Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 272 Curtis Estabrook
Elementary 18K272
101-24 Seaview Ave.
Brooklyn
NY 11236

Principal: Dakota Keyes

Dates of Review:
March 15, 2017 - March 16, 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. 272 Curtis Estabrook 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>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>
<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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</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>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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</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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</thead>
<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 Capturing Kids Heart initiative, schoolwide commitment among administrators, counselors, teachers, students and parents guide the efforts in creating an inclusive school culture that positively impacts student’s academic and personal behaviors and promote student voice.

Impact

Students have adopted effective positive and academic behaviors as a result of the nurturing learning climate and social and emotional structures that are in place.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders believe that the approach to building a safe inclusive culture is to create an environment where students feel safe in their surroundings and with their teachers. This belief is reflected in a school-wide culture of positive attitude that is cultivated by daily activities that resonate the positive theme “Believe” that is posted on walls throughout the building. Across grades and classrooms, a nurturing and positive environment is apparent via the genuine respect shown to students by teachers and students to teachers. This was evident in a student meeting where one student volunteered to translate for a non-English speaking student so that the student could participate in the conversation. In classrooms, students were observed asking their peers for help, and raising their hands even when they had a difference of opinion. School structures enable students to have a voice in creating a behavioral contract that is posted in every class. In addition, the morning assembly program is conducted by students. One parent noted and others agreed that they consider the school as the student’s home away from home and they do not worry when they drop their children off. In addition, the students interviewed all agreed that they are well known by more than one adult and that there is always someone they can speak to.

- The Capturing Kids Heart program supports and boosts the school’s positive culture building through the focus on crisis de-escalation, and social-emotional learning. In both student meetings, students spoke proudly about the behavioral contract they created and shared that they help each other abide by the contract. One student stated, “If I see my friend doing something wrong, I remind him of the contract.” Staff takes a proactive approach to discipline through their mentoring program where college student mentors are paired with students to provide support rather than punitive measures. In addition, school leaders have created a safe space where students have an opportunity to sit, reflect, and speak to a mentor in the event that they have made a poor decision. These initiatives continue to have a positive impact on students’ social behaviors as evidenced by fewer incidents reported since the start of the school year in the Online Occurrence Reporting System when compared to last year at this time.

- Guidance counsellors worked with teachers and school leaders to personalize student attendance and have developed an initiative called “Race to School” to improve student attendance and lateness. Classes with the highest attendance are highlighted on the attendance board and receive a pizza party. One teacher stated that students in her classroom were heard encouraging a peer who is a chronic latecomer to come to school early so they can win and, subsequently, her class attendance has improved. Also, during the parent interview, one parent noted, and the others agreed, that they receive phone calls if their child is late or absent from school. Together these structures ensure that students receive the support their learning needs.
Area of Focus

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

Findings

Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into curriculum for learners to engage in conversations and produce meaningful work products.

Impact

While multiple entry points enable students to engage in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking in both student work products and discussions, entry points are not strategic, thus there is no student ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- In a fourth grade social studies lesson on European Immigration, students used close reading strategies to analyze primary and secondary documents to interpret various “push and pull” factors that brought immigrants from different countries to America. Students were heard presenting their viewpoints for migration such as the disease and natural disaster that swept through Italy in the start of the 20th century. Each table had a discussion facilitator who was tasked with ensuring that students used text-based evidence to support their claims. Another student added that the pull factor was the idea of American prosperity: “People were looking for a better life.” In a third grade reading lesson, students discussed how text features help to determine main idea. In one group, students explained that the main idea was in the caption of their text. As a rebuttal, one student disagreed and challenged the others to find supporting evidence. He asked, “Is that telling what the paragraph is mainly about?” Structured prompts ensured that students demonstrated a high level of thinking in discussion; however, student ownership in discussion was not observed.

- In a third grade science lesson, the teacher used differentiated tasks to engage students in small-group activities. High achievers used text and notes from a previous lesson on endangered animals to discuss how the lions and tigers were endangered and develop their own questions on the topic. One student’s question asked, “Why didn’t they put up more signs?” At-risk students worked with the teacher using a graphic organizer to identify main idea and supporting details. In both groups, students were able to complete the task. While there were consistent multiple entry points across classrooms, there was no evidence of strategic entry points. In a fifth grade math lesson on multiplying fractions by a whole number, students were given manipulatives and placed in groups to solve the same problem. Higher achievers solved the problems correctly, while students including English Language Learners who needed additional scaffolds were unable to complete the task as such; while there were scaffolds in this lesson they were not strategic to the need of the learners.

