

# Quality Review Report

## 2018-2019

**P.S. 536**

**Elementary 12X536**

**1827 Archer Street  
Bronx  
NY 10460**

**Principal: Jesse Yarbrough**

**Dates of Review:  
October 30, 2018 - October 31, 2018**

**Lead Reviewer: Jorge Estrella**

# 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. 536 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>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>Area of Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Proficient</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>Proficient</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>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</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>Area of Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>5.1 Monitoring and Revising Systems</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
---------------------------	--	----------------	-----------------------

### Findings

School leaders and staff have developed systems for evaluating curriculum and instruction supported by a purposefully transparent online system to share student data and action plans relating to curricular and instructional practices. School leaders align the use of resources with the goals for the school.

### Impact

Effective systems and protocols equip faculty to evaluate processes to intentionally adjust curricular practices, and professional development to support student learning and student mastery of the Common Core. Transparency and accountability is promoted by the use of an online system, resulting in an increase in the coherence of instructional and collaborative practices, and policies across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers successfully revise and refine their practices in a strategic and structured fashion to promote coherence and alignment to the Common Core. For example, after piloting a math program for K-5, school leaders and teachers found that the new math program better addressed the needs of their students, which emphasizes student inquiry and conceptual understanding, so the program was adopted for the current school year with modifications to the sequence of units. To ensure all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities are making adequate progress, the school's instructional program along with student data is analyzed every six weeks by teacher teams, to track the progress of identified groups of students. As a result, the impact of the instructional program is effectively evaluated to determine curricular and/or instructional adjustments as necessary.
- To evaluate and build consistency of schoolwide practices and to provide feedback based on student performance, teaching practice, formative assessments, Common Core-aligned curriculum, and classroom environment, school leaders conduct monthly learning walks using a learning walk rubric supported by a Learning Walk Data Tracker document that is posted on the online shared file platform. One example of the aggregated results of a learning walk states, "In many classes, teachers spent the work period engaged in either guided reading, small group instruction, or student conferences. These are the highest leverage actions you can take during the independent/group work time." The structured approach to monitor the implementation of the schoolwide instructional program via learning walks leads to timely adjustments to instructional practices by providing immediate feedback, thus increasing coherence of policies and practices.
- School leaders and coaches consistently analyze trends from Advance to determine targeted professional development via direct coach supports or intervisitations. This support system is reflected in the Teacher Coaching Tracker which is posted online and reviewed weekly by the instructional cabinet composed of school leaders, coaches and teachers. Teacher teams have established protocols to include discussions of the effective use of resources such as libraries for guided reading and the use of Thinking Maps. Teachers provide feedback about professional development in such ways as reflection sheets, surveys, debriefing conferences, and goal setting sessions. For example, one teacher stated, "I want to improve my assessment strategies to gain a better understanding of student growth and next steps to improve instruction." Thus, school leaders and faculty reflectively identify and address needs in an ongoing basis, ensuring that schoolwide goals and student success are constantly supported.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
---------------------------	---------------------	----------------	-------------------

### Findings

Differentiated tasks for targeted student groups and several methods of support are consistently used to offer multiple entry points into the curricula, and as a result student discussions lead to meaningful work products.

### Impact

While students engage in discussions and produce high quality work products across grades and subjects, there are missed opportunities to expand thinking and promote ownership of learning by all students including ELLs and students with disabilities.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, students are placed in groups to engage in differentiated tasks through targeted learning in according to reading levels. In a first grade literacy English as a New Language (ENL) class, there were four groups of students working on predictions. The novice group worked with the teacher for a guided reading, students in the apprentice group were reading a text, making predictions and having a group discussion and in the practitioner group students were making predictions and using text evidence to support their predictions. Fast finishers were assigned to use a circle map to begin writing facts about the topic. Instructional resources to support students in the learning process and be cognitively engaged in the lesson were available. Although students are seated in groups, and are provided with entry points for the most part, strategically designed differentiated tasks and extensions that support the needs of all learners were missing. As a result, the vast majority of students are yet to have strategic entry points and opportunities to engage in tasks that will support them in meeting their instructional needs.
- Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula where students can demonstrate high levels of student thinking. Students manage the completion of tasks, with teachers serving as facilitators. To meet the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities, teachers use supports, such as chart paper, strategy cards, manipulatives, sentence starters, Thinking Maps, and assisted technology to engage students in learning. Teachers encouraged students to explain their thinking either in whole groups, small group, pairs, or in individual conferences during the classrooms observed. In a second grade math class, students worked in groups to learn about counting, using counting cubes, counting blocks, and themselves as counting subjects. The teacher circulated about the room, providing support to groups and individual students by addressing misunderstandings and posing questions to challenge thinking.
- In all classrooms visited, teachers were observed using the workshop model and provided students with opportunities to turn and talk to their elbow partner or work in small groups. In a fifth grade math class, students were asked to work in small groups solving multi-step problems that required the use of multiplication and division. During the lesson, students were observed discussing different strategies to solve their problems as they looked at process charts, and referred to previous assignments. The teacher circulated about the room to ensure interactions with other students helped push thinking and progress toward learning targets. Students were observed using accountable talk stems such as "I agree with what you said. Can you tell me more about it?" Or "Now I am wondering." Although there are high levels of student discussion and thinking about work products, ownership of the learning by students has yet to be reflected across classrooms.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

