and support has shifted her thinking as a teacher and made her classroom more rigorous. School leaders shared that teachers who need more support receive additional observations. As an example, teachers new to the profession may receive additional non-evaluative observations as school leaders or veteran teachers mentor them. While school leaders conduct frequent observations and encourage teachers to visit each other's classrooms, there is not yet a consistent structure for teacher peers to continually support the development of each other.
- Observation reports contain feedback that captures teachers' strengths and weaknesses and is accompanied by next steps teachers should take to improve their practice and have an impact on student success. For example, in one report a teacher is commended for developing a targeted mini-lesson that modeled the learning objective. Next steps for this teacher included providing students time to reflect on why they had an incorrect answer and providing targeted feedback to students. The school leader referenced the instructional focus to support the teacher in implementing this next step. In another observation report, the teacher received highly effective ratings in all components except "Using questioning and discussion techniques." However, the feedback, "...to continue to expose students to connections across the curriculum," was not connected to that component. Thus, while most feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice, there are occasional instances in which feedback does not clearly support teacher development in an identified component of need.
- While feedback to teachers offers actionable next steps that teachers can use toward pedagogical improvement, this feedback is not consistently aligned with professional goals teachers have set. During the teacher meeting, teachers shared that school leaders are supportive of teachers' goals and find professional development opportunities for teachers. Additionally, in collaboration with school leaders, teachers develop yearly goals during their initial planning conference. As an example, in an observation report, the school leader includes a reference to the teacher's goal of fostering student independence. Next steps included continuing to plan tasks that challenge students to take risks. However, a review of observation reports reveals while goals are developed, there are inconsistent references to these goals in the feedback provided to teachers. Therefore, school leaders provide feedback that supports teacher development, but it does not yet consistently reflect alignment to teacher goals.

## Additional Finding

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

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts such as text-based evidence and deep understanding. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized coherently.

### Impact

Curricular decisions regarding the Common Core result in coherence across grades and subject areas and promote next-level readiness for all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

### Supporting Evidence

- A review of unit and lesson plans reveals there is alignment with the Common Core and New York State content-area standards. Additionally, there is evidence of the integration of the instructional shifts, with an emphasis on students demonstrating a deep understanding of math. For example, in a grade-five math lesson plan, students are expected to use multiple strategies to justify why the given answer is correct or incorrect. Additionally, students are expected to provide feedback to the mystery mathematician on what he did correctly or incorrectly. For example, in a grade-one math lesson plan, students are required to use an alternative strategy to check their answers. A kindergarten lesson plan includes that students will select various centers to practice counting by tens. Each center includes a task that requires students to demonstrate a deep understanding of the skill. Furthermore, a review of the pacing calendars across grades reveals that there is coherence between the grades. As an example, place value is introduced in grade-one and built upon each year. Therefore, there is evidence of coherence across grades that the instructional shifts are strategically integrated and promote college and career readiness for all students.
- Across the vast majority of curricular documents, there is evidence of text-based evidence and a balance of informational and literary texts. A review of pacing calendars from multiple grades reveals that students consistently read both informational and literary texts. As an example, included in a grade-four lesson plan is a task that requires students to use both informational and literary texts. Students are tasked with using both to write a historical fiction story on the American Revolution. A grade-two lesson plan reveals that students use textual evidence to write their own nonfiction books on different animals. A grade-three lesson plan also includes a task in which students research a topic of their choosing and produce an informational book. Furthermore, a review of pacing calendars and unit plans reveals the instructional shifts are embedded in science and social studies lessons as well. A grade-five science lesson plan reveals that students use text and discussion-based evidence to draw a conclusion on which substances stabilize a mixture.
- Lesson and unit plans include activities that emphasize rigor. An example of a kindergarten task is to write a how-to book that teaches the reader how to do something. Students were required to plan out the books by acting out the steps and describing their steps to a partner. Students then drew pictures and added details and labels. Included in a grade-three unit plan is a task that requires students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, to create their own one- or multi-step word problem on different topics such as the four operations, fractions and time. All students were also required to solve each other's problems using more than one strategy. Examples of additional tasks from across grades and content areas include literary essays, informational and argumentative essays, and create and solve real-world problems such as the cost to renovate a room from floor to ceiling. As a result, students are engaged in activities that develop rigorous habits across the curriculum.

## Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the belief that students learn best when engaged through the workshop model and small group instruction. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

### Impact

As a result of the school's shared beliefs, students produce meaningful work products. Additionally, the design and delivery of instruction to include scaffolds for students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, ensures that students to engage in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.

### Supporting Evidence

- The core belief that students learn best in an environment in which they are challenged with rigorous tasks that foster collaboration and discussion through the workshop model was evident across classrooms. For example, in a grade-five classroom, students worked collaboratively in small groups to determine if a mystery mathematician solved a problem correctly. Students had to solve the problem using two different strategies and then provide a glow and a grow to the mystery mathematician. One student said, "A glow is that he showed the expanded form but a grow is to check his work. He did not add the numbers correctly." In a grade-four ELA class, the teacher modeled how to identify sub-topics and skim a text for the students. Students then worked in partnerships to use those skills to research a topic on the Revolutionary War in which they will write a book. The teacher also pulled a small group of students to receive an additional strategy lesson on finding a text that supports their topics.
- In a grade-one integrated co-taught classroom, students were placed in one of two groups during the mini-lesson. Each teacher provided a similar mini-lesson, but the small group structure allowed students to receive additional support. Students then solved multi-step word problems using two strategies. One student shared that he was using the number line strategy to check his answer. During a grade-four ELA lesson, students engaged in a turn and talk after the teacher modeled how to include emotion and tension in her writing. One student shared with her partner, "The character is scared because he was worried about his grandchildren." Students then discussed the character in their historical writing. Another student shared, "My character is George Washington and the setting, crossing the Delaware River, will create tension in my story." Her partner shared, "My character is Samuel Adams, and the tension will be from his anger at being over-taxed." Therefore, as a result of teaching practices aligned to the core beliefs, students produce meaningful work products.
- Across classrooms, all students, including students with disabilities and ELLs, received supports such as anchor charts, leveled readings, and differentiated graphic organizers. As an example, in a grade-five ELA class, students received different mentor texts to use based on their reading levels. Additionally, during a grade-one science lesson, students received one of three graphic organizers used to classify objects as being visible in the day, night, or both. Other students received a three column chart to complete the same task. In a grade-one dual language Chinese class, some students had access to the vocabulary in both Chinese and English, while others only had the task in Chinese. Furthermore, students across classrooms had access to individual toolkits for literacy and math. In a grade-three math class, one student used a checklist from her math toolkit, while another student was able to solve the problem without it. Therefore, all students have access to challenging tasks such as solving multi-step problems and writing literary and informative essays.

## Additional Finding

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

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations through a staff handbook and classroom observations. School leaders and staff effectively communicate and successfully partner with families around next-level readiness.

