Quality Review Report

2015-2016

I.S. 5 - The Walter Crowley Intermediate School

Middle School Q005
50-40 Jacobus Street
Queens
NY 11373

Principal: Kelly Nepogoda

Date of review: January 5, 2016
Lead Reviewer: AJ Hepworth
The Walter Crowley Intermediate School is an intermediate school with 1,829 students from grade 6 through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 44% Asian, 2% Black, 52% Hispanic, and 2% White students. The student body includes 16% English Language Learners and 15% students with disabilities. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 96.1%.

### School Quality Criteria

#### Instructional Core

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<td>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</td>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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#### School Culture

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<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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#### Systems for Improvement

<table>
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<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator: 2.2 Assessment Rating: Well Developed

Findings
Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics and grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula to offer a clear portrait of student mastery and show progress towards goals for all students across grades and subjects.

Impact
Common assessments provide teachers and students with actionable and meaningful feedback to adjust curricula, instructional decisions and performance so that all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, can demonstrate increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence
- Formative assessment daily tracking sheets are used in math classes to identify students’ level of mastery on specific standards as either novice, apprentice, practitioner or expert. Teachers tally the information to guide next steps in their instruction. A grade 6 math teacher noted 25/27 students self-assessed themselves as expert while 2/25 as practitioner when learning interpreting ratios. The teacher’s next step was to administer a pop quiz the following day. Notes from the next day’s lesson plan documents confirm all students achieved at the level of mastery, except for one who the teacher has planned a private work session with. Additionally, other tracking sheets identify next steps as “go over task cards and complete lesson,” “work with apprentices to see what they need,” and “reteach with [four students names listed].” Students shared they also receive index cards with information of what to work on in science when they do not know their next steps.

- Pre- and post-assessments are administered, analyzed and used to adjust curricula in all core subject areas at the beginning and end of each unit. A review of an English Language Arts unit pre- and post-assessment revealed how the teacher provides comments and notes for every student regarding their competencies with the instructional shifts. A social studies unit pre-assessment identifies all students’ correct and incorrect responses, including their level of proficiency on each respective standard as above or below the 75th percentile. Following analysis of the data, the teachers use the information to arrange strategic grouping of students who need attention on one of three skills: analyze documents, cause and effect, and defining terms and vocabulary.

- In most of their classes students are made aware of their gaps in learning and record the standards they have not met on a goal tracking form. In grade 7 social studies, students identify two standards on their goal tracking form they need to improve based on their pre-assessment results. The students reflect on the steps they have taken to meet the standards and specific activities that helped them work on the skill. At the end of the unit, the students write out on their goal tracking form whether or not they met their goal.

- Rubric feedback forms are attached to all student work writing assignments in English Language Arts. Additional feedback, such as, “Work on expanding your ideas with relevant inferences to develop the claim,” is provided in a teacher commentary section for the students to understand next steps. The students also write reading, writing, listening and speaking goals for the next unit based on their weaknesses.
**Area of Focus**

<table>
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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**
Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula for all learners.

**Impact**
Students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks that demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in their work products although access to high-quality supports and extensions into the curricula was not evident.

**Supporting Evidence**
- All teachers ask students to use text-based evidence to support their work products and class discussions. In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) English classroom, students were tasked with using appropriate text evidence from “Rush” by Akash Kapur (a *New Yorker* magazine article) and writing an inference explaining why each influence is beneficial or harmful. One student wrote in their notes, “in the text Ganesh says, ‘Now more than fifty buses passed through the village every day...’” to help develop her inference. Students shared their inferences in small groups with additional text evidence, and although one girl suggested her partner “needs to find stronger evidence for that,” the partner did not understand why. In a social studies class discussing the Declaration of Independence Preamble, the teacher asked the students to identify “what the Preamble states about inalienable rights according to the text?”

- An emphasis on language work and improved vocabulary is a goal of all classrooms according to building administration. In a social studies class, students in small groups began the period arranging four words (revolution, rebellion, riot, and uprising) written individually on large sentence strips in order of complexity. Throughout an engaging dance class, both boys and girls were instructed to focus on appropriate dance terminology when sharing their explanation of bodily movements. In an English Language Arts class, students were given a series of academic vocabulary words (immersion, virtually, capacity, and linear) and directed to use word play strategies (stretch it or talk it out) to understand their meaning. The teacher reviewed the words as a whole class by calling on students and invited them to call on another student, although the teacher occasionally interrupted a student’s explanation and extended the conversation through her own modeling and definition.

- Teachers aim to include elements of argumentative discussion in their lessons. Although observation of those discussions included opportunities for students to have access through prompts, it was not apparent the prompts were used strategically or were consistently referred to for purposes of developing high-quality supports or extensions into the task. In a social studies class, students engaged in a rich discussion while supporting and challenging one another to develop answers to their specifically assigned questions based on their unit pre-assessment. One student shared out, “didn’t we discuss this yesterday...some colonists were still loyalists and believed that wherever they are now it is because of England and ...” However, this high-level of student discussion was not clearly represented throughout many of the classes.
Additional Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts which consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects.

Impact
Students are presented curricula that build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence
- A review of lesson planning documents revealed they emphasize clear reference to the content specific standard being taught and occasional references to the instructional shift(s) students will practice during the lesson. For example, a math lesson plan purpose is written as “How do we find percents of a quantity by using percent proportion?” The math practices checked off relevant to this lesson include modeling, using structure and patterns.

