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

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<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 Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**School Quality Ratings continued**

### School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>Additional Finding</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>Area of Celebration</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
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<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>
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<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>
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<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>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

High expectations connected to the school leaders’ professional and instructional goals, and aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, are consistently communicated to the entire staff through the principal’s detailed memo and other means. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations to students and families.

Impact

Structures that provide staff training and foster accountability promote high expectations for teaching and learning. Families are kept abreast of student progress toward college and career readiness through multiple venues and artifacts that help families understand student’s progress toward those high expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are made aware of school leaders’ high expectations for instruction, assessment, and student success through multiple ways including weekly newsletters, staff handbook, and in professional development sessions. Expectations listed in a newsletter include checking for understanding during instruction, student feedback, and the use of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge questions. A review of professional development plan revealed an alignment between expectations communicated and professional development teachers received. In one document, teachers participated in learning sessions on questioning, formative assessments, and checking for understanding. The training was designed to support activities and assignments which would further engage students in their learning and promote student thinking. The administration conducts regular walkthroughs as well as formal and informal observations as a method for monitoring the implementation of the high expectations and to identify where additional support is needed.

- During cabinet meetings, school leaders discuss trends from observations and establish professional development expectations. They use the Advance tracking tool to measure professional growth in alignment with the Danielson Framework for Teaching. In addition, teachers take surveys to provide additional insight of what they need regarding their own professional development. Recently, training in questioning and discussion were offered as per the observation data and teacher’s request to improve instruction. Teachers assume responsibility for implementing new strategies and meeting schoolwide expectations in collaborative teams and intervisitations in which they visit each other’s classroom to observe effective strategies. In one document, a teacher acknowledged her colleague who allowed her to observe how she used questioning to engage her students in discussions. One teacher stated, “Professionally we need each other to get the job done.”

- Parents shared that school leaders communicate with them via progress report, phone calls, flyers, and workshops. In addition, parents are provided opportunities to attend curriculum fairs, and workshops where they have the opportunity to learn about the Common Core Learning Standards and what students are required to learn. Parents can also attend a session on Tuesdays that allow them to have that one-on-one conversation with the teachers. During these sessions, teachers can answer parent concerns and provide guidance to help families navigate through homework and to promote a home-school connection. One parent shared that when her daughter got an assignment wrong she did not know how to help her, but after the teacher explained the feedback that was given on the work and the rubrics, she felt much more confident in helping her daughter with her work and tries to use some of the same language on the rubrics such as adding details and cite evidence when helping her daughter.
Findings

Teaching strategies such as graphic organizers, sentence starters, and manipulatives provide multiple entry points into the curriculum allowing for learners to engage in conversation and produce meaningful work products in most classes.

Impact

Teaching strategies have yet to provide strategic entry points such as scaffolds in tasks, across the vast majority of classes thus, there is not yet student ownership in discussion and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- In a fifth grade self-contained math lesson, students discussed strategies to solve multi-step problems involving mixed operations to determine which product had the best savings. Students prepared by highlighting key words indicating which operations to use. One student commented, “I think we first need to find out how many packs of five we need.” In a fourth grade writing lesson, students worked in peer groups to edit each other’s opinion essay using a four-point rubric. Students were heard questioning each other, “Does that make sense?” One student questioned her partner about the feedback he gave her which stated, “You did not cite evidence from both documents.” He further guided her to the document that she could have used to support her claim. In a first grade social studies lesson on families now and long ago, students read various leveled texts and used close reading strategies to discuss the ways in which life long ago was different from life today. One student noted, “Long ago the homes people lived in were different. They were not very high.” One student stated that maybe they did not have elevators back then. While structured prompts ensured that students engaged in high level thinking, student ownership in discussion was not observed.

- Guided by a technology presentation and diagram showing various types of seeds, students in a kindergarten class explored various seeds and classified them based on characteristics such as hard or soft. Students used chart papers, markers, and graphic organizers to record their findings as they learn about seeds that are the beginning of new plants. In a second grade writing lesson students used graphic organizers, sentence starters, and differentiated tasks to respond to the essential question about what life would be like without plants. The session ended with students sharing their writing with their peers. One student wrote that animals would not have shelter or food if there were no plants.

