Quality Review Report
2016-2017

P.S. 216 Arturo Toscanini
Elementary 21K216
350 Ave. X
Brooklyn
NY 11223

Principal: Donna Neglia

Dates of Review:
April 20, 2017 - April 21, 2017

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

P.S. 216 Arturo Toscanini serves students in grade PK through grade 5. 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>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>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 Culture

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

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

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

Findings

High expectations connected to the school leader’s 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 high expectations to families and help them to support their children.

Impact

Structures that provide staff training, foster accountability, and promote the school’s high expectations for teaching and learning are in place. Families are kept abreast of student progress 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 means including weekly notes, staff handbook, and in professional development. Expectations listed in a memo include checking for understanding, scaffolding of skills, and multiple entry points into lessons. A review of the professional development plan revealed an alignment between expectations communicated and the 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. Administrators conduct 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 track professional growth of teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching to measure progress. Through this method, school leaders identify trends and establish professional needs based on teacher observations. In addition, teachers take surveys to provide additional insight of what teachers need regarding their own professional development. Recently, training in differentiated instruction was offered as per observation data and teacher’s request to improve instruction to meet the needs of the large population of English Language Learners (ELLs). Teachers assume responsibility for implementing new strategies and meeting schoolwide expectations in collaborative teams and intervisitations in which they visit their colleagues’ classrooms to observe effective practices.

- Parents shared that school leaders communicate with them via phone calls, progress reports, flyers, planners, daily folders, workshops, and various online interactive systems that give them direct access to teachers. Furthermore, parents noted that during parent engagement Tuesdays they have the one-on-one conversation with teachers who answer their concerns and provide guidance to help their children navigate through homework and to promote a home-school connection. One parent noted and the others agreed that the workshops provided by the school have been most helpful in helping them learn about the Common Core Learning Standards and what students are required to learn. Another parent shared that the workshops on test-taking strategies have given her the confidence to help her daughter in writing short responses. She explained that she used the writing samples and rubrics she received in the workshops as a checklist. As a result, her daughter’s writing has improved as noted by her teacher.
**Area of Focus**

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

Teaching strategies such as graphic organizers, sentence starters and manipulatives serve as 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 scaffolded tasks across the vast majority of classes. Thus, classrooms do not yet reflect student ownership in discussion and participation.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In a fourth-grade math lesson, students discussed strategies to solve multi-step problems involving fractions and whole numbers. Students prepared by highlighting key words indicating the operations to use. One student commented, “I think we first need to know what the problem is asking us to do.” In a third-grade reading lesson, students worked in peer groups reading *The Year of Miss Agnes* by Kirkpatrick Hill to determine how Miss Agnes’ action affected the sequence of events. One student noted that Miss Agnes was a great teacher. Another student challenged him to cite the evidence in the text. He directed her to chapter one where the character was described as tough. “She was tough because she wanted the students to stay on track.” In a fourth-grade reading lesson, students worked in groups to identify the character’s actions and the motivation for the action. Students were heard discussing the difference between the character’s action and the motivation. One student commented that the motivation usually comes before the action. While structured prompts ensured that students engage in high-level thinking, student ownership in discussion was not observed.

- Entry points into lessons were consistent across most classes; there was no evidence that they were strategic in the majority of classes. In a fourth-grade Integrated Co-Teaching lesson, students worked in groups responding to leveled questions on earthquakes. Students were directed to restate the question, answer the question and cite evidence to respond to the questions. While teachers offered support to small groups, not all groups were able to complete the task. In one group, students were observed re-reading the question several times to figure out what the question was asking. In another group, two students were unable to restate the question to write their responses so they waited for the others to assist them. In a kindergarten math lesson, students worked in groups counting to one hundred using various manipulatives. However, in one peer group the students were counting by ones using cups numbered one to one hundred. They were unable to navigate through the large number of cups to find the consecutive numbers and did not complete the task. Although the teacher provided some entry points into the lessons, students with disabilities including ELLs who needed additional tailored scaffolds were unable to complete tasks thus, scaffolds in these lessons were not strategic.

