Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 181 Brooklyn
K-8 17K181
1023 New York Ave.
Brooklyn
NY 11203

Principal: Victor Esannason

Dates of Review:
January 25, 2017 - January 26, 2017

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


School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</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>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>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>
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</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</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>
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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>
</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>
</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>
</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>
</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: | 1.4 Positive Learning Environment | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings
The school’s positive behavior intervention support program (PBIS) approach, and schoolwide structures for culture building and discipline, maintain mutual trust and positive attitudes to ensure academic success.

Impact
The school’s positive culture results in a safe environment that ensures student voice is valued and services are aligned to the needs of diverse learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The schoolwide PBIS Program supports the mantra of pride, respect, and organize (PRO). The acquisition of a PBIS coach supports teachers and other faculty in developing structures to promote positive behaviors throughout the school. The faculty has created a monthly theme to focus on and to provide Steptoe rewards to students who demonstrate behaviors aligned to the theme of the month or those of previous months. The Sanford Harmony program is implemented in lower grades via morning meetings and a buddy system that incorporates peer feedback. Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) data reflect a year-to-year decrease in the number and level of infractions by students, thus reflecting an increase in positive behavior.

- Teachers and parents expressed improvements in the overall school environment and shared how they are able to express their ideas towards improving the culture for learning. In addition, the student council serves as a forum for students to have their voices heard and ideas expressed. Currently, the student representatives are looking for ways to improve schoolwide community-building activities such as the implementation of fundraisers and food drives. Students share ideas for improving the quality of schoolwide activities with their student council representatives.

- Structures such as the School Implementation Team (SIT) and Pupil Personnel Team (PPT) are in place to determine and assess the quality of Individualized Education Programs throughout the year. Each team meets at least bi-monthly and reviews a combination of student work, and other data reports to develop action plans, which secure the appropriate placement of students in need of support and coordinate programming resulting in academic progress. The need for professional learning to ensure behavior plans is securely in place and implemented well as discussed at these meetings. In addition, attendance protocols include outreach and support by teachers and out-of-classroom personnel to ensure excessively absent students are monitored and supported.
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

Although the school uses curriculum–aligned rubrics, benchmark assessments have yet to be fully developed and in place across all grades and subject areas.

Impact

Cross-grade adjustments using data are in the process of development as are efforts to ensure students understand their next steps from feedback using formative and summative assessments.

Supporting Evidence

- *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)* reading data and end-of-unit math summative data are analyzed for trends and progress towards benchmark levels. In the upper grades, a review of English Language Arts (ELA) data reflected that students demonstrated difficulty with reading informational text. In math, grade four teachers made adjustments to the curricula to incorporate more division games as the students demonstrated difficulty with interpreting the remainder. A review of ELA and math data shows increases, yet students are still scoring below benchmark levels. School leaders obtained resources to supplement the instructional program. Although the school provides special programs to support student progress in these areas, those structures are not yet fully in place to address areas that analysis of data has determined needed growth.

- This year school leaders and staff are implementing tasks where students are assessed pre-, interim- and post-unit on targeted skills across subject areas. However, analysis of science and social studies data has yet to reflect needed adjustments in the curricula. In addition, school leaders are in the process of using the data to ensure targeted subgroups’ needs are met.

- During an interview, several students shared teachers’ feedback, which was in the form of compliments and next steps. A similar structure of feedback was displayed on several work products in classrooms and in student folders. One student was able to explain her teacher’s feedback, which asked the student to elaborate on her writing and to expand on those details. However, other students were unable to share strategies that aligned with feedback obtained from their teachers. One student shared that in order to improve the quality of his writing, he needs “to infer,” yet the feedback provided stated that the student needed to work on proofreading.
Findings
The school’s curricula is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate instructional shifts related to application and fluency while consistently emphasizing rigorous habits within academic tasks across grades and subject areas.

Impact
Planning and decision-making promote coherence, especially in math, for student sub-groups to ensure their exposure to rigorous writing tasks and to build a pathway to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- This year, school leaders and staff made a decision to extend the GO Math! program from kindergarten to grade eight to build consistency in teaching number sense and math fluency across the grades. A combination of Fundations and ReadyGen ensure students in grades kindergarten through grade five obtain close reading skills and have a foundation in word-solving strategies. For grades six through eight, ELA faculty utilize Expeditionary Learning to build comprehension skills. A review of ELA and math curricula tasks reflects alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards. In addition, school leaders obtained Rubicon Atlas to place curricula onto one program for the purpose of building transparency between all subject and grade-level teachers. Both the science and social studies curricula reflect alignment to state standards and the city scope and sequence.

- Emphasis on math application and fluency is evident across grades. In a grade six math plan for students with disabilities, the task asks students conduct a gallery walk while using ratio and rate reasoning to solve real-world problems related to unit pricing, cooking and the determination of speed as well as to explain how they obtained their answers. In a grade five Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) lesson plan, the task required students to use patterns and place value to determine the product of a number and the positioning of decimals including those number problems with exponents. A review of the math curricula from Rubicon reflects similar alignment to these instructional shifts.