- While entry points into lessons were consistent across most classes, there was no evidence that they were strategic. In a fourth grade math lesson, students were directed to use teacher’s model to solve a problem involving multiplication of fractions. While teachers offered additional support to small groups, not all students were able to complete the task. In a third grade lesson, the teacher had students working in groups to solve differentiated math problems. However, in two groups students were unable to solve their problem correctly. Although teachers provided some entry points into the lessons students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, who needed additional scaffolds were unable to complete the tasks thus, scaffolds in these lessons were not strategic.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Curricula across grades and subject areas integrate the instructional shifts by exposing students to fiction and nonfiction text with a focus on academic vocabulary and citing evidence. Additionally, curricula emphasize rigorous tasks and high-order skills across grades and subjects.

Impact

Curricula promotes career readiness and require all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, to demonstrate high-order thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff develop curricula maps, lesson plans, and pacing calendars aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and incorporate the instructional shifts. Planning documents evidence instructional shifts such as writing from source, academic vocabulary, and procedural knowledge in math. A fifth grade social studies on human rights reflected the focus on academic vocabulary such as, “human rights,” “discrimination,” and “international law.” A fourth grade math unit required students to solve multi-step word problems from given tape diagrams and equations, and use vocabulary such as “variable,” “algorithm,” and “tape diagram” to justify their answers. In a grade three science unit, students were required to read *One Well: The Story of Water on Earth* and a variety of secondary documents to examine the water cycle and cite text evidence to explain the role of fresh water around the world.

- Strategies for providing access to content for students with different learning styles are incorporated in most lessons. Lesson plans demonstrated that teachers make modifications to units through the use of instructional grouping, small group work, scaffolds, and manipulatives so that all learners have access to rigorous tasks. For example, a fourth grade math lesson plan identified students to work in a group with teacher on solving word problems involving rounding and algorithms while other students would work in peer groups using various scaffolds such as discussion and a variety of manipulatives to solve the problem. A lesson in a self-contained class, focused on reading informational pieces, outlined tasks for specific students noting that three students would work independently taking notes to support group discussion, while others worked with in close reading groups with an adult. Reading lessons included leveled texts, group discussions, graphic organizers, questioning, and notetaking taking to ensure that all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, are engaged.

- Tasks across grades and subjects emphasized rigorous habits for all students. A fourth grade social studies task indicated that students would read multiple articles and use close reading strategies to develop judgments about how the roles people had in a colonial village helped them survive. A grade four writing lesson required students to research a text to write an analytical essay on how writers use powerful introductions and conclusions. A third grade social studies lesson indicated that students would be asked to read a text and make annotations to engage in text-based discussions. This pattern of task that required high-order thinking skills was seen across the curricula.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
Teachers create and use rubrics and checklists aligned to curricula as well as ongoing checks for understanding to determine student progress toward goals.

Impact
Teachers use rubrics to provide students with actionable feedback. The use of ongoing checks for understanding results in effective on-the-spot instructional adjustments.

Supporting Evidence
- Teachers adopted student-friendly rubrics and checklists that are aligned with curricula and provide students with actionable feedback. A four-point jigsaw problem solving rubrics assess math knowledge, thinking, application, and communication. Feedback on a second grade multi-step problem stated, “Your diagram shows that you understand the question. Your next step is to explain how you know that Tessa had enough string to organize her recycling.” Feedback on a fifth grade opinion writing rubrics stated, “You have a strong topic sentence that include[s] your opinion. Next step is to work on your conclusion by restating the topic sentence.” A third grade writing rubric provided the following feedback, “You have included text evidence to support your topic. Next step is to work on using some transitional words such as, however, therefore, to connect your ideas.”

- Teachers across grades were observed checking for understanding during instruction by asking targeted questions. In a first grade social studies lesson, students discussed whether they would prefer to live in New York City long ago or now. The teacher asked, "Why would you prefer to live in New York City now?" A few students responded while the others sat quietly. The teacher did an in-the-moment interruption and directed the students’ attention to pictures showing New York City long ago and current pictures highlighting buildings and transportation. One student explained that he would prefer to live in the city long ago because he would be able to play outside and ride on the street cars. As a result, students were able to use details to justify their answers. In a fourth grade writing lesson, students were engaged in peer editing using a rubric. The teacher observed that a number of students were only checking the boxes and were not writing comments. She made an in-the-moment adjustment to review the model that she provided for them. A first grade reading lesson required students to read a variety of text and highlight evidence to support their choice of pets. A number of students were observed highlighting whole paragraphs, “Why did you underline this paragraph?” The teacher used a mid-class interruption using her model to demonstrate that she only underlined the sentences that supported her choice of pet. This type of effective adjustment to meet students’ needs was observed across classrooms.