- In a fourth grade lesson, students read texts and discussed pictures to answer the essential question, “What was the immigrant experience like in New York City?” Students focused on a picture showing immigrants arriving in New York and used the given information to make inferences about the immigrants when they arrived. Students were heard saying that the experience must have been challenging. One student asked, “Why did you say that?” The student explained that coming to a new country with very little belongings can be challenging. “It is like starting a new life.” Thus, students in some classes were able to demonstrate higher-order thinking.
Findings

Curricula across grades and subject areas integrate the instructional shifts by exposing students to fiction and nonfiction text with a focus on academic vocabulary and citing evidence. Additionally, curricula emphasize rigorous tasks and higher order skills across grades and subject areas.

Impact

Curricula promote career readiness and require all students including English Language Learners and students with disabilities to demonstrate higher-order thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Both faculty and administration develop curriculum maps, lesson plans, and pacing calendars aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and incorporate the instructional shifts such as academic vocabulary, citing text evidence, and conceptual understanding. The instructional focus of citing text evidence is evident in a second-grade reading unit requiring students to read On The Farm by Julie Ferris to respond to the essential question “How do writers use explanatory details to develop points?” and cite evidence to support their answers. In math, teachers plan activities that require students to demonstrate conceptual understanding as well as procedural knowledge. A fifth-grade math unit indicates that students will be asked to write and interpret numerical expressions and justify their mathematical thinking in writing. In a fourth-grade social studies unit on immigration, students are exposed to academic vocabulary such as: primary, secondary documents, persecution, refugee, and migration to write an essay on how using primary documents which help to understand a period in history.

- Curricular planning documents include essential questions, Common Core Learning Standards, and emphasize the use of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge to promote higher-order thinking. Students are expected to answer a range of questions such as, “Why do writers use dialogue and details to develop characters and their experiences?”; “Why is it important to change the whole number to a fraction when multiplying a fraction by a whole number?”; “Why does geography matter?”; To what extent does geography influence where people live?” In addition, planning documents reflect tasks designed to engage higher-order thinking such as comparing and contrasting texts, solving multiple steps math problems, and in writing using text evidence to support claims.

- Rigorous tasks are embedded in units to ensure that students are prepared for the culminating activities with attention to writing from source. A grade five English Language Arts (ELA) unit includes two tasks in which students read Night of the Spadefoot by Bill Harley as the mentor text and a series supporting text such as Shells from Everything by Cynthia Rylant to determine a theme of a text by comparing and contrasting how characters, settings, or events in a story are impacted by a challenge. Then the students will write an argumentative essay and use citations from sources to support their view. In a fourth-grade social studies unit, students will be required to write an analytical essay comparing the two Native American tribes. In another ELA task, students will write a literary analysis of how the character’s motivation affects the sequence of events in The Lemonade War by Jacqueline Davis.

1.1 Curriculum Rating: Proficient
Additional Finding

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

Teachers create and use rubrics and checklists aligned with curricula. Teaching practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding to determine student comprehension of the learning objective.

**Impact**

Teachers use rubrics to provide students with actionable feedback. The use of ongoing checks for understanding results in effective on-the-spot instructional adjustments.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers adopted and created curriculum-aligned rubrics and checklists to support students in knowing next steps. A fourth-grade math rubric provides students with feedback on math knowledge, thinking, application, and communication. Feedback on this rubric to a fourth grade student involving multiplying fractions stated, “You clearly understand the concept of multiplying fractions. Our next step is to work on explaining the process using mathematical vocabulary.” Similar use of rubrics and feedback was evident across subject areas. On a fifth-grade ELA writing rubric, feedback on a narrative writing assignment stated, “Excellent claim, let’s work on finding relevant evidence to support your claim.”

- Across classrooms, teachers used checks for understanding by asking targeted questions to monitor student comprehension. In fourth-grade social studies lesson, the teacher asked, “What can you tell about Victoria from looking at the picture?” One student stated that the picture shows that Victoria and her family live a simple life. The teacher stated, “Why did you say that?” The student pointed to the fact that Victoria’s attire was very casual. The teacher took notes and directed student attention to the other document and asked them to find evidence to support their claim. In a fifth-grade Integrated Co-Teaching lesson, the teacher asked the student, “Why did she change the whole number to a fraction?” Only three students raised their hand. The teacher did a quick review of the concept with the class before moving forward with the lesson. In a second-grade math lesson, the teacher asked the students to tell why it was important to line up the numbers? After a few probing questions, students were unable to give the appropriate answer. The teacher stopped the class and with the students’ input she demonstrated the importance of placing the hundred, tens, and ones in the correct column. Thus, teachers were able to use the data from on-the-spot checks for understanding to make adjustments to meet students’ needs.