### Impact

School leaders and teachers make effective decisions, such as the use of Thinking Maps across classrooms to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students. Curricula is accessible for all learners and students, who benefit from access to engaging and rigorous tasks across content areas and grades.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers have adapted the curricula to meet student needs, based on student work and data. In English Language Arts (ELA), teachers use the Teachers College curricula as a reference and regularly make modifications for reading and writing. The structure of the instructional planning documents is comprised of curriculum maps, detailed units of study, and lesson plans. School leaders and teachers adopted a new math curriculum that is aligned to the Common Core and emphasizes student inquiry and conceptual understanding with modifications to the sequence of topics. The school uses the New York Scope and Sequence for science and social studies, which has units incorporated into the ELA and math curricula. Instructional planning documents, across content areas and grades incorporate components of the workshop model. Lessons start with “I can” statements followed by a mini-lesson, guided practice, and independent or group tasks. As a result of this curricular planning approach, students take part in a coherent curriculum across grades that prepares them for the challenges of college and career.
- Instructional planning documents revealed lessons that engage students in challenging tasks with embedded higher-order questions using Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* to develop and promote high levels of thinking. To engage all students in higher order thinking, school leaders introduced Thinking Maps as a transferable, student-focused tool to help learners make their thinking visible. These planning tools were observed in lesson plans, displayed on classroom bulletin boards, students’ notebooks, as well as students’ work presented during the student meetings. A fifth grade ELA lesson includes Thinking Maps to generate ideas and to explain text features and a third grade art lesson, shows that the teacher will allow students to select the Thinking Map of their choice to create a list of memories and to list details and drawings. A culminating task for a fifth grade literacy unit asks students to create a visual display board to present it to the class or create a class museum.
- To provide access to the curriculum for all learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, teachers plan lessons that include a variety of scaffolds such as; visuals, bilingual dictionaries, native language supports, mentor text, manipulatives, assisted technology, sentence starters, thinking maps, skills cards, small group instruction, and one-on-one support by teachers and/or paraprofessionals. Teachers also include vocabulary development, Total Physical Response and kinesthetic strategies to address the needs of newly arrived students. For example, in a first grade ENL literacy/science lesson, the teacher included the use of video clips about elephants and their calves, to build knowledge and promote conversations among students. As a result of incorporating language acquisition strategies and scaffolds in lesson plans, students have access to the curriculum.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

### Findings

School leaders and teachers use common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subjects. The frequent and varied use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessments was consistently evident in daily lessons across classrooms.

### Impact

School leaders and teachers have a system to administer and analyze common assessments. This leads to teachers reviewing results and formulating specific action plans to address individual students' needs through data driven adjustments to curriculum and instruction.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers use common assessments across content areas, as well as checklists, conferencing notes, and New York State data to monitor student-learning progress. Also, school leaders and teachers use a shared document platform to store all schoolwide assessment data so that teachers have access to information that allows them to monitor and track students' learning progress across grades and subjects. Furthermore, the results of these assessments are used to inform unit plan modifications and pedagogy. In math, school leaders and teachers regularly use common assessments and a data-focused protocol to analyze student learning including all subgroups, to make adjustments to curriculum and pedagogy. The review of math team minutes, revealed that after conducting an item analysis of a common assessment administered in mid-October 2018, teachers developed specific next steps to support learners towards mastery. In a fourth grade class, 75 percent of students understand how to find perimeter and know which operation to use and 60 percent of the students were observed making close reading errors and not actually answering the question. As next steps, teachers agreed to focus small group work with ELLs on understanding word problems through close reading strategies of multi-step word problems. Teachers used guided practice to ensure that students understand key vocabulary. As a result, teachers adjusted curricular units and have observed gains as evidenced by students' progress on the unit assessments.
- Across observed classrooms, teachers were checking for understanding. In a fourth grade classroom during an ELA lesson the teacher checked for understanding of student work, group work, questioning, and tasks using a formative assessment tool to capture findings. The teacher then provided verbal and written feedback to groups of students so progress could be made towards completion of the task. For example, the teacher wrote on students' notebooks "Next Steps: Think about how all of the non-fiction text features work together to help you understand the topic." Specific feedback from checks for understanding promotes student awareness of their own learning needs and provides the teacher with information about the teaching of future lessons.
- During the meeting with students, they shared that teachers give them opportunities to reflect and self-assess their work using rubrics and checklists. For example, one student wrote "Next time I will work on my writing and spelling." Another student's self-assessment indicates "I need to put more attention to my computational skills. Perhaps I need to organize my work better." Another form of observed self-assessment is done via colored cards illustrated with emojis which indicates the student's level of understanding of the task as well as how to request assistance from the teacher. In addition, students engaged in peer-assessment through the use of self-reflection forms and checklists to give peer feedback.

## Additional Finding

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

### Findings

School leaders consistently convey high instructional expectations including elements of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, through professional development, a staff handbook, and a shared online platform where resources and guidance are readily accessible to teachers and entire staff.

