Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 018 Edward Bush
Elementary 14K018
101 Maujer St.
Brooklyn
NY 11206

Principal: Alison Alexander

Dates of Review:
November 9, 2016 - November 10, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Valerie Taylor
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


School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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 Finding</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<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 Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
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## Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<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 Finding</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Area of Celebration

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</table>

### Findings

The positive environment of the school reflects the strong approach to culture building, discipline, and social emotional support. There are structures in place to reinforce this positive environment.

### Impact

Parents, staff, and students feel safe and students are well known by at least one adult.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal believes that building a strong culture is very important in creating a positive learning environment. Parents have access to parent calendars, school website, and parent workshops. The school’s guidance counselor is instrumental in ensuring that students are matched to the middle school of their choice. Parents are included and supported during the process by the school leader and staff. During the parent interview, parents expressed that they enjoy the monthly meetings with the staff where they get to ask questions and share their concerns. Furthermore, they enjoy the various celebrations at the school where teachers and families get together as one to share their culture in food and music.

- There are structures in place to address students’ social and emotional learning and youth development for academic success. The school is a Character Counts school where the students study the six pillars of character. Morning announcements remind students to demonstrate good character each day. Inspirational posters and murals are also posted throughout the building. During classroom visits, teachers encouraged students to incorporate the word responsibility in their conversations which was the pillar for the week. In the student interview, they were all able to name an adult they could go to if they needed to speak to someone. For example, one student stated that he feels comfortable speaking to the lunchroom lady if he has a problem.

- Students are supported through programs such as the morning meeting with teachers where teachers help to keep them on track with their goals and issues they might be having with attendance and academics. In addition, the student council provides another platform for students to address social issues and develop leadership skills. Teachers believe that the program gives teachers an opportunity to know students well and helps to build trust and respect. In the parent interview, one parent shared that her daughter is on the student council and she has seen some positive changes in her attitude toward school work. Another parent commented that the school is like a family and expressed appreciation for the staff who makes them feel welcome all the time. Furthermore, they all praised the safety agent for knowing the students and families by name.
Area of Focus

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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Findings

Teachers are not yet consistently aligning assessments to the Core Knowledge and Expeditionary Learning curricula. Some teachers are using ongoing checks for understanding as part of their classroom instruction.

Impact

Feedback to students is not always actionable and teachers have limited information about student achievement. Not all teachers are making effective curricular adjustments to meet the needs of their students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers used rubrics and the glow and grow strategy to provide feedback on assignments that were displayed on bulletin boards. The glow tells the student what they did well and the grow tells them next steps. There were also a few examples of peer assessments using the glow and grow strategy. However, in a number of classrooms visited, the glow and grow feedback from teachers were not actionable and lacked a well-defined direction to take the work to the next level or on subsequent assignments. For example, grows such as, “write more details” and “work on paragraphs” were observed across grades on students work products.

- Students shared that some teachers used exit tickets to assess how well students understand the learning. However, when they were asked if they got help from the teacher after they submitted the exit ticket, they were unable to respond. One student commented that the exit tickets were done at the end of the class. However, it was unclear how the exit tickets were used to inform instruction. Furthermore, during classroom visits, teachers circulated throughout the class and engaged in one-on-one conferences with students as they checked for understanding. Only three out of nine teachers observed took notes or recorded their noticing. Furthermore, there was very little evidence that checks for understanding resulted in significant adjustments to instruction.

- During the small group student meeting, only three students were able to articulate a clear next step for improvement based on the feedback given to them by their teachers. When asked how they know what to do to improve their work or to get a level four on work that had been rated level two or three, five students struggled and were not able to give a clear response. A later review of the work folders revealed that some rubrics had numbers circled with no evidence of further feedback from teachers or clear steps for improvement. One student stated that he knows when he does good work because the teacher tells him. Another student said that he knows when he is doing well in math when the teacher gives him a check or when she posts it on the bulletin board.
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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Findings
Curricula and academic tasks are loosely aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. Lesson plans and academic tasks are beginning to emphasize high order thinking.

Impact
Rigor and high order thinking skills are inconsistently accessible for learners across grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers utilize the Common Core-aligned Core Knowledge curricula for literacy through grade two and the Expeditionary Learning curriculum for literacy in grades three to five. These programs consist of interdisciplinary units of study that are content rich and provide multisensory learning and language development through discussion. Teacher teams are in the process of aligning curricula to Common Core standards to focus on integrating career readiness skills and the instructional shifts. For example, a unit plan for opinion writing outlined the essential question, vocabulary, and the associated standards.

- Teacher teams utilize grade meetings and additional planning time to focus on integrating career readiness skills and the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks reflected some planning to provide students access to the curricula that promote college and career readiness. For example, teacher teams are structured to modify lessons based on student work products. However, there was inconsistency in curricula that include differentiation for ELLs and students with disabilities. For example, a math lesson plan indicates that students will divide by two-digit divisors. Although the task requires high order thinking there was no differentiation for ELLs and students with disabilities.