- During a student interview, the majority of students were able to articulate the purpose of the rubrics and what it means to progress to the next performance level. One student shared that he used the rubrics to self-assess and as a checklist to make sure he includes details, uses complete sentences, and that his topic is clear. A review of the student’s assessment to himself states, “I think I should get a four on this task because my answer shows comprehension of the mathematical concept.” Although his assessment was higher than the teacher’s assessment, which was a three, he agreed with the teacher’s feedback asking him to use more mathematical vocabulary. As a result of actionable feedback and clear use of curriculum-aligned rubrics, the students all agreed that rubrics help them improve their work by telling them what to do and how to get a good grade on their work. One student noted, “I always look at level four on the rubric to guide me.”
Additional Finding

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

High expectations connected to the school’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 letters and other means. The school leaders and staff communicate expectations to students and families and keep them abreast of student progress toward college and career readiness through various venues and artifacts.

Impact

Structures that provide staff training and foster the existing system of accountability support the school’s high expectations for teaching and learning and help families understand student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate high expectations for instruction to faculty and staff via newsletters, professional development sessions, and written and oral feedback toward goals aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. This year teachers receive professional development on rigorous instruction, formative assessments, and data analysis. School leaders also support teacher development of goals through their reflection on professional development. These reflections are captured in teacher surveys that enable school leaders to make adjustments to professional development relative to teachers’ needs. A system to monitor the implementation of these professional sessions includes frequent classroom observations and actionable feedback to ensure that the instructional focus is implemented in the classroom. An example of this feedback states, “Continue to provide opportunities for students to articulate their learning in discussions.”

- In three different teacher meetings, teachers agreed that the principal communicates high expectations weekly in a clear manner through very specific and highly detailed letters which outline the instructional findings from various walkthroughs and observations. All teachers are engaged in ongoing collaborations such as grade-level meetings in which teachers assume accountability for meeting established expectations. A review of grade-meetings provide evidence that teachers plan lessons, analyze student work and share teaching strategies. Teachers shared that while school leaders have provided them support and training to meet expectations, the most effective method is the grade-team structure. One teacher noted, and the others agreed, that it promotes greater accountability by organizing teachers to work together to ensure that students meet learning targets, and has resulted in a culture where they work together for the success of all students.

- Parents shared that school leaders communicate expectations connected to college and career readiness and student progress via progress reports, phone calls, flyers, newsletters, and workshops on Common Core Learning Standards in both English Language Arts and math. In addition, they noted that teachers create homework-help sessions during parent outreach on Tuesdays to support them in helping their children at home. One parent stated that the Tuesday meetings have been very helpful in keeping them informed of the school expectations and student progress. Specifically, he noted, “My daughter was having a problem explaining her work in math and I could not help her, but after meeting with the teacher, she helped me understand what is expected and I am much more confident in my ability to help her.” Another parent noted, and the others agreed, that teachers also provide them with reading and math resources to support their children academically.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Through inquiry-based team meetings, teachers promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Distributive leadership builds teacher leadership skills and give teachers voice in schoolwide decisions.

Impact

The shared leadership structures found throughout the school have resulted in strengthening teachers’ instructional capacity and a focus on improving student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers consistently collaborate on teams focused on analyzing student work, adjusting curriculum, implementing the instructional shifts of the Common Core Learning Standards, sharing best practices, and evaluating school goals. Teachers have common planning time built into their schedules to meet for collaborative work during the school day and to engage in professional learning. In one teacher team meeting, the Response to Intervention team used a protocol to look at student data to determine if students were ready to make the transition into their classroom without the support of intervention services. Through this practice, they determined that a few students were ready to make the transition with classroom support. In addition, the team identified students who would fill the spots made vacant by returning those students to their classrooms. Team members stated that their function is to bridge the gap between the intervention program and the classrooms. This endeavor is aligned to the school's goal to ultimately increase student reading performance.

- In a teacher conversation, teachers shared that their collaboration has strengthened their instructional capacity by providing them with a larger repertoire of teaching strategies. One teacher shared, “We get to learn from each other and it continuously strengthens my practice.” Another teacher stated that through the collaboration she has improved in designing lessons with multiple entry points to meet the needs of all students. She stated that emulating strategies shared by her colleagues on differentiated instruction led her to add more differentiated tasks in her lessons. Another teacher noted that she was moved from the fifth grade to the third grade and through the collaboration and the support from the third grade teachers she was able to make the transition. “I did not feel like I was alone and I learned a lot from my colleagues.”

- Distributed leadership opportunities and teacher voice are present throughout the school. Inquiry teams and grade-level teams have teacher leaders who represent them on instructional matters, provide coaching for teachers, facilitate workshops, and serve as mentors for new teachers. In two teacher team meetings, teachers stated that they have wide latitude and discretion in their professional work and have a choice of materials. Teachers suggest instructional materials such as the newly purchased Fundations program to assess reading comprehension. Teachers also recommend programs for students’ social-emotional development such as the mentoring program that is facilitated by teachers and college student mentors.