- During the student interview, students described pieces of work that they were proud of, and explained how they used rubrics to determine what was required for a high grade. One student showed a writing task with feedback recommending that he use linking sentences to connect his ideas. He explained that the rubrics showed him examples of linking sentence starters and he used them and got a better grade. The students also stated that they regularly assess their own learning, as teachers ask them to review their own work. This was evident on reflection document that was attached to work samples. “Teachers ask us to look at our work and write a comment about what is missing and what we would do to get a better grade.”
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

School leaders support teacher development with effective feedback and next steps from frequent cycles of observation. An effective system drives the use of teacher observation data in the design of professional development as well as informs decisions as to staff members’ assignments.

Impact

Frequent cycles of observation provide teachers, including those new to the profession, with effective feedback. The professional learning team meets with school leaders to review instructional trends noted during classroom visits to inform professional development and decisions concerning assignments.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct four cycles of formal and informal observations for all staff and provided actionable feedback for next steps. Observation reports demonstrates that teachers receive prompt written feedback aligned to the school leaders’ focus. One observation included feedback recommending that the teacher “Organize group/partners to be engaged in discussion. Utilize turn and talk or think, pair strategy.” Another teacher feedback stated, “Ensure activities are engaging to hold students’ attention and require them to explain their thinking.” The teacher was guided further to revisit the documents she received in a previous professional development session titled “Looking at Rigor and Student Engagement.”

- The instructional team comprised of grade leaders and administration meet bi-weekly and review student assessment data to identify gaps in student learning in English Language Arts and math. Analysis revealed that students across grades were having difficulty with problem solving. The Exemplar math program has since been implemented to supplement the Envision program. Professional development documents indicated that teachers received training to support them in implementing the new math program. The use of the Exemplar program was evident across grades and the rubrics are used to provide students with actionable feedback.

- School leaders analyzed observation reports after each cycle to look for patterns and trends that may emerge. This information is used to design professional development. School leaders revealed that student discussion was an area that needed improvement. A professional learning calendar for the month of February indicated that teachers participated in professional development offsite on engaging student in discussion and turn keyed the information for other teachers. Additionally, teachers visited a model school to observe student discussion. Observation reports also evidence that teachers who were rated highly effective in specific areas were encouraged to facilitate schoolwide and small group professional learning and serve as mentors for new teachers.
**Additional Finding**

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Team and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured inquiry-based professional collaborations. There are distributive leadership structures in place.

**Impact**

Professional collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards, strengthening the instructional capacity of teacher who have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers consistently collaborate in grade teams both vertical and horizontal with a focus on planning and inquiry. Teachers have common planning time built in their schedules during the school day to engage in professional learning. In one teacher team, the fourth grade teachers demonstrated the protocol for analyzing student opinion writing. One teacher noted that students were citing evidence to support their claims, however, they were not paraphrasing. Another noticing was that students were not using complex sentences. Through this process, they determined the areas of need, created an action plan, discussed next instructional steps, and set a check-in date to review student performance. The action plan included small group instruction, the use of scaffolds and anchor papers. Team members stated that their function is to bridge the gap between fourth and fifth grade to make sure the students are prepared for the next level. This endeavor is aligned to the school leaders’ goal to improve student performance in writing.

- Teachers have strengthened their instructional capacity through team collaboration. In one case, a teacher emulated a colleague’s lesson where she modeled the use of rubrics to edit a piece of writing. Since implementing the anchor chart in her classroom, the teacher noted an improvement in her students writing products and this has improved her practice in planning instruction in writing. Another teacher shared that through the collaboration she has improved in designing high order questions. She stated that working with her colleagues to design the questions has led to her preparing anticipated open-ended questions in her lessons. Furthermore, teachers noted that their collaboration is often done through intervisitations where they observe some of the practices shared in their meetings. One teacher stated and others agreed that their collaboration has had a positive impact on their teaching practices. A review of the Advance reporting data showed that teachers have improved in the area of planning and instruction from fifty three percent of teachers rated effective in the first cycle to seventy nine percent in the third cycle.

- Both inquiry and grade level teams give teachers voice in key decisions. Team leaders represent teachers on instructional matters as needed and facilitate workshops. Some teacher leaders are selected by administrators based on their leadership skills. Teachers have a voice in creating and delivering professional development to their peers through the professional development team. The professional development team met several times this year with administration to collaborate and review student data to determine next steps for professional learning. In addition, teachers have volunteered for leadership roles that impact schoolwide improvement such as, writing and obtaining grants for library books, musical instruments, and materials for the woodshop where students get to engage in hands on activities building things such as picture frames. Teachers interviewed noted that they are encouraged and supported to take leadership roles by school leaders.