Quality Review Report

2016-2017

J.H.S. 291 Roland Hayes
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 32K291
231 Palmetto St.
Brooklyn
NY 11221

Principal: Janice Bruce

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

Lead Reviewer: Rod Bowen
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

J.H.S. 291 Roland Hayes 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.

School Quality Ratings

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

### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</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>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.3 Leveraging Resources</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings
A productive partnership with a community based organization (CBO), purposeful use of technology and space, as well as the strategic allocation of staff time, are all aligned to the school’s goals.

Impact
Such resource allocations have positively impacted student social-emotional well-being and academic performance, particularly for select students in English Language Arts (ELA).

Supporting Evidence

- The CBO partner plays an invaluable role in growing and sustaining the school’s culture as well as the social-emotional well-being of students. Staff from the CBO develops and co-facilitates the advisory curriculum, provides group and individual counseling to students, and supports attendance improvement efforts.

- There have been purposeful decisions made in relation to the use of technology to support school goals. Financial and space resources have been allocated to the maintenance of three computer labs. These designated spaces allow for students to be programmed for web-based adaptive learning classes that provide individualized instruction in math and literacy. The system provides teachers with targeted suggestions for instruction based on student results. Students’ regular access to this online platform, as well as the teacher interventions informed by the data, have yielded an incremental increase in ELA proficiency.

- The school community has also invested in a communication system that utilizes texting as a means to efficiently communicate with parents. Lastly, resources have been put towards the introduction of a web-based grading and communication platform that is now being used by the majority of teachers and students.

- The collaborative teacher teams include grade teams, content teams, a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports team and a data wise inquiry team. The work of these teams not only positively impacts teaching and learning through assessment design and the analysis of student work and data, but also school culture with the creation of celebratory luncheons and ceremonies for students.
Area of Focus

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

Across classrooms, teaching practices are inconsistent in providing multiple entry points into the learning activities that would enable students to produce meaningful work products.

Impact

There is uneven student engagement in appropriately challenging tasks as well as uneven student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- In some classrooms, students were provided with differentiated means to engage in the tasks. In an Integrated Co-teaching (ICT) science class, students were given ability-leveled packets. More supportive versions included key words in bold, illustrations, and important sections that were underlined. Those who did not need them did not have such scaffolds. With these instructional measures along with the hands-on lab activity, students were able to speak to the distinctions between the two types of seismic waves as they worked to determine which were more dangerous.

- Students in a math class were seated in groups as they rotated through stations where they worked to solve least common multiple and greatest common factor problems. Although many students showed that they knew how to work with multiples and factors, few could explain them in their own words. One stated, “Factors are numbers.” It was also apparent that not all groups were able to execute the station tasks as designed. In one instance, a group noted that their peers, who were at the station prior to them, had not completed their section. At another table, the teacher was observed doing the charting and thinking for the group as they watched.

- Students in a social studies class needed to read non-fiction text to decide on a thesis and provide evidence from the text that would provide a rationale for the claim. However, no close reading strategies were taught or used to inform how students were to make relevant distinctions within the passages. Similarly, during a lesson for English Language Learners (ELLs), the students were to determine the gist of a written speech. Although the teacher asked if anyone had figured it out and whether or not they had any questions, students were not responsive. She shared her answer to the prompt but not the process that led her to it. She then attempted a think-aloud. Noticing that students were primarily writing down what she was saying, she asked them to not simply copy her responses but encouraged them to look for the message in the passage themselves. Before directing them toward independent work, she reminded students to annotate but did not accompany the reminder with expectations on how to do so.

- Discussion in an ICT ELA class was dominated by three highly engaged boys who shared responses to questions and read aloud for the class when needed. Although the teacher requested other volunteers, virtually no other students actively participated.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

School staff integrates the instructional shifts into the curricula and ensures that they are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards.

Impact

College and career readiness and coherence that consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades are promoted within curricular documents.

Supporting Evidence

- A math lesson was informed by the State standard focused on the rule that a function assigns to each input exactly one output. According to the plan, instruction would start with an on-demand writing task where students would describe a function in their own words. Later, in groups, they would interpret tables of information and address questions related to rate of change. Open ended responses that they would answer collaboratively included, “What will the graph of the function look like? Explain.”

- A social studies lesson plan listed three Common Core Learning Standards, yet only one was germane to the designed learning activity. That standard would have students determine the central ideas or information of primary and secondary sources. The other two standards were text based, yet no text was used in the activity. In the lesson, students would take notes on a video about the rise of Japanese and European dictators in the period after World War II. Then, using their notes, small groups would discuss specific totalitarian leaders.

- The lesson plan for an ELA class touched on multiple standards as students would read a number of articles in search of information that could support position papers that they were drafting. While reading the text provided, they would search for a topic or theme that was repeated across the articles and come up with a wondering related to what they noticed across the text. This commitment to informational text was observed.

