Quality Review Report

2016-2017

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Brooklyn
NY 11207

Principal: Lawrence Burroughs

Dates of Review:
March 21, 2017 - March 22, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Michele Ashley
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


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 Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<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></td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<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>
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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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<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></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Finding</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></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>
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<tr>
<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>Area of Celebration Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings

Teacher teams consistently analyze benchmark and unit assessment data and work samples for students on their grade. Distributive leadership structures are in place that provide opportunities for teachers to develop leadership skills.

Impact

Professional collaboration and the sharing of best practices result in improvements to teacher practice and progress toward goals for students. Structured opportunities for teacher leadership build leadership capacity and give teachers a voice in decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers on all grades meet weekly to look at student work and analyze current data. Teachers use data and work samples to identify a learner-centered problem on the grade and collaborate to identify new strategies and next steps to address the problem. Teachers on each grade or content team bring progress monitoring, unit assessments or student work to meetings and use Data Wise protocols to support their analysis. Teachers identify and analyze standards where students are performing at the lowest level as “focus standards” and design lessons that address those standards to incorporate across the grade. During the grade eight team meeting, teachers analyzed student work samples, shared observations and wonderings, and identified next steps to be applied across the grade. Next steps included the application of a vocabulary graphic organizer called a Frayer Model and peer assessment.

- Teachers across teams shared that teamwork has influenced their practice and provides new strategies implemented across grades and content areas. Teams attribute student growth on focus standards to the sharing of best practices and team inquiry. Teachers shared that they have developed lessons, graphic organizers and questions together improving their planning as a team. A review of team notes and data analysis sheets reveals that students make progress from pre- to post unit assessments. Grade eight students demonstrated progress on the three focus standards selected during the data analysis for one unit. Based on a comparison of pre- and post-assessment data, students improved from twenty-one, thirty-two and twenty-one percent on grade level to fifty-one, forty-six and sixty-four percent on grade level, respectively.

- School leaders have structures to place teachers in leadership positions as peer collaborative teachers (PCTs), new teacher mentors and model teachers. Regular and flexible schedules are in place to ensure that teachers receive consistent support as needed. PCTs adjust support and schedule intervisitations for teachers based on observation data and school leader recommendations. Teachers share warm and cool feedback and next steps with peers following intervisitations. Teacher leaders meet with school leadership regularly to share their observations and provide recommendations that affect instructional and professional development decisions.
## Area of Focus

### Quality Indicator:

| 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: Developing |

### Findings

Teachers are developing practices to provide multiple entry points for students using questioning, small group instruction and station learning. However, levels of engagement and opportunities for student discussion were inconsistent across classrooms.

### Impact

Inconsistent engagement in appropriately challenging tasks leads to uneven demonstration of higher order thinking skills in student work products and discussions, including the work of students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs).

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers have begun to use questioning to engage students in learning tasks. Some teachers prompt students verbally and in writing to elicit responses and encourage students to share their thinking. In one English Language Arts (ELA) classroom, the teacher prompted students to consider what makes a good conclusion. The teacher partnered students to read through two conclusions and share which was the strongest and explain why. This teacher shared her own thinking process as a model using a sample conclusion and conclusion rubric, before asking students to think and share with their partners. Although most teachers have begun to use questions to prompt student thinking, the level of questioning and clarity present in this ELA lesson was not yet present across classrooms.

- Teachers have also begun to use small groups and station learning to provide opportunities for students to share their thinking and produce meaningful work products, yet the level of rigor and engagement in these tasks varies across classes. In a math class, the teacher assigned students to working groups to complete subtraction problems. In this classroom, the teacher moved from group to group asking questions about the process including, “How did you show subtraction?” and “Do we need to regroup?” However, in this lesson several students finished their group work early while others struggled to complete the activity. Minimal instruction, modeling and teacher-assessment of student understanding hindered some students from engaging in appropriately challenging tasks and producing meaningful work products.

- In some classes visited, teachers provided opportunities for students to share their thinking in student discussions; however, this practice was inconsistently used across classrooms. In a math lesson the teacher assigned students to small groups and provided varied levels of support to each group. Students were encouraged to discuss and solve problems as a group using the tools provided. The level of discussion varied in each group. In some groups, students discussed their process before solving, while in other groups the students solved problems on their own and compared results. A lack of consistency and guidance for small group discussions limits the level of student thinking and participation across classrooms.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and purposefully integrate academic vocabulary and writing from sources. Across classrooms, teachers plan and refine curricula and tasks using data from New York State, benchmark and pre- and post-unit assessments.

Impact
Alignment to standards and the purposeful integration of the instructional shifts builds coherence across curricula. Data-informed planning refines lessons to include access and opportunities to engage a diversity of learners.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty have selected Common Core-aligned curricula across grades and content areas and purposefully integrate fluency and academic vocabulary based on feedback from New York State ELA and math data. A review of lesson and unit plans demonstrates that teachers across grades and content areas identify Common Core Learning Standards and focus standards as they align with the learning objectives of each lesson. A grade eight algebra lesson plan includes the focus standards, as well as, the aligned Standards for Mathematical Practice.

- Academic vocabulary is a school-wide curricular focus and is evident in lesson plans collected across grades and content areas. A science unit plan includes lessons to introduce key vocabulary and use vocabulary games called Frame Games and short response paragraphs to preview and reinforce definitions. An ELA unit plan includes plans to introduce key vocabulary from texts before reading and include illustrations as needed for ELLs. A math lesson includes a list of math vocabulary specific to algebra and geometry to be introduced using Frayer Models and personal vocabulary walls in student notebooks.

- A review of unit and lesson plans provides evidence of teacher planning and revisions to provide access for students. Lesson plans include teachers’ assignments of students to instructional and small working groups. In a math lesson, the teacher assigns student to “bachelors”, “masters” and “doctoral” working groups based on unit pre-assessment and exit ticket data. Based on this data, groups would participate in teacher-led instruction, a collaborative task or independent practice using an online platform. In a social studies lesson plan, the teacher assigns students based on progress monitoring data and divides them between a teacher-led instructional group and an independent research group on man-made and natural structures. In a grade four lesson plan, students were assigned to problem solving, enrichment or reteach groups based on teacher observation during the previous day’s lesson.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use and create content-specific rubrics and grading policies that are aligned to the curricula. Teachers review data from pre- and post-unit assessments and progress monitoring.

Impact
Teachers use student assessment data to make