Quality Review Report

2016-2017

M.S. K266 - Park Place Community Middle School
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 13K266
31 New York Ave.
Brooklyn
NY 11216

Principal: Glenda Esperance

Dates of Review:
May 16, 2017 - May 17, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Audrey Madison
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

M.S. K266 - Park Place Community Middle School serves students in grade 6 through grade 8. 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](http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm).

School Quality Ratings

### Instructional Core

To what extent does the school...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</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>
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<tr>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<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></td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Finding</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>
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### School Culture

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<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
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### Systems for Improvement

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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Proficient</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<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>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Findings

School leaders support the development of teachers with effective feedback and next steps from the strategic use of the observation process, and analysis of student work and data. Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths, challenges and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact

Feedback to teachers articulates clear expectations for teacher practice, supports teacher development, and aligns with professional goals for teachers, thus elevating schoolwide instructional practices that promote professional growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- At the start of the school year, school leaders met with staff individually to identify areas of strengths and areas for continued growth based on the prior year’s observation data and teacher self-reflection on their practice. Two to three professional goals were collaboratively determined and are aligned to Danielson components 1e: Designing Coherent Instruction, 3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques, 3c: Engaging Students in Learning or 3d: Using Assessment in Instruction. Specific expectations for individual teacher growth are clarified and documented and individualized professional development plans aligned to the goals were created. Midyear one-to-one conferences were conducted to determine progress toward goals, and include a review of completed observations and administrative feedback. Teacher reflections are part of this process and convey the impact of professional development sessions on practice.

- Observation reports reflect feedback that includes detailed examples of student and teacher actions and offers specific recommendations to improve student learning outcomes and teacher practice. In one case, a teacher was rated developing in components 3b, 3c and 3d, because there was limited student discussion and students were unable to give feedback on how to improve writing pieces because they were not provided a rubric, mentor text or checklist as a reference. Assessment tools such as teacher notes or exit slips were not evident. Subsequent observation ratings increased to proficient, with rationale and feedback that demonstrated suggestions had been implemented. Another teacher received a developing rating for component 3b, with adequate rationale and examples. Additional evaluator notes reflect that afterward, the teacher followed through on post-observation verbal feedback to restructure the classroom environment, seating students in groups to increase facilitation of peer discussion and improved to an effective rating. Observation reports reflect that additional resources such as articles, websites, videos, and referrals to the Danielson rubric are offered, and teacher practices generally reflect improvement. The principal emphasizes strides toward meeting the school goal for elevated teacher practice by explicitly stating in the additional evaluator notes of the reports, which observed components evidenced “highly effective and effective practices.”

- Informed by data analysis of the metric ratings in the School Quality Guide, school leaders determined an instructional focus to differentiate instruction with an emphasis for students performing at or above grade level. Observation reports strategically reflect feedback that reminds teachers of the wide range of academic abilities in their classes and the expectations for teachers to plan for supports and extensions. In a report for one teacher, the observer indicated all students were working on the same questions in a math unit review packet and conveyed that students were surveyed about the level of difficulty of the task, noting eight out of fourteen students thought the task was easy. In another instance, comments to another teacher state that instructional materials and resources are to be differentiated and appropriately challenging to every student and included a sample lesson and a recommended website as resources.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy       | Rating:   | Proficient |

Findings

Teachers consistently apply strategies such as reciprocal teaching and grouping to offer multiple entry points into the curricula and engage students through questioning and discussion. However, entry points are not consistently strategic and student discourse is not yet established.

Impact

While all learners, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs), are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills through peer discussions and work products, extensions into the curricula and student ownership are limited.