- Reading, writing, hands-on experimentation, as well as data collection and analysis were the rigorous habits embedded in a science lab plan. Content specific vocabulary, such as plate tectonics, upper mantle, seismograph, and seismic waves, was present in a brief background text. Based on the text, students would have to develop a hypothesis and provide reasoning for which kind of seismic waves travelled faster and caused the most damage. Using slinkies, students would approximate the different types of waves and measure how long it would take waves to travel over specific distances. They would then interpret their data and answer questions such as, “What type of damage would each type of wave create on a building?” The lesson would end with students having to formulate a conclusion in writing based on their investigation.
Findings
Assessments are consistently used across subject areas to determine student progress towards goals. Across classrooms, teachers use questioning to check for understanding.

Impact
Teachers use the analysis of data from assessments as well as formative data gathered while teaching to inform instructional and curricular adjustments.

Supporting Evidence

- Data from an ELA assessment revealed student needs regarding the task of analyzing characters. A next step resulting from the analysis was to have students compare and contrast two or more characters in a text or between texts, focusing on specific traits like how they behave. Data from an algebra assessment highlighted measurement as an area in need of revisiting. A social studies assessment informed the creation of sentence starters to support select students as they developed claims and counter claims. For example, the resource lists, “I contend that” and “I believe that” as the beginning of claims, and “an alternate or opposing viewpoint is” and “others think that” as starters for counterclaims.

- One of the biggest ways in which assessment data informs instruction is through the generation of student working groups. Heterogeneous grouping in a math lesson ensured that performance based grouping in a math class was done to assign the roles of technician, manager, accountant, and backup helper.

- During a social studies class, the teacher prepared his students for a short video they were going to view by asking them what was happening in the world at this time so that these historical figures could come to power. When it was clear that some had forgotten, he pointed to a poster in the room that had relevant content on it. He checked for understanding again when he stopped the video and asked, “What were some of the promises being made by these dictators?”

- A teacher in an ELA class asked students how they were to determine relevant information for a position paper. Students responded and he provided space for them to agree and/or disagree with one another. He further assessed students’ understanding of reason and evidence by asking what else could be written. Such questioning practices serve to surface student understanding and allow teachers to make necessary adjustments during instruction.
Findings

Although newsletters and other forms of communication with families are in place, school leaders and staff are still developing systems to effectively share expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness. An online grading platform, as well as select programs and initiatives, serve to communicate high expectations to all students.

Impact

Parents do not always understand their children’s progress towards the school’s high expectations. Students lack clarity as to how the school’s high expectations are preparing them for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leadership noted that progress reports are issued quarterly, i-Ready reports go out to parents twice per year, parent-teacher conferences occur three times per year, and parent breakfasts are held monthly. Newsletters are sent home at the beginning of the year to share information regarding teaching and learning. A science newsletter showed the essential questions and projects from the first four units of study, while a social studies newsletter shared the topics that would be covered in grades six through eight.

- However, the parents who were spoken to did not reference any of these forms of communication when asked how they are kept abreast of how well their children are doing in class, as well as their progress towards promotion and graduation. One stated, “I get information from my son.” Another parent noted that his child shows him his work, and based on that he knows his son is doing fine. Although measures are in place to communicate high expectations to parents, they do not always increase parental awareness of the teaching and learning taking place within the school, specifically as it relates to student progress.

- Students shared that there is an online grading platform that they all have access to that they use to see their class averages, whether they have homework assignments, their grades on past work, and their attendance.

- Students are provided with opportunities by grade to explore careers, engage in a teen entrepreneurship program, and participate in a college visit. Yet, with the exception of a student in the Junior Honors Society, students were unable to articulate any program, experiences, or opportunities that prepare them for high school, college, and/or careers in any meaningful way. When asked about career day, a student commented, “It was about what we want to do when we get a job or something.” Students were not able to speak to how career day impacted what they view as possible for themselves. When asked about Project Peace, a student noted, “I think they taught us how to get a master’s degree,” but the student was unable to talk about what a master’s degree is, the relevance of it, or specific steps needed to earn one.
**Findings**

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured inquiry work focused on their instructional practice and the implementation of new strategies. Distributive leadership structures are in place.

**Impact**

Collaborative team meetings promote school goals and strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers. Teachers have a voice in key decisions and are positioned to impact instruction across classrooms.

**Supporting Evidence**

- An ELA team used a unit exam as a data source. Minutes from their meeting noted the students they were focused on, what standards would be retaught, and what evidence they would use to show improvement. The “data story” that informed their effort was that a mid-unit assessment revealed that some students could cite detailed textual evidence, but they could not effectively explain the evidence. Their plan was to provide students with prompts to explain how their evidence supported their claim.

- Notes from a math team meeting showed how ongoing inquiry work was used to address students’ inabilities to successfully solve multi-step problems. The strategy of providing students with an answer and having them come up with the problem did not work as students provided one-step problems. The next strategy would be to use double-entry journals. The minutes went on to describe how the use of double-entry journals would be implemented by all teachers so that the left section would be for the problem and the right side for explanation. This example of teams using an inquiry process to clarify what does not work as they search for what does serves to strengthen their pedagogy in relation to their students’ learning needs.

- Teachers instituted academic luncheons and other celebrations to support a culture of student achievement. The science teachers collaborated to discern what the optimal science classroom looks like, informing resource allocations for the department. The school's Saturday Academy is teacher run, both instructionally and operationally.

- School leadership has enlisted various teachers to support the growth of their colleagues. There are three lead teachers, one master teacher, and a model teacher in math and a peer collaborative teacher in ELA.