Quality Review Report

2016-2017

J.H.S. 078 Roy H. Mann
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 22K078
1420 East 68th St.
Brooklyn
NY 11234

Principal: Anthony Cusumano

Dates of Review:
December 8, 2016 - December 9, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio
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

J.H.S. 078 Roy H. Mann serves students in grade 6 through grade 8. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<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>Well Developed</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>Proficient</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>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
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### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
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### Systems for Improvement

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<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>Well Developed</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>Proficient</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>Proficient</td>
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Area of Celebration

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

The school staff maintains a culture of mutual trust using a three tier Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) approach in fostering its theory of action for discipline and social-emotional support while streamlining the personalization of structures and supports to align with the needs of students.

Impact

The school’s commitment to culture-building results in a safe, inclusive environment where all voices contribute to school improvement efforts and impacts academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- The school’s motto, “Together We Can Make a Difference” was embedded in conversations with multiple stakeholders where comments such as, “We are a community. We work together” were shared. Students feel that there is a mutual understanding of respect for each other’s diverse backgrounds and abilities. The use of Manny Bucks, behavior rubrics, and other tools support the three tier intervention model, which is supported throughout the school. In addition, parents shared that the school leaders and staff make it their mission to ensure students are safe in and out of school through the establishment of dismissal teams. Long-term Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) data reflects a continuous decrease in the number and level of infractions due to weekly monitoring by school leaders and staff which demonstrates progress towards the school’s goals.

- Through the school’s enrichment cluster program and community-building learning projects students are provided opportunities to be actively involved in the school beyond the classroom. Forums such as student government and surveys allow students to express their voice throughout the year. Enrichment cluster topics created by the school change each year based on student input. Last year, students expressed their preferences for wood design versus sign making workshops where work products could be used for the school’s general store. In addition, projects created through the enrichment clusters are used for fundraising for the Ronald McDonald house and Habitat for Humanity, which were student chosen charity foundations.

- Schoolwide structures for ensuring students receive individualized support are embedded within the school’s Response to Intervention and the School Attendance Implementation Team. Each team meets weekly and reviews a combination of student work, state examination scores and other data reports to develop action plans which secure the appropriate placement of students in need of support and the coordination of programming resulting in academic progress. The ongoing monitoring of students through these systems has had positive impact on student grades each marking period and improvement in daily attendance.
Findings
Across the vast majority of classrooms, the use of assessments, checks for understanding via conferences, and self-assessment using rubrics are aligned with the curricula.

Impact
Although students regularly self-assess, they have yet to demonstrate the independent use of strategies for ongoing, meaningful revision leading to their academic achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- The school primarily uses online programs, such as Waggle for math and Achieve for English Language Arts (ELA), to assess student progress. In addition, teachers use rubrics aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and schoolwide curricula in each subject area to gauge student understanding of concepts. A review of student work demonstrates that feedback is provided in each subject in the form of glows for strengths and grows for areas of weakness. Comments include, “Great job in making an inference about Roger based on textual evidence. Next time, challenge yourself to use advanced vocabulary.” However, in some classes, the provision of strategies to assist students in revision over time was not as clear.

- During an interview, several students shared that they use rubrics and their teacher’s feedback to determine the areas where they have demonstrated strength and are in need of further support. One student shared how a teacher provided specific strategies for simplifying equations while reviewing a math assessment and shared the feedback that demonstrated improvement on another exam. Although several students were able to demonstrate understanding of their next steps and feedback, a few students were unclear of the feedback or strategies provided towards improving drafts or assessments in different subject areas.

- Ongoing checks for understanding and self-assessment opportunities occur across classrooms. Teachers use one-to-one conferences to determine the level of understanding of students based on student discussion or quality of work products. Students self-reflect on their abilities through the use of checklists and rubrics. However, adjustments based on conference and self-assessments resulting in student ownership of next steps vary in some classrooms. In one classroom, some student comments to their peers provided feedback, which did not include specific, clear strategies or next steps.
### Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders and faculty ensure the alignment of Common Core Learning Standards and content standards. There is strategic integration of the instructional shifts such as text complexity, deep understanding, application, and the embedment of rigorous habits in the curricula across grades and subject areas.

**Impact**

Tactical planning around the instructional shifts and emphasizing higher-order thinking results in schoolwide coherence in the curricula and the promotion of college and career readiness for all students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school primarily utilizes the *Expeditionary Learning* program for English Language Arts to allow for tasks that provide opportunities for group work, which is aligned, to the school’s instructional focus on engagement. To ensure the instructional shifts such as math fluency are addressed, the *Connected Math Program 3 (CMP3)* is supplemented with the *Encore* and *GO Math*! Series. Although the science teachers use *Glencoe* as their initial resource for the development of science units, modifications are made to the curricula to incorporate additional lab reporting and projects as well as an increased focus on conceptual theory. Similarly, in social studies, modifications to ensure writing is correlated to the units in ELA and the tasks incorporate project-based learning. Socratic Seminar and debate are embedded into planning. All units are listed on the *ATLAS Rubicon* site to provide teachers with access to all units for full transparency and are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards.

- Citing evidence is an instructional shift emphasized across grades and subject areas. In a grade eight social studies unit, one task reflects the creation of an extended timeline where students incorporate point of view detailing how Native Americans were affected during the post-Civil War era. Citation to expand on the defense of the student’s perception was required as well. In a grade eight science unit, students are required to conduct research to determine how quickly different cells undergo a cell cycle and add details to a lab report. Similarly in an ELA unit, the essential questions foster the use of citing text evidence in an analysis of fictional narratives.

