Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 109
K-8 22K109
1001 East 45th St.
Brooklyn
NY 11203

Principal: Kerdy Bertrand

Dates of Review:
October 24, 2016 - October 25, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Rosemary Stuart
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>
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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>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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</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>Developing</td>
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### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
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<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<td>Area</td>
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1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults

3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations

### Systems for Improvement

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

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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

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

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

4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning

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
### Area of Celebration

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.3 Leveraging Resources</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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#### Findings

School leaders allocate resources for curricula and provide time in teacher programs in alignment with instructional goals.

#### Impact

Adopted curricula provide opportunities for students to engage in challenging academic tasks and produce meaningful work products. Teachers focus on improving instructional practices.

#### Supporting Evidence

- The teachers and school leaders jointly decided to adopt new curricula, such as a phonics program to supplement the existing curricular materials in the early childhood grades as well as programs in both English Language Arts (ELA) and math in the upper grades. These purposeful decisions ensure that students have access to rigorous tasks. The school leader has allocated resources to obtain baseline assessments in reading and other content areas for each class as well as provide an online program for sharing information about student performance for staff and parents.

- School partners include several community based organizations that provide afterschool remediation and enrichment opportunities for students. For example, students are involved in science and technology initiatives to encourage digital learning and coding. Other partnerships enable families and students to have access to cultural institutions such as the Museum of Natural History and the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens.

- School leaders, new to this school, determined that students with disabilities needed more support and revised teaching programs specifically to place teachers with expertise in programs for push-in and pull-out services. In addition, there have been many new teachers hired for this school year, including teachers new to the profession and others who are new to City schools. One school leader stated that the large number of new teachers has "energized the teaching staff," and that they have contributed toward improving the quality of instruction for all students.

- The mission statement for the school aims for parents, teachers, and children to be “active participants in the total learning process.” Several students shared essays in which they outlined their learning goals. One eighth grade student wrote that she wanted to increase her grade in social studies by making sure that her assignments were completed on time and by getting a better understanding of the content, adding that she will be able to determine progress toward achieving her goal by using the new online grade reporting system. She further wrote that, “This goal is significant to my life because later on it can help me in high school.”
Findings

Classroom teaching strategies do not consistently address the differing learning styles and needs of all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. Not all student writing and discussion reflect high levels of rigor.

Impact

Not all students participate in appropriately challenging tasks and there are uneven demonstrations of student thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Some teachers use differentiated tasks to engage students in rigorous learning activities. For example, one teacher assigned a group of students to interpret word problems of varying levels of difficulty to create an input-output table, an equation, and a graph. These tasks, however, did not specifically address the needs of students with disabilities or those of the small enrollment of ELLs.

- In one class, students had access to projects they could do in the event they completed the lesson task ahead of other students in the class. Projects included creating a PowerPoint presentation or a board game based on the setting, characters, and plot of the book the student was reading. However, another task required students to complete a worksheet of computations with no context of real world application or expectation that the student explain their thinking about the meaning of decimal multiplication.

- Some teachers are providing instruction that is student centered, such as preparing for a debate on the merits of children being on Instagram. During this lesson, one group of students outlined their reasons in favor of this activity, and another group prepared to argue the opposite position. In another class, kindergarten students sang a song about the properties of hexagons while counting the number of sides and vertices in tiles. However, many lessons were teacher-led with limited opportunities for students to engage in rigorous discussion. Some questions did not inspire students to engage in deep discussion or only allowed for one word answers. In one class, students described pictures of families, in some instances incorrectly or incompletely, without an opportunity for discussion that may have surfaced the errors allowing for the possibility of correcting any misunderstandings.
### 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**

Teachers are beginning to adapt curricula to align with Common Core Learning Standards with support from school leaders. Some lessons are planned to emphasize rigorous habits.

**Impact**

College and career readiness skills are not evenly evident across grades. Planning for instructional coherence is inconsistent for all students with disabilities and ELLs.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders review lesson plans using a checklist of properties such as Common Core standards, rigorous grade level tasks, and higher-order thinking questions. One comment regarding an ELA lesson plan suggested that the teacher should plan to personalize the lesson plan so that it would be "specific to your student population." However, not all feedback to teachers about lesson plans focused on strengthening the alignment to the Common Core or on the need to provide differentiated tasks. On one checklist, the school leaders noted that the lesson included plans for three groupings and that there was no clear reason for how the groups were identified. On most checklists, the standard addressed was noted, but there was no reference to incorporating the instructional shifts.

- Teachers and school leaders jointly determined that they wanted to adopt new curricula in math and *Journeys* in ELA in order to increase the alignment of the programs with the Common Core and to provide lessons that are more targeted to the needs of their students, as in a supplemental phonics program for the early grades.

- Some lesson plans emphasize rigorous tasks which are explicitly connected to the standards. For example, in a plan for a grade eight math lesson, students are expected to determine some possible applications for linear equations through questions such as, “What does the slope represent in the real world problem?” In other lessons, the tasks are not outlined in detail or are planned as a series of questions or prompts that are not differentiated to account for the varying needs of groups of students.