Supporting Evidence

- Student engagement in reading and discussion through the implementation of reciprocal teaching strategies, is apparent across classrooms, including classes for students with disabilities. Seventh-grade students in an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class read and discussed an article on poverty and eviction to make connections to the central idea of a text they had read previously. Students utilized the reciprocal teaching Fab-4 graphic organizer to predict, clarify, summarize, and generate their own questions and spoke freely with each other about the article. Displayed student work in a seventh-grade humanities unit on colonial America and in a sixth-grade humanities unit on Mesopotamian society further reflect student engagement in these comprehension strategies. Sentence starters and charts for each strategy were evident in support for discussion and writing. However, the deliberate use of these strategies as high-quality supports is not yet embedded across most classrooms to encourage students to use the text to determine answers to their generated questions, confirm or dispute their predictions, discover how the author provides clues to the meanings of unfamiliar words and further extend their comprehension.

- Teachers use varied grouping strategies, including adult facilitation to scaffold learning. However, grouping is not yet consistently strategic. In a mixed-grade class of students with disabilities, the teacher facilitated a group of sixth graders utilizing multiple formats to present information about the mummification process. An anticipation guide was used, key terms were presented in picture and text form, an animated video of the process was shown and the teacher read the text aloud. The paraprofessional facilitated reading and discussion as seventh-grade students worked to answer open-ended questions about the American Revolution using text structured in short paragraphs with subheadings. In another class, eighth-grade students worked in collaborative groups to use the Pythagorean Theorem to solve real-world problems. All students worked on the same three problems, discussed their solutions, but most did not question each other about different answers to the nearest tenth or take responsibility to explain their work during the share out. During an eighth-grade science lab, the teacher assigned student roles for collaboration in groups. Yet routines such as reading the directions first were not strategically followed to ensure successful execution of the experiment.

- Opportunities for student-to-student discussions leading to meaningful work products are apparent across classrooms as students are required to turn and talk during most lessons. In a music class, sixth-grade students conferred in pairs to critique a rehearsal recording of themselves playing as an orchestra. In an eighth-grade humanities class, groups of students discussed their answers to document-based questions about Germany and World War I, then decided on a group task from a choice of assignments. However, ownership in genuine student-led discussions to evidence further progress toward student discourse and strengthen student understanding was not an entrenched practice.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders and faculty make purposeful decisions to ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, integrate the instructional shifts and meet the needs of teachers and students. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data such as rearranging and emphasizing specific reading and writing standards across unit plans.

Impact

Diverse learners, including students with disabilities and ELLs, have access to cognitively engaging curricula that coherently promotes college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders decided to change the math curriculum to increase opportunities for students to engage in real-world problem solving and challenging math tasks which were lacking in the previous curriculum. The math team elicited recommendations from other schools and *Eureka Math* was chosen specifically because this is the curriculum used on EngageNY, emphasizing the shifts towards application and dual intensity and would build student capacity for higher-order mathematical thinking and extended problem solving. Curricular documents reflect math units that are aligned to the standards and tasks reflect application of the concepts in real-world situations. Teachers are supported with access to the pre-assessments, multi-step questions, exit slips and other formative assessments embedded in the curriculum. School leaders and teachers determined targeted standards of focus, informed by item analysis of State math exams and utilize *iReady*, an online math program, as a supplementary resource for individual skill building and fluency. School leaders offer Algebra for twenty-two selected students and have programmed additional instruction periods in preparation for the Regents exam in Algebra I.

- School leaders and teachers determined targeted reading and writing standards of focus for English Language Arts (ELA) based on item analysis of State exams. Sixth and seventh grade ELA units in the Code X curriculum were rearranged to emphasize argumentative and informational/explanatory pieces earlier in the school year rather than beginning with narratives. Planning documents reflect revised lessons to include skills from lessons that were previously taught progressively through the units in the curriculum and incorporate performance assessment tasks such as analyzing techniques that the author uses. Documents also reflect integration of the literacy writing standards into humanities, with emphasis on citing evidence from sources. School leaders supplement the curriculum with independent reading books at student reading levels, trade books and periodicals aligned to literacy topics and content areas.