### Impact

School leaders offer ongoing professional learning opportunities and have a system for shared accountability that is resulting in staff and students being fully informed about schoolwide expectations. Students receive guidance supports that help them toward taking ownership of their learning path and preparation for the next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders convey high expectations for teacher practice through use of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* as a lens to inform frequent feedback that is directed towards meeting the instructional goals of all learners. School leaders and coaches conduct monthly learning walks and provide formative feedback to teachers using the *Learning Walk Rubric: Elements of Effective Instruction* which is a customized rubric that is aligned to school goals and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. An example of the feedback states, “Make sure to include opportunities for student-to-student discussions during your lessons. In this lesson, all questioning was teacher-student and were call and response with a single predetermined answer.” At the beginning of the school year, teachers receive a staff handbook which delineates clear guidance for expected instructional practice. Classroom observations and regular walkthroughs, followed with timely feedback, combined with the use of an online document sharing system by all staff members for planning and collaborative work sustains a culture of mutual accountability for expectations.
- As an ongoing practice, school leaders provide professional learning opportunities that are aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and needs are captured via teacher surveys, *Advance* data, and student outcomes. Another approach for professional learning is via intervisitations, used by school leaders as a venue to refer teachers following observations in order to view colleagues’ best practices. To norm balanced literacy practices across all classrooms, school leaders developed an online Video Learning Library to capture best practices, and use this resource to engage teachers in professional learning. This document is in a shared file platform that teachers have access to view videos at any time. The 2018 School Survey shows that 96 percent of teachers say that the principal sets clear expectations for teachers about implementing what they have learned in professional development, which is higher than the city results.
- Faculty establish a culture for learning where emphasis is on balanced literacy. It was evident that all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, know the academic expectations. For instance, essential questions are posed at the beginning of units and in most classrooms informational charts were displayed capturing the learning in the unit thus far. Students are also able to monitor their progress towards their learning targets via skill cards. They learn annotation skills, use text evidence to support claims and engage in multi-step problem solving. Parents and students shared that students engage in challenging tasks where they need to conduct research from reliable sources. Students also noted that they value the focused feedback from their peers as well as teachers, which is supporting their next learning steps and preparing them to succeed in middle school. The school also offers several workshops for families about middle school articulation. As a result, the 2017-2018 Next-Level Readiness report shows that 96 percent of students have middle school core pass rates higher than the city, district, and comparison schools.



## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
---------------------------	---	----------------	-----------------------

### Findings

Teacher teams systematically analyze student work and data for groups of targeted students. There are distributed leadership structures embedded which allows teachers to take ownership and build capacity.

### Impact

Teacher teams use a data based rationale and the analysis of student work resulting in effective adjustments to their instructional practices and the development of strategic goals for groups of students. The strategic approach of having teachers participating in distributive leadership structures allows them to affect student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- During the fourth grade teacher team meeting, teachers analyze student work and assessment data resulting in accurate information on groups of students. They determined that high-performing students in math are using different strategies to solve multi-step problems and were accurate in finding the perimeter. However, ELLs had difficulties finding the perimeter and knowing which operation to use, as well as making close reading errors or not answering the questions. The math team discussed instructional strategies such as increasing the level of complexity of word problems for high-performing students, creating strategic groupings for ELLs to work on understanding word problems, and key vocabulary. Across classrooms strategies developed by teachers and noted in classroom observations to address findings from the analysis of data enabled students to articulate the tasks and demonstrate mastery of the content. A team member shared that as a result of their work in teacher teams, they noticed collective improvements to their practice as per the frequent feedback received from school leaders and colleagues, such as giving students choice to show mastery of a standard with a topic.
- In the first grade team meeting, teachers analyzed student work to modify reading and writing teaching points for the unit using an informational writing rubric. Teachers identified trends in the student writing such as challenges in developing sentence structure, missing key details in describing the topic and the use of punctuation. Teachers focused on a daily shared reading protocol to expose students to complex, grade appropriate texts, using a common guided reading lesson plan template and resources for level-specific strategies and scaffolds for ELLs and students with disabilities. Teachers and school leaders, are consistently memorializing their collaborative work and taking action to revisit teaching practice. As a result, groups of students are demonstrating increased mastery in reading levels as evidenced in comparative Fountas and Pinell (F&P) data. The last 6-week cycle of 2017 shows an average of 68 percent of ELLs and students with disabilities increased by at least one F&P reading level, and the first 6-week cycle of 2018 shows an average of 79 percent of the same subgroups also increasing by one level.
- School leaders promote distributed leadership practices at the school through teacher team structures, coaching roles, department leads, and school culture leads among other leadership opportunities. In these capacities, teacher teams make key decisions about implications for instruction such as revising curricula, developing assessments, sharing best practices to address a diversity of needs, targeting students for interventions or enrichment, and aligning specific teaching strategies for groups of students. Teachers play a key role in curricular decision-making, leading initiatives for school environment improvement, participate in the hiring process, and lead professional development. As a result, the 2018 School Survey shows that 93 percent of teachers say that teachers take responsibility for improving the school.