- Not all lesson plans describe tasks that will engage students in active learning. One lesson plan identifies students to work at stations in groups either individually or with the support of the teacher. However, the plan doesn’t identify the task that will be the focus for each station.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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Findings
Assessment policy is inconsistent with respect to creating and using common assessments. There are missed opportunities for teachers to embed checks for understanding into instructional practices.

Impact
There are limited opportunities for teachers to gather and analyze data to determine trends and adjust curricula and instruction to meet the needs of all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Some teachers assess reading levels of students using running records. They share these reading levels with each other using an online document sharing program. Aggregated data regarding performance on State ELA and math tests are distributed to teachers and the notes from one grade team meeting indicate that the teachers analyzed this data. However, there is little evidence that the data are analyzed across grades or disaggregated to the student level to identify trends and patterns of student performance and to adjust instruction accordingly. For example, some teachers noted that the State math scores of all students in grade 5 declined in 2015-2016; however, teachers are not all tracking the performance of individual students from grade to grade.

- A few teachers capture information about student performance and use it to adjust subsequent instruction. One teacher observed eighth grade students during independent work time and collected information about how well each student portrayed a function as a table, graph, or equation, and if they wrote a word problem interpreting the equation. The teacher explained that the information would be entered into an online grade reporting system to which students and parents have access and would be used to determine groups of students needing additional instruction in these skills. Not all teachers were taking the opportunity to collect student-specific performance information.

- Some upper grade teachers are creating their own periodic performance assessments and are tracking the performance of their students on these tasks. Teachers stated that the whole staff is in the process of creating uniform common assessments and that the newly adopted curricula include pre- and post-instruction assessments that they will be administering.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations to staff and parents about instructional practices and student achievement.

Impact

School leaders provide training and hold teachers accountable for rigorous instruction and help families understand the progress their children are making toward college readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- High expectations are reinforced through notices displayed throughout the school. The instructional focus of the school emphasizes the expectation that students are provided with rigorous instruction and formative assessments leading to “deeper understandings of the content and skills” that are aligned to the Common Core Learning standards. It further states that teaching adjustments will lead to improved student achievement. At the start of the year, teachers created graphic organizers illustrating the best instructional practices for the coming year.

- School leaders survey teachers to determine their needs for professional learning and use the results to determine training opportunities. For example, two-thirds of teachers indicated they wanted additional support in addressing the needs of ELLs. The school leaders hold teachers accountable by conducting instructional learning walks and by providing feedback to teachers noting adherence to stated expectations, such as how well the lessons are aligned to the learning objectives.

- The Family Handbook provides information on how parents can stay informed about student progress and become “active participants in the total learning process.” Parents and students attend monthly schoolwide awards assemblies that reinforce the expectations around attendance and achievement. Students are recognized for exemplifying the college-going behaviors of politeness, responsibility, independence, diligence, and empathy (PRIDE). Parents celebrate their children’s progress along with teachers and school leaders.

- Parents understand what is expected of their children and can monitor their progress regularly through interim progress reports in ELA, math, social studies, science, homework, and conduct. Some teachers use ClassDojo, an online app that enables them to communicate with parents about daily class activities and to give homework or class project reminders. One parent indicated, and others agreed, that they strive to use the same academic language that is being used in the lessons. For example, one parent stated that at home she had been calling a triangle shape a pizza until the teacher informed her that at school the children were learning about sides and vertices of triangles. Another parent noted that the teacher shared tips on how to help students focus on writing and sight words from upper grades with the purpose of preparing them for success in the next grade. Eighty-nine percent of this school’s former eighth graders earned enough credit in their first year in high school to be on track for graduation.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: | Developing |

Findings

Teachers collaborate on teams and some are using an inquiry approach to promote implementation of the Common Core and to analyze aggregated data across grades.

Impact

Collaboration is beginning to strengthen teaching practices aimed at furthering student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are beginning to engage in a cycle of collaboration that begins with planning and implementing lessons. They then administer assessments, revise their lesson plans, and begin the cycle again. Teachers indicated that they are starting to use the strategy of beginning with the expected learning outcomes as they plan their lessons. Several teachers explained that in addition to their regularly scheduled team meetings, they voluntarily meet during their lunch periods to share best practices and provide additional support for new teachers.

- The minutes from one teacher team meeting showed that team members analyzed questions about rounding numbers from the State math test and also discussed the narrative writing from the ELA exam. The team members determined that the next instructional steps included having students engage in peer tutoring and edit using the associated rubrics. The next steps were not specifically connected to improvement goals for groups of students.

- Examples of feedback to teachers from school leaders note that lessons increasingly address the Common Core standards, include learning objectives that align with the task, and that some reflect the backward planning strategy.

- Teachers were observed looking at samples of student work, however, the work was not based on a common assessment and there was no classwide or gradewide performance data for them to compare with. Team members discussed the strategies each of them uses to determine when to re-teach to the entire class rather than to an identified small group.