- Guided by a technology presentation and diagram showing a pan balance and various weights in grams, fourth-grade students predicted mass of various objects and worked in groups to test their predictions. Students used rocks, markers, anchor charts with pictures, and chart papers to record their findings as they learn about mass and weight. Groups including ELLs were engaged in the activity. During a second-grade math lesson, students worked in groups to write the total for money amounts greater than one dollar. Students used various manipulatives to solve differentiated tasks. The session ended with students sharing their answers explaining why they use a decimal point in the answer.
## 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 texts with a focus on academic vocabulary and writing from source. Additionally, curricula emphasize rigorous tasks and high order skills in all subject areas.

### Impact

Curricula promote career readiness and require all students including ELLs and students with disabilities to demonstrate high-order thinking.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff develop curricular 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. In a fourth-grade math unit, students are required to solve multi-step word problems including multiplying fractions and whole numbers and justifying their answers in writing. In a grade-three social studies unit on Egypt, students will cite evidence from a variety of sources to respond to the essential question “How do culture, geography, and history shape a world community?” In a fifth-grade reading unit, students are asked to read *Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African-Americans* as the mentor text and a variety of supplementary texts such as *The Price of Freedom* to determine how the author’s point of view influences the description of events. In a fourth-grade science unit, students will use academic vocabulary such as, nitrogen, oxygen, thermal energy to explain how air can be a mixture of solutions and a suspension.

- Academic tasks across grades and subjects emphasize rigorous habits for all students. A fifth-grade writing task indicates that students would unpack a variety of texts to write a research-based argumentative essay. A third-grade social studies task requires students to construct a persuasive speech to present to the zoo’s visitors about the importance of the animal and its adaptations to our community. A fourth-grade reading task will ask students to analyze a text to explore how the author’s choice of words helps to visualize the setting and plot of the story.

- Lesson plans demonstrated that teachers make modifications to units through the use of instructional grouping, small-group work, scaffolds and manipulatives so that learners have access to rigorous tasks. For example, a fourth-grade reading plan outlines a task for specific students noting that five students will work independently taking notes on how the characters actions affect the sequence of events to support group discussion while another group works with partners using close reading strategies to complete a sequence of event map. A third group will engage in reading using technology. A second-grade math plan identifies students to work in groups with adult support solving word problems involving money while others work in peer groups using various scaffolds such as differentiated tasks and a variety of manipulatives.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating:</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</table>

Findings

Teachers use rubrics and checklists aligned to curricula and ongoing checks for understanding to determine student progress toward goals.

Impact

Teachers use rubrics to provide students with actionable feedback while students also use rubrics to self-assess and improve upon their work. The use of ongoing checks for understanding including modeling result in effective, on-the-spot instructional adjustments across classrooms.

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 rubric assesses math knowledge, thinking, application, and communication. Feedback on a second-grade multi-step problem stated, “Your model shows that you understand the question.” Let’s work on explaining how you know Austin is incorrect.” The following feedback is recorded on a third-grade writing rubric, “You clearly stated your opinion and supported it with details from the text. Next step is to use your ideas and thoughts about the topic to help readers understand the reason for your opinion.” On an informational report on endangered blue whales, a third-grade student received a feedback stating, “You organized your information clearly and included helpful diagrams, work on connecting your ideas and information with transitional words.”

- During the student interview, students described pieces of work that they were proud of and explained how they used rubrics to determine what is required for a high grade. A fifth-grade student showed an opinion-writing task with feedback recommending that he work on writing a strong conclusion. He explained that he looked at the rubric and it stated that he could restate the main points and connect them to the text to make his conclusion better. I revised his piece and he received a better grade. Students also noted that they regularly assess their own work using the rubric before they submit it to the teacher.

- Teachers across grades were observed checking for understanding during classroom instruction by asking targeted questions. During a third-grade reading lesson, students discussed how the character affects the sequence of the story. The teacher asked, “How did the character being strict affect the story?” Only a few students were able to share responses in the form of inferences which aligned to Webb’s Depth of Knowledge Level 2. The teacher did an in-the-moment interruption and directed a student’s attention to a previous chapter where the author described the character as a tough one who does not allow you to get away with anything. One student stated, “I think strict could also mean that you are tough. If she says you have to do something you have to do it.” During a fourth-grade science lesson, students measured mass using a variety of rocks. The teacher observed that a number of students were having difficulty balancing their scale and were unable to articulate a strategy when they were asked, “Why did you choose a yellow weight instead of a blue?” She made an in-the-moment adjustment to review the weights and allowed a group of students to model for the class when they use a small weight or a big weight. As a result, students were heard saying, “That’s too much, let’s try five grams.” These types of effective adjustments to meet students’ needs were observed across classrooms.
Additional Finding

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

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 observations data in the design of professional development and decisions as to staff assignments.