- Lesson plans reflect multiple means of access to curricula based on student work and data. Plans for a sixth-grade humanities lesson for students with disabilities indicate text presented at different Lexile levels, access to audio-text and comic-strip format, scaffolded graphic organizers that offer different levels of prompting to support paragraph development for a historical argumentative essay. A seventh-grade ELA lesson plan reflects that high- and mid-level students will work in independent groups to analyze how an author develops a speaker’s point of view and annotate text. The teacher will facilitate the lower-performing group to analyze and annotate through guided questions. A science plan identifies heterogeneous groups of higher and lower level eighth-grade learners, grouping determined based on data captured in an online grading system and previous classroom performance on group tasks. Video for visual learners and vocabulary task cards were identified as scaffolds for ELLs and students with disabilities.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders and teachers determine student progress toward goals through the use of diagnostic, periodic and benchmark assessments. Teachers use rubrics for assessment tasks aligned with the school’s curricula.

**Impact**

A range of assessment results are used to adjust curricula and instruction. Students and teachers receive actionable feedback regarding student progress and are informed of strengths and next steps in learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- As per the Middle School Quality Initiative (MSQI), teachers administer Degrees of Reading Power assessments (DRP) two to three times a year to measure literacy skills through assessment of students’ comprehension of text passages. Further diagnostic running records were administered to the lowest performing students to determine specific and targeted interventions. Results from the Fall DRP assessments revealed that most of the struggling readers can read the words, but lacked strategies to comprehend complex text. School leaders and teachers determined it was important to shift their teaching methods to engage students in thinking about text to comprehend, which led to training and implementation of reciprocal teaching and explicit instruction of four comprehension strategies. In addition, school leaders scheduled students for additional periods to focus on skills in English Language Arts. Students are targeted for different interventions based on this data: students in need of phonemic awareness were programmed for Wilson instruction; others for skill building in structured guided reading groups; and targeted ELLs are scheduled for additional English as a New Language periods. Spring DRP results were used to determine progress.

- Mid-year ELA and math benchmarks in February were used to determine student growth toward the targeted standards of focus in both areas. The midyear school summary report indicates the percentage of students on each grade that met the standards on these assessments. Adjustments such as professional development through Metamorphosis consultants and extending implementation of reciprocal teaching strategies to the humanities and science classrooms to engage students in reading in the content areas were determined based on these assessment results. Formative assessments such as Stop-Drop-Write are used monthly by the ELA, humanities and science teachers, to adjust explicit writing instruction aligned to the Common Core. School leaders and teachers monitor individual and class data regarding informational and argumentative writing.

- Teachers consistently provide written feedback based on the use of rubrics aligned to curricular tasks. Performance task rubrics from the ELA curriculum are used to assess seventh and eighth grade argumentative essays. Criteria regarding organization and clarity, evidence and reasoning, language and conventions are checked or highlighted. Additional comments provide feedback that expresses strengths and areas of need within criteria. Next steps offer specific recommendations. In science, lab report evaluation scoring rubrics inform the degree to which eighth-grade students meet requirements of the task and lab performance rubrics assess how the labs were conducted. Teacher feedback on ‘create your own continent project’ offered a glow, “You were able to identify the earth’s physical features and their traits,” and an area to grow, “Let’s work to fully support your theme with more facts and details.” The music teacher incorporates the NYS Music Association rubric to provide verbal and written feedback to students regarding intonation, tone, and tempo based on audio recordings of the students playing instruments.
Findings

School leaders convey explicit messaging of high expectations and provide extensive professional learning and support for all staff. School leaders and staff effectively collaborate with families to support their children’s progress connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability has been established as a result of clear communication, training and parent partnerships present throughout the school.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders determined a school-wide pedagogical goal for teachers to demonstrate improvement toward highly effective and effective practice, with emphasis on Danielson *Framework for Teaching* components, 1e: Designing Coherent Instruction; 3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques; 3c: Engaging Students in Learning; and 3d Using Assessment in Instruction to be evident by an increase in Measure of Teaching Practice ratings. Reflection on the observation ratings revealed the need for continuing training in the Danielson rubric for school administrators and teachers. Professional development was provided to engage staff to re-examine the Danielson rubric, observe video lessons, take low-inference notes, and rate components. Teachers and school leaders have more substantive conversations about observation evidence in each component.