### Impact

Communication and professional development around high expectations result in a culture of mutual accountability. Information sharing and communicating through verbal and written reports as well as through workshops allow families to support students in their academic progress.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders provide staff with a faculty guide that includes both procedural information and instructional expectations. Included in the handbook is school-specific evidence of best practice aligned with the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. As an example, included in the handbook are key beliefs that drive instruction which include adjusting instruction to meet the needs of all students. Furthermore, teachers are expected to use the workshop model and use assessment data to form student groups. Also included in the guide are instructional expectations such as the structure of a reading workshop lesson and differentiated instruction through leveled activities in math. Teachers are supported to meet these expectations through feedback from observations and professional development. For example, teachers received support on creating literacy toolkits for all students and professional development on strategies to support ELLs. Teachers all agreed that there is an open-door policy that encourages them to take instructional risks and request additional feedback. One teacher shared that she invited a school leader to observe her while she tried a new discussion strategy with her students.
- One teacher stated, an all present agreed, that there is a culture of supporting each other to ensure all students succeed. Teachers support each other through teacher-led professional development. As an example, teachers created mini-sessions based on their instructional strengths for a round table share. During the round table, teachers selected which three sessions they wanted to attend. A few examples of the topics shared during the round table include math discourse, rigor to increase engagement, and vocabulary instruction. Teachers came to a quick consensus on the benefit of learning from each other during these sessions. Additionally, school leaders used teacher feedback to create study groups for teachers to join. Thus, taken together, there is a culture of mutual accountability that supports teachers to achieve schoolwide expectations.
- Expectations are effectively communicated to families through an online platform, newsletters, and in-person meetings. One parent stated, and all present agreed, that teachers consistently email or call parents regarding student progress. One parent shared that the teacher provided her with a strategy that included using the mood meter at home to discuss the character in the child's independent reading books. The parent added that as a result of using this strategy at home, there was an improvement in the area of retelling and comprehension that lead to an increase in the child's reading level. Parents also attend monthly workshops at the school on different topics. For example, there was a workshop preparing parents and students for the state exams. One parent added that this workshop provided a clear picture of next-level readiness. Parents also receive monthly newsletters that include current units of study for each content area and helpful suggestions to try at home. For example, one newsletter includes that students will be reading nonfiction books on animals to write a book. Thus, school leaders and staff successfully partner with families to support student progress.

## Additional Finding

<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

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations such as grade and vertical teams. A distributed leadership structure empowers teachers.

### Impact

Collaborations strengthen teachers' instructional capacities, which has led to schoolwide coherence and increased student achievement. Teachers' voices are integral to decisions that affect student learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- Vertical teams examine student work to identify the trends, curricular modifications and supports that are needed to increase student performance. The math vertical team was observed reviewing student work samples from across the grades to identify misconceptions and determine next steps. Teachers identified categories such as determining importance, envisioning, calculations, and checking answers. The team determined that most students were struggling with calculations and then reviewed the work again to determine what was causing the errors across grades. The team determined that students struggled to use the correct operation. One teacher shared a strategy that included having students describe how they would solve the problem before actually solving it. Another teacher suggested that they create problems and provide the solutions and have students explain how to solve those problems. Each teacher agreed to create problems for their grades. Additionally, the problems were going to become part of a math toolkit for students across all grades. A review of minutes from previous meetings and data reveals that as a result of creating targeted math toolkits, there was a 34 percent increase in students correctly solving multi-step word problems, thus resulting in schoolwide coherence and increased achievement.
- As a result of professional collaborations, teachers' instructional capacities have been strengthened and there is increased achievement for all learners. For example, in grade-three, teachers were focused on improving students' ability to elaborate in writing. One teacher shared a graphic organizer that was implemented across the grade. As a result, 83 percent of students improved in the skill of elaboration in their writing. The grade-four team identified supporting claims with evidence as an area of need for their students. One teacher shared that they decided to create anchor charts and a graphic organizer to help students unpack and elaborate on text evidence. Additionally, one teacher shared an example of how her feedback to students has improved as a result of the grade-team meetings. She said, "My feedback to students has become more focused." She added that this had an impact on her students' writing. Teachers all agreed that their practices had been strengthened as a result of professional collaborations.
- Teachers play an integral role in decisions that affect student learning across the school. The Brainy Bunch, which is comprised of teachers across grades and content areas as well as school leaders, meet regularly to collaborate on curriculum and pedagogical decisions that impact the school. As an example, after conducting a learning walk, the Brainy Bunch determined that providing student feedback and peer feedback was an area of growth. Teachers on this team created model lessons for their colleagues to observe and then supported teachers as they implemented opportunities for student-to-student feedback in their classes. As another example, two teachers lead the social-emotional learning (SEL) team. This includes creating a student SEL squad, action plan, and providing professional development for teachers. Furthermore, the professional development (PD) team identifies areas of need and facilitates PD for teachers. For example, one teacher facilitated a session on increasing academic discourse for ELLs. Teachers also shared that they have the autonomy to decide what their respective grades need, rather than having school leaders determine it.