Impact

The instructional team conducts observations and an analysis of assessment data and provides teachers, including those new to the profession, with effective feedback that pinpoints next steps. 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 observations for all staff and provide actionable feedback for next steps. Observation reports demonstrate that teachers receive prompt written feedback aligned to the school leader’s focus. One teacher observation report included feedback recommending that the teacher “Use data from assessments such as Fountas and Pinnell and conference notes to form individual goals for students.” Another teacher feedback stated, “Ensure that all students have access to the learning; revisit the Teachers College manuals for ideas on scaffolding.” In another observation, feedback to the teacher stated, “Work with your team to develop a way to track mastery of concepts and goals before, during, and after instruction.”

- The instructional team comprised of grade leaders and administration meet monthly and review assessment data through item analysis, to identify gaps in student learning along the standards by grades, class, subgroup, and for individual students. Analysis of math data revealed that students across grades were having difficulty with solving word problems. Thus, the Exemplar math program was implemented to supplement the Go Math! program. This was also in alignment with the school leaders’ goal to improve students’ math performance which has shown a decline on the 2016 State exam. 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.

- School leaders analyze observation reports after each cycle to look for patterns and trends. The information gleaned from this process is used to design professional development. A professional development calendar revealed that teachers participated in professional development regarding strategies to support ELLs. Additionally, teachers participated in intervisitations to observe effective strategies to engage students with disabilities. Observation report also evidenced that teachers who were rated highly effective in specific areas were encouraged to facilitate school-wide professional learning sessions, open their classrooms for their colleagues to visit and to observe lessons, as well as to serve as mentors for new teachers. This was evident in observation reports in which the teachers received highly effective in specific domains. The feedback to one teacher stated, “As next steps, I would like to arrange for colleagues to visit your classroom to observe effective strategies to support English Language Learners.”
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 teachers who have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers have common planning time built into their schedules to engage in professional learning during the school day. Teachers collaborate in teams with a focus on planning and inquiry. During one fourth-grade team, teachers demonstrated the protocol for analyzing student writing. This endeavor is aligned to school leader’s goal to increase student performance in writing. One teacher noted that students’ writing lacked organization. Another teacher noted that students were not citing evidence to support their claims. 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 such as graphic organizers and sentence starters. Team members stated that their function is to bridge the gap between fourth and fifth grade to ensure that the students are prepared for the next level.

- Teachers have built instructional capacity through team collaboration. In one case, a teacher praised her colleagues for sharing strategies they use to introduce a nonfiction text. Since observing her colleagues’ lessons, she feels much more confident in planning and delivery of instruction using nonfiction text. Another teacher noted that her practice has improved in math instruction using the *Exemplar* problem-solving strategies. She stated that after observing her colleague’s lesson which included the use of an anchor chart demonstrating a step-by-step approach to solving multi-step problems, she has emulated the strategy as well as the anchor chart. As a result, she now includes more direct instruction and scaffolds that she might not have used. One teacher noted and others agreed that their collaboration has had a positive impact on their teaching practices and others agreed. A review of teacher observation reports showed that teachers have improved in the area of planning and instruction from team cycle one to cycle two.

- Inquiry and grade teams give teachers multiple opportunities to have a voice in key decisions that affect learning. Team leaders are selected by administrators based on their leadership skills and professional skills. Through these teams, teachers have a voice in creating and developing professional development for their peers, selecting instructional materials, and serve as liaisons between the staff and administration. In addition, teachers have volunteered for leadership roles that have an impact on school improvement such as, facilitating family events, hosting school visits for other educators, and opening their classrooms for their colleagues to observe best practices. Teachers interviewed noted that they are encouraged and supported to take on leadership roles by school leaders.