- Teachers express that the training provided by the MSQI coach in reciprocal teaching has supported their growth toward meeting school-wide expectations to teach students to extend conversations focused on text and assess their own comprehension. Literacy team teachers took on the responsibility to collectively develop a cohesive approach to further implement the reciprocal teaching strategies across content areas and engage in collegial inter-visitations to support each other’s practice. The professional learning plan reflects external consultants’ support of content and pedagogical knowledge. With a collectively determined instructional focus on differentiation and adjusting instruction based on the evidence of student understanding, teachers engage in targeted professional development sessions offered by the school district and the NYC Department of Education in support of their goals. Teacher reflections and lesson plans provide evidence of the integration of professional learning.

- Parent members of the School Leadership Team and the Parent Teacher Association state they are actively involved in the development of the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) goals and action plans, and have input into decisions such as extending the subscription for *iReady* for student access over the summer. Parents have organized the transition workshop for incoming sixth graders and parents, as well as offered workshops to help families support homework help and preparation for State exams. One parent invited a high school assistant principal to speak to families about expectations in high school. Interviewed parents were all part of the 85 percent of families who attended student-led conferences, which were scheduled from morning through evening hours over the course of a month to accommodate parent schedules. Students informed their parents of their progress through presentation of report cards, portfolios of selected work for core subjects, discussion of grades, strengths and weaknesses after preparation supported by their advisory teachers over a two-week period. Parents also receive DRP and *iReady* reports, to further inform of progress. Parents stress that they ensure their children are engaged in the supports, such as afterschool and Saturday Academy programs and the extracurricular experiences that help their children develop academically and be well rounded.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development
Rating: Proficient

Findings
Content-focused teacher teams consistently analyze student work and results of assessments with an emphasis on determining students' needs and enhancing teacher practice. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact
The work of collaborative teacher teams leads to improved teacher practice and progress toward achievement of goals for groups of students. Teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Minutes of the math inquiry team reveal that teachers collectively analyze assessment data. In one instance, the results for a sixth-grade stop-drop-solve assessment on equivalent expressions indicated that most students had not yet developed the skills to create equivalent expressions by combining like terms and distributing, evidenced by data demonstrating over 73 percent scored at lowest levels. Teachers looked at student work, documented strengths and needs, re-taught lessons, and administered an entrance ticket to re-assess student understanding. During an observed team meeting, teachers followed a protocol to examine student responses on the entrance ticket, noting improvements and errors. Teachers stated that most students answered correctly, but are still struggling with written explanations. Teachers discussed next steps to expand the math skills and connections to other units such as geometry. Yet, comparative data results were not discussed and there was a missed opportunity to examine the quality of written responses to determine the specific strengths and next steps, hindering progress toward mastery of goals for students.

- Literacy team minutes convey that teachers are assessing student work to determine effectiveness of the reciprocal teaching strategy. Through team meetings and collaborative inter-visitations, teachers identify successes stating that students are engaged in the reading and are "actually going back to the text during the discussion." Based on analysis of student work, teachers also notice challenges such as some students are not yet completing the summarization. Many of the students’ questions are literal based and can be found by reading further in the text. Journal responses indicate teachers are also reflecting on their practices, and collaborating to determine, "How can we build toward thoughtful questions rather than literal questions of some students?" "How can we support students to develop the meanings of words without using a dictionary?" Teachers have allotted additional time for structured summaries.

- School leaders have established opportunities for school leadership roles. Lead teachers facilitate the work of the collaborative teacher teams for literacy, social-emotional growth and math. As members of the instructional cabinet, lead teachers collaborate with administrators towards meeting the pedagogical goal to improve teacher practice, with emphasis on Domain 3 of Danielson and influence key decisions such as the implementation of the stop-drop-write and solve assessments. Lead teachers have invited presenters to enhance the work of their teams. A school-based MSQI coordinator facilitates implementation of the initiative to ensure that DRP assessments and data analysis are executed and also serves as a model teacher for reciprocal teaching. The music teacher has developed into a lead teacher for other music teachers across Brooklyn, through her engagement in a professional learning series for arts educators.