- In each unit, tasks are designed to ensure students have exposure to *Depth of Knowledge (DOK)* Level 3 and 4 tasks. One ELA essay reflects a prompt, which asks students to take on the role of a character and explain how the theme of the story is expressed through that character’s lens. Another task asks students to consider the meaning of the novel, *Inside Out* and create a “back again” free verse poem similar to the main character’s diary entries as they relate to being a refugee forced to flee their home country for safety. In a math unit, students are asked to interpret data from a chart and use knowledge on ratio and proportions to answer various questions.
### Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula where students can apply high levels of student thinking.

#### Impact

Student work products and discussions reflect full participation and engagement, which results in higher-order thinking for all learners.

#### Supporting Evidence

- In an Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) ELA grade six class, the teachers asked students to engage in discussion and then use each other’s ideas to develop an understanding of the importance of learning about Greek mythology. One student shared that as a class they are reading *Percy Jackson & the Olympians* and it will help them connect to the text and understand the characters’ motives. Another student stated, “I agree and would like to add that it will help us understand the main idea of the story by understanding Greek mythology and the story of Percy Jackson.” Subsequently, another student added that this helps us understand and compare Percy’s actions with his or her own. Collectively, this allowed the students to reflect on their process as readers and provide responses, which deepen their understanding of the texts being used.

- In a math class, groups of students worked on problem solving using strategies to divide with decimals. Each group worked independently and collaboratively on the word problems. Student group discourse consisted of application and analysis where the students explained to one another the process of each strategy, which was reflected in their work products.

- In a special education class, the teacher used a series of pivotal questions to engage students in thinking about the objectives for the lesson. Students were asked to interpret vocabulary and phrases as well as to define the meaning of the lesson objectives while explaining the purpose as it related to the current unit. When asked, students responded that the purpose of understanding the meaning behind their daily objective was to understand and expand their understanding in order to make inferences regarding the content and concepts they learn.
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff along with training on the instructional focus connected to the Danielson *Framework For Teaching*. The staff effectively communicates expectations and maintains partnerships with families.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability and a strong home-school connection result in student progress towards these high expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders utilize the use of ambassadors to communicate the school’s expectations through weekly professional learning and teacher teams. Once a month during Monday professional learning, teacher leaders engage teams of teachers in training seminars to incorporate strategies to support student engagement or tiered questioning and effective discussion. Additionally, after an intervisitation, teachers are observed by their peers based on their areas of focus to obtain support that aligns with the school goals. Teachers stated they hold each other accountable to ensure the expectations and next steps for their grade-level teamwork is accomplished.

- The weekly *Technique of the Week* is shared in newsletters to the staff, which contain strategies that can be used. For example, to secure wait time after posing a question a three minute pause strategy was suggested. The use of sentence stems was a strategy presented as well. The use of these practices was mentioned during team meetings, were part of written feedback to teachers and viewed in classrooms. School leaders use post observation debriefs to communicate and hold teachers accountable to school-wide expectations related to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. A review of feedback provided to teachers indicates continuous increases in the rating of teachers from effective to highly effective. Sample feedback aligned to school-wide goals includes pedagogical strategies such as having students critique each other’s work and having students respond to one another to encourage idea building using their responses.

- Communication on schoolwide expectations and progress towards them is accomplished through a variety of methods including the school website, an online grading system and school messaging systems. Parents reported that school leaders and staff have an open-door policy, which offer ongoing opportunities for them to engage in school activities. Each year, the school has a full day open house where parents can shadow their children during the day to engage in activities with their child to understand the concepts needed for their success on the grade and expectations for the year. One parent reported that her child was struggling and the teachers quickly responded to her needs resulting in her placement on the merit roll the next marking period. Similarly, other parents reported that their children obtained support through additional resources from the teacher, intervention and online learning programs leading to their academic progress.
Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, content area, inquiry-based professional collaborations, which promote the achievement of school goals. There is consistent analysis of student work products for progress and achievement.

Impact
Collaborative inquiry-based structures result in the strengthening of instructional capacity, improvement in teacher practices, and progress towards goals for student groups.

Supporting Evidence

- Department teams meet weekly and utilize protocols to discuss student work and to share strategies, which focus on the improvement of teaching. School leaders report that through the ongoing use of *Waggle* and *Achieve* online programs, teachers demonstrate improved ability to engage in discourse using data. One grade six team reviewed student work to measure the level of student engagement in their reading and writing. Upon careful review they determined that students were not fully engaged in the novels selected for the unit. Thus they revised the unit. Changes to the unit included adding a series of short texts and novels to increase student engagement. Across teams, the creation and use of graphic organizers to assist in organizing student thinking has become more prevalent.

- During an ELA team meeting, teachers determined that citing relevant text evidence was a need area for several students in each grade. One of the teachers facilitated the review and the analysis of the student work from targeted students. Several teachers provided suggestions to support the presenting teacher including specific sentence starters, heterogeneous grouping or partnerships and graphic organizers.

- Students whose levels range from 2.7-3.1 on state ELA and math scores are chosen for the weekly review of work products by the teacher teams. In addition, teachers review certain students who achieved a Level 4 to determine which extensions provide the greatest challenge for this subgroup. Teachers reported that the use of more independent practices, such as using checklists or task specific rubrics, aid high performers and is beginning to increase the quality of their writing, especially in their use of voice when they write. Additionally, the work products from the other targeted students reveal students regularly use the scaffolds and strategies provided them and data from *Waggle* and *Achieve* indicate increases in achievement.