- Document review of lesson plans indicates that Depth of Knowledge questions, academic vocabulary, and differentiation are schoolwide expectations. However, in the majority of plans reviewed, that tasks did not include supports and extensions to address the wide range of student abilities. Similar culminating activities were planned for high achieving students as well as students with disabilities. For example, a fourth grade social studies plan on the Iroquois, indicates that students will compare past and present life of the Iroquois. However, the task did not describe how the diverse groups would be supported or challenged.
### Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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**Findings**

Across classrooms, instructional practices are inconsistent and student discussions did not reveal high levels of student thinking and participation.

**Impact**

There are limited opportunities for students to demonstrate high levels of thinking and produce meaningful work products.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders and teachers believe that students learn best when they are provided with multiple entry points and scaffolds to rigorous curricula. In a few classrooms, student tasks were differentiated and multiple levels of support were provided by teachers and staff. For example, in a fifth grade math class students worked in groups to solve word problems. There were four distinct groups with tiered performance. Students used numbered cards to communicate with the teacher if they needed help. For example, card number four lets the teacher know that the group has completed that task and is ready for more challenging work. However, evidence of these core pedagogical practices was inconsistent across classes.

- In the majority of classrooms observed, there were student clusters for small group instruction, however, lessons did not consistently reflect differentiation. In a third grade class, the teacher used a circle map to demonstrate writing an opinion piece. The question was, “What is an opinion?” Students in all groups were given the same circle map to respond to the same question. Some of the students copied the example from the chart while others wrote one or two responses to the question and became disengaged. During a second grade math lesson, students were expected to solve the same problem and to identify the first step in solving a word problem. Students’ responses reflected minimal understanding of how to solve the problem and only a few were able to articulate what they were learning.

- Across classrooms teachers are beginning to use accountable conversation talk prompts. Students are prompted to turn and talk but the conversation often resulted in very low level conversation or teacher to student and student to teacher responses. For example, during a reading lesson, students were asked to turn and talk to their partner about their prediction. A few students responded to classmates with “I agree” or “I would like to add on.” However, most responses were in direct response to teacher questions and did not demonstrate high levels of thinking.
### Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 3.4 High Expectations

**Rating:** Proficient

#### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide ongoing feedback to teachers and families about academic progress.

#### Impact

Staff and teachers are well supported toward progress and are held accountable for expectations communicated by the principal. Parents understand the school’s expectations for their children’s progress on the path toward college and career readiness.

#### Supporting Evidence

- The principal has communicated and provided professional learning opportunities to all teachers to support the schoolwide instructional focus of “productive struggle.” The principal believes that if teachers plan strategically aimed at building students’ persistence through new challenging tasks with instructional supports, students will be cognitively engaged. Lead teachers attended a series of workshops, titled Productive Struggle, in math and then turn-keyed the information to the staff. Teachers shared that they are incorporating the strategies in their classrooms by encouraging perseverance in solving math problems. One teacher shared how he used questioning to help the students understand that they know enough to solve the problem and he finds they usually persevere until it is solved.

- The school leader conducts ongoing observations giving timely feedback aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and her high expectations. In addition, the principal implemented coaching days where she works alongside teachers in the classroom to improve their practice. Teachers are then given two to three weeks to implement the suggestions before the next observation. During the classroom visitation debriefs, her intended feedback to teachers was aligned with her expectations. For example, after a reading lesson, she noted that although the bubble map was an appropriate tool for the task there was not enough scaffolding to give all students an opportunity to engage fully with the task.

- The school’s guidance counselor is instrumental in conferring with families about requirements for articulation for middle school through workshops, fairs, and individual conferences. Parents stated that they enjoy the open-door policy at the school and the communication regarding their children. Specifically, they mentioned parent teacher conferences, principal memos, annual school calendar, parent events, and the use of ClassDojo, an online interactive platform that informs families of their children’s academic progress and social occurrences.
## Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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</table>

### Findings

The practice of analyzing assessment data and student work is inconsistent across teacher teams. Input by teacher leaders into key decisions is not yet fully embedded in school practices.

### Impact

The work of teacher teams is not yet consistently resulting in improved pedagogical practice and student outcomes across subject areas. Curricular decisions are beginning to affect student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- In a fourth grade inquiry team meeting the objective was looking at samples of opinion writing. A classroom teacher gave an overview of the task and the team took ten minutes to read the pieces which included low, medium and high performance. The conversation then turned to suggestions for improvement and strategies related to the writing of an opinion piece. There was no evidence that this process was tied to a thoughtful gradewide analysis of student work or next steps.

- School leaders and teachers reported that teacher teams meet regularly to analyze data and plan instruction. In a meeting with teachers, one teacher reported that the collaboration among staff is very helpful because they get to support each other and share successful strategies. A cluster teacher stated that the team meetings give her an opportunity to work alongside the classroom teachers and incorporate what the students are learning into her lessons. The other teachers all agreed. However, the work does not typically result in improved teacher practice or progress toward goals for groups of students.

- Distributive leadership structures are developing schoolwide. In conversation with the principal she outlined the plan to build leadership capacity. Currently, teacher leaders serve on teams and they have a voice in making decisions regarding curriculum. For example, there is a technology team that makes key decisions on the purchase of technology programs such as the Learning A-Z platform and Core Clicks to support reading instructions. In addition, teacher leaders serve as mentors for new teachers and volunteer for leadership roles as needed. For example, during the visit one teacher asked the principal if she would like her to escort the large group of students to the office during her lunch time. However, teachers’ voice is not yet embedded in most key decision making.