- Students are provided different colored task cards in accordance to a math lesson plan document. Challenges that emphasize appropriate rigor are noted on the bottom of each task card for students to complete. The challenge on the practitioner task card, asks students to solve three real world problems. One of the three problems asks students to determine the discount of an item knowing the original price and sale percent. Novice and apprentice students are challenged with completing the first problem of the practitioner and create their own percent word problem. Experts are challenged to work backwards and determine the original price of a t-shirt knowing the sale price and amount of sale, in addition to creating their own word problem.

- An English as a New Language (ENL) planning document specifies different expectations for groups of students in the drafting of their post-assessment by deconstructing the prompt and drafting out the introduction. Lower-level English Language Learners (ELL) are provided a scaffold to assist them in the development of their essay through the inclusion of a fill-in form with sentence starters. Mid-level ELL students are provided a different form which furthers their learning to making connections from evidence in their findings. The highest achieving students are not provided with any purposeful task tool to facilitate their writing.

- Science lesson planning documents infused the introduction of force and Isaac Newton through a discussion about the recently released Star Wars film, *A Force Awakens*. The lesson procedure states students will have to “jockey for job choices even though they will be required to complete all jobs throughout” the task. The rotating jobs include Padawan (traineer), puller, timekeeper, and recorder. Anticipating student responses and student understandings has been included in the lesson plan for the activity. Additional documents are provided to students to support low and medium level learners with clearly defined definitions and/or formulas, although all students must complete the lab activity data recording sheet.
Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training. Teacher teams and staff have established a culture for learning that consistently communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students and provide ongoing feedback and supports.

Impact
A system of accountability exists to achieve high expectations throughout the building, including supports for students so they are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence
- Building administration provided a memo to all staff in early September stating, “Just as we provide clear academic and personal behavioral expectations to ensure daily student success at I.S. 5, so, too, is it imperative that school leadership provide the same transparency, clarity and professional learning support so that our teachers shine. This is done in an effort to make clear the connection between Danielson and our best teaching practices.”

- A review of several Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) evaluation forms from informal, 15 minute observations revealed concise and strategic recommendations in a narrative form. One example included recognition of what students were demonstrating successfully in their mathematical thinking and how it supports meeting the school’s instructional vision and Common Core Learning Standards expectations related to listening and speaking. Another observation encourages the teacher to continue her practice of sharing her “professional learning and perspectives” as they “enrich conversations and direct our collective work to benefit team learning and new teacher growth.” Additionally, administration notes in the feedback they “look forward to returning to see the above mentioned suggestions embedded in your pedagogy in the coming weeks.”

- Students use the information they receive from all of their subjects’ unit pre-assessments to write their personal learning goals and are able to communicate why those expectations are appropriate for them. The students shared they feel comfortable asking friends for assistance in class when they do not know what to do, in addition to using the after-school help sessions and Khan academy, a free online learning tool. Several of the students were able to express where they want to go to high school and why, while some just know they are trying hard to get into a good high school although they are a bit unsure about their options.

- Students establish their own goals using a goal form prompting them to identify their strengths and weaknesses in reading, writing, and listening and speaking. Once identified, students write their own goal for the next unit and include a reason why. Finally they check off the next steps to achieving their goal. Students stated they all use rubrics in all their classes so they fully understand what is expected of their work products and how to create a high-leveled task performance. Many of the rubrics included next steps and additional feedback written in the margins of the paper with the relevant cell identified for further clarification. Some students also noted they have opportunities to reflect on their participation in some classes.
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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**Findings**
The vast majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations to analyze assessment data and student work. These collaborations have strengthened teacher instructional capacity and promoted the achievement of the school goals and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards.

**Impact**
School-wide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners has resulted from teacher team inquiry practices and shared improvements in teacher practice.

**Supporting Evidence**
- All teacher teams meet weekly to discuss methods of improving student assessment results through using data tracking. Teachers noted previously they understood the standards through the data analysis they discussed in teams, but now they are communicating the results of their analysis with students at large during class time and seeing students show greater awareness and achievement based on “their owning of the standards.” One teacher shared the inquiry discussions has afforded her the opportunity to reflect with her colleagues and devise approaches and changes in her instructional delivery that resulted in increased student achievement. Seventeen students who were in remediation and six at the level of mastery are now performing at a level of two in remediation, thirteen at near mastery, and the remainder of the class at or above mastery.

- Many teachers use Mastery Connect, a digital data tracking management system, to target specific changes to instruction, make the necessary curriculum changes and ensure alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards in a timely manner. Teachers noted they can use unit pre-assessment results during their inquiry meetings to determine if questions were standards-driven or meet the level of rigor necessary for improvement in that unit. Teachers then promote increased achievement through students creating their own learning targets based on the standards, which one teacher stated, “has been a major shift in my teaching practices,” affording her an opportunity to be more reflective, hence improve her own pedagogy.

- During a teacher team inquiry meeting, teachers shared out an awareness of an imbalance in their analysis reports on the multiple choice section of a recent assessment. They further noticed the students achieved increased achievement on the short response section as the focus on all the standards has been significantly targeted recently, especially for standard WS.6.1. Another teacher noted they “need to have [students] look at vocabulary and deconstruct the vocabulary in a mini-lesson to break down the questions and in our next formative [assessment] create similar questions and see how they perform on that.” The teachers concluded the meeting by suggesting next steps for improving their instructional practice. Suggestions included: focused framing of questions, additional work on counter-claims and elaboration, and teachers deconstructing the questions in class on chart paper where students learn the skill of paraphrasing so they can rephrase the question “and make it in their own language.”