- A review of curricula maps reflects tasks aligned to Webb’s Depth of Knowledge Level 3. In a grade eight unit, students are asked to design and use a Punnett square or pedigree chart to predict the probability of certain traits. In a grade seven social studies unit, students are required to write an essay to demonstrate their understanding of why people, create, structure, and change their governments. In an ELA class for students with disabilities, students review and understand the purpose of a petition and make a connection to the text, Lyddie, in order to form an opinion about whether the main character should act upon a social issue, and they cite evidence from the text to support their thinking.
Findings
Teaching strategies have yet to consistently provide multiple entry points into appropriately challenging tasks and student discourse for all students.

Impact
Missed opportunities for full engagement in tasks foster uneven levels of thinking and participation and inhibit higher-order thinking.

Supporting Evidence
- In a grade five ELA class, students worked in groups to answer questions based on a common class text, Rachel Carson. Each group was provided questions based on their reading levels. In one group, one student debated his peer’s response and stated that the response couldn’t be used to answer the question, as it wouldn’t match the information in a text. Other students in each group were viewed citing evidence from the text to support their responses. One group made text-to-text connections with another book. However, the level of student responses in tasks across other classes did not reflect the same level of perspective and critique.

- In a grade two class, the teacher taught a lesson on how addition and subtraction are related. The teacher used visuals and referred to math strategies while teaching. For independent work, students were given an opportunity to engage in a task using manipulatives to answer a math question. However, most students were provided the same one or two questions to respond to during this time. In addition, some students were not using the manipulatives provided to answer the questions and were unable to complete the task.

- In some classes, teachers primarily directed the lesson. In an abridged social studies class with students with disabilities, the teacher asked mostly recall questions directed to individual students. Similarly, in an ICT math class, a review of the problem of the day was mostly teacher-student-teacher and one- or two-word responses from the class.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 3.4 High Expectations  
Rating: Proficient

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide training on assessment practices to the staff. The school staff consistently communicates high expectations to families through parent workshops and other structures to help them understand their children’s progress.

Impact
A system of accountability is in place for staff, and families are aware of their children’s academic progress towards high expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Communication on the school’s instructional focus on assessment is emphasized in *Weekly Glance* newsletters, emails, and other memoranda. School leaders use professional development training to communicate and provide support for teachers and other staff on expectations as measured by assessment. A review of the professional development calendar reflects sessions on the use of formative assessment to plan instruction. It also reflects time for teachers to act on “Bridge to Practice” where grade and content teams choose a practice to try based on the training session.

- Teachers are provided feedback and support via post-observation conferences and through written feedback reports. A review of reports reflects feedback and resources provided by school leaders to assist teachers towards improvement in using assessment in instruction, questioning, and discussion. Support provided aligned to assessment reflect how to elicit more from students to check for understanding and how to circulate around the room to review student work and gauge student understanding.

- Parents reported that teachers often provide them with information on their children’s academic progress. Online databases and progress reports provide families with grades and Tuesday parent engagement time is an opportunity to speak with staff members to determine how their children are performing in school. Monthly parent workshops on writing and homework-help inform parents of schoolwide and grade-level expectations. Parents reported that teachers often serve as resources for their children and provide parents with tools to help their children at home.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<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 school is in the process of developing consistent *Data Wise*-structured, inquiry-based collaborations to analyze data and students work for targeted student groups.

Impact

Teacher teams are developing structures to ensure teacher practice and capacity improve as well as increase student progress towards goals.

Supporting Evidence

- This year, teacher teams are beginning to utilize protocols from *Data Wise* to structure meetings that occur weekly both vertically and at the grade level. School leaders are working on creating model teacher teams to build capacity towards strengthening other teams across the school. A review of minutes reflects these structures. In addition, protocols and focus for cycles of teacher teamwork are set by administrators to ensure meetings are aligned to the school’s goals and instructional focus. For the October-November cycle, guidance included how to conduct a lesson plan collegial review and how to look at student work.

- In the beginning of the year, upper grade ELA teachers used the item skills analysis from the state exam to determine skills in which students were deficient such as in citing evidence. The group began to use strategies to help with the structure of writing essays to help with citing evidence including role, audience, format, topic (RAFT) and restate, answer, cite, explain (RACE). In addition, they provided extra, differentiated homework assignments. Targeted students were chosen as a focus throughout the year in order to monitor their progress during team meetings. However, consistent analysis of student progress across grades is only beginning to emerge in the school.

- In a math team meeting, teachers reviewed sample math tasks for specific students. The team reviewed the work for evidence of strengths and for areas of growth, which included lack of math academic vocabulary when justifying the answer and describing the concept of ratio and unit rate. The team suggested using models and more visuals as well as emphasizing math vocabulary more in lessons. However, a review of notes across other grades and content areas shows only some teams review student work with clear next steps for instruction towards a set of goals.