Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 250 George H. Lindsay
Elementary 14K250
108 Montrose Ave.
Brooklyn
NY 11206

Principal: Roseann Lacioppa

Dates of Review:
November 15, 2016 - November 16, 2016

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. 250 George H. Lindsay serves students in grade K 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>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<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>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 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>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

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<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>
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<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>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff through the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and professional learning sessions. Family engagement sessions help parents understand their children’s progress and communicate expectations connected to college and career readiness.

### Impact

Staff and parents are well informed regarding the school’s expectations and student achievement and are held accountable for meeting those expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- The staff has access to all school communications including professional development agendas, teacher team information, and the teacher’s handbook which outlines the school's expectations for instruction, professionalism, and the elements of Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teachers engage in collaborative practices to support the school’s high expectations including planning instruction, analyzing student work, and sharing best practices.

- School leaders communicate expectations through ongoing observations and give timely feedback aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the schoolwide expectations for learning. For example, one school leader recommended that a teacher establish class routines to promote smooth transitions from one activity to another. Another recommendation suggested introducing writing folders for kindergarten students. In addition, the principal conducts one-on-one conferences with all teachers to reinforce expectations and hold teachers accountable for planning next steps.

- Weekly parent workshops provide opportunities for parents to engage in learning with their children through hands-on projects tied to literacy and math units of study. For example, teachers were observed engaging with parents in math problem solving and word study activities delivered in both Spanish and English. In another workshop parents worked on art activities that incorporated language development and literacy skills. In the parent interview, they stated that the workshops help them learn about the literacy themes covered at school, provide them with strategies to help their children with reading and give them the opportunity to spend quality time with their children as they work toward meeting expectations.

- Families are kept informed via phone calls, monthly calendars, ClassDojo, an educational website and newsletters. The newsletters are provided in English and Spanish and includes information about current events, activities for family engagement, parent workshop topics, schoolwide instructional focus, and reminders. For example, November kindergarten’s instructional focus for social was cultural identity and trees as resources for science. Reminders include checking book baggies daily for homework, and setting aside a special time for reading daily.
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

Teachers are inconsistently using assessment rubrics to provide actionable feedback to students regarding achievement. Not all teachers are using ongoing checks for understanding to assess student learning and adjust curricula.

Impact

The inconsistent use of common assessments and uneven checks for understanding result in limited information about student learning. Not all teachers are making effective curricular adjustments to meet student’s learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grades, teachers circulated throughout the classroom during the students’ independent work time to check for understanding and provide support. Only a few of the teachers observed took notes or used the information to adjust the instruction. For example, in a fourth grade lesson the teacher used her noticing to redirect students’ discussion. She stopped the students and asked them to adjust their thinking by looking for evidence to justify their answers. In a math lesson a teacher removed two students from their original group and added them to a small group with the aid of manipulatives and adult support. However, these practices were uneven across classrooms.

- Teachers use rubrics to provide feedback on work displayed on bulletin boards. Some work products included actionable next steps in the comment sections of the rubric while others reflected general comments. One comment reminded the student to use periods at the end of a complete sentence and use a capital letter at the beginning of a sentence. In other cases, the comments lacked a well-defined direction to take the work to the next level or to keep in mind on a subsequent task. For example, one teacher suggested that a student “use your planning page to add more to your paragraph.” There were also a few examples where the feedback was limited to a check in the boxes on the rubric. For example, a check was placed in the box next to the item stating that the ending of the story was connected to the main part of the story.

- Checks for understanding as assessments varied across classrooms. For example, in some classes teachers used exit slips to assess student mastery of the learning objective. In other classes observed, teachers used the thumbs up strategy without follow up questions to check for understanding or adjust to meet the needs of all learners. In a few classrooms observed, students gave the thumbs up sign but were unable to articulate their understanding of the lesson.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders and faculty ensure curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and incorporate the instructional shifts with a focus on text complexity and academic vocabulary. Lesson plans consistently reflect rigorous academic tasks that require high-order thinking skills.

**Impact**

Lesson plans and curricula emphasize career and college readiness and require all students including English Language Learners and students with disabilities to demonstrate high-order thinking.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The teachers utilize the Common Core-aligned *Core Knowledge* for English Language Arts (ELA) in kindergarten through grade two, and the *Expeditionary Learning* curriculum for literacy in grades three to five. The *GO Math!* and *Exemplars* problem solving are used across all grades. The programs consist of interdisciplinary units of study that are content rich. School leaders explained that these programs were chosen as they provide multisensory learning opportunities and promote language development through discussions for all students including English Language Learners (ELLs). The staff revised the curricula to adjust pacing and include the necessary supports to meet the needs of all students.

- Planning documents reviewed included *Depth of Knowledge* questions, teaching points, academic vocabulary, scaffolding, and tiered tasks that are embedded in the curricula with the integration of the instructional shifts. For example, in one fifth grade plan students are asked to analyze text, present claims, and defend arguments with text evidence. A fourth-grade lesson plan states that students will read *The Great Law of Peace* to identify connections to another text about the Peacemaker. A math lesson plan indicates that students will use the distributive property to multiply two digit numbers and a social study plan states that students will describe the geographical and historical setting in a case study.

- Across classrooms curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills. For example, teachers utilize Webbs’ *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) in order to plan questions that require strategic and extended thinking. For example, “Why do you think the word partial is used in the phrase partial products?” In addition, lesson plans indicate culminating and performance tasks that allow students to engage in higher order thinking such as comparing and contrasting texts, and solving *Exemplars* math problems to enhance their writing in math and conceptual understanding.
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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Findings
Teaching strategies providing multiple entry points into the curricula are inconsistently implemented and student discussions and work products do not reveal high levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact
Lessons inconsistently provide opportunities for all learners including students with disabilities to demonstrate high levels of thinking and produce meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- In a few classrooms visited, students were engaged in high levels of thinking and used evidence or examples to support their reasoning. In a fourth-grade class, students responded to high-order questions such as, “Do you think Adorodoah will change the way he thinks about peace?” Students participated in their group discussion giving text evidence to support their thinking. In a math class students worked in groups to solve word problems and shared their strategies. However, evidence of these core pedagogical practices was uneven across classes and grades.

- In most of the classes, student discussions were limited by low-level questions or low-level tasks. In a first-grade reading lesson students were asked a number of low-level DOK recall questions. For example, “What did his dad do?” and “What did she lick?” During an integrated co-teaching (ICT) math lesson, students worked in groups on differentiated math problems where some students multiplied by two digit numbers while others multiplied by one digit numbers. Students were required to predict and discuss questions such as, “What is the problem about?” The majority of the students sat quietly while one student did most of the talking. One student worked ahead of the group to solve the problem but erased it after he was told by another student to wait for the group. While the tasks were differentiated the opportunity to engage students in high-level discussions and challenging thinking was limited particularly for high performing students.

- Across classrooms, teachers are beginning to use accountable talk conversation prompts. Students were prompted to engage in conversations in most of the classrooms visited. However, the conversations often resulted in teacher to student and student to teacher discourse. For example, in a fifth grade lesson the teacher posed a question to the class, “Why do you think she needs that by her side?” Although the question required high levels of thinking, the teacher moved forward with the lesson after one response with a missed opportunity to delve deeper with a follow-up question and engage the students in high-level discussion. In an ICT class, students were engaged in a reading lesson requiring them to compare themselves to a character and write three things to share with their group. The use of the same text did not afford opportunities for all students to identify a range of comparisons to support the discussion. In an ICT class, students completed the task in time to share. Although students sat in groups, there was no evidence that the task was modified to allow English Language learners and students with disabilities to engage in the discussion at a high level.
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 use frequent cycles of teacher observation to provide feedback and design professional development.

Impact
Teachers receive feedback from observations and professional development designed to develop their instructional practices and promote professional reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- A professional learning calendar outlined topics to be covered during professional learning sessions for staff. Topics included, Framework for Great Schools, Advance observations, and the norming of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, in October, the priority for professional development was on questioning and discussion, student engagement, using assessment, and managing student behavior. These topics were identified by administrators as areas of need based on teacher observations.

- School leaders conducted formal and informal observations for all staff and provided actionable feedback for next steps. For example, one comment reminded the teacher of a previous feedback which was to work on the structures of the writing workshop based on the workshop model. It further stated that each lesson should begin with a quick mini-lesson where the skill is modeled for the students before they are sent off to work independently or in groups. Additionally, the teacher was given a date for a follow-up visit to see the progress. A schedule of intervisitations and the instructional specialist who would be supporting her was given to the teacher.

- In the teacher question and answer session, teachers reported that the feedback they received on their observations was very helpful. One teacher shared feedback that recommended she provide differentiated tasks for the students. She further stated that during the one-on-one conversation with the principal, they discussed the feedback and supports that were available to help her implement the recommendation. Following the conference, the principal arranged for her to visit another teacher’s classroom to observe a lesson using tiered tasks. Another teacher shared a similar experience and recalled how observing one of his colleague’s lesson on reciprocal math, helped him with his planning of math instruction and the delivery.
Findings
Across the school, the majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote school goals and distributive leadership practices.

Impact
Professional collaborations result in strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers and enhanced their voice in key decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grades, teachers participate in inquiry teams and grade level meetings. These collaborations focus on school goals and implementing the instructional shifts of the Common Core Learning Standards. The second-grade inquiry team used a protocol to focus on the evaluation of student work and on strategies to support student success. The objective was analyzing samples of an Exemplar math problem. Based on the Atlas protocol for second grade, teachers discussed evidence of student thinking. The team determined that the students demonstrated understanding of a key detail in the problem, which was to use the distributive property to solve the problem. The team’s suggestions for next steps included providing the scaffold of using sentence starters, vocabulary word cards, and an anchor chart to help students explain their thinking to meet the second-grade standards.

- Distributive leadership opportunities and teacher voice are present throughout the school. Teachers have opportunities to provide input on schoolwide decisions that affect student learning. For example, inquiry teams and grade level teams have teacher leaders who represent them on instructional matters, disseminate information and serve as the point person to the administration. Teacher teams review curriculum before they are adopted by the school and participate in learning walks and give feedback which helps to determine changes regarding the school culture. This year the idea to departmentalize the fifth grade came as a result of the collaboration between fifth grade teachers. Teachers explained that departmentalization allow them to focus on a specific subject area. For example, reading is taught by one teacher while math is taught by another as opposed to one teacher teaching all the subjects. In this model, students move between classes. Teachers commented on the impact of the departmentalization and they noted that the students are developing valuable organizational skills by having to move from class to class. They all agreed that this model helps to prepare students for the middle school experience.

- Grade teams have three common preparation periods each week. In one teacher conversation, teachers praised the administration for the opportunity to meet as a team. One teacher stated that the collaborations between teachers have significantly improved her practice in questioning. The other teachers all agreed that observing their colleagues was very helpful. Furthermore, the teachers shared that they stay in frequent informal contact with each other throughout the week by email and phone calls to follow-up on discussions as well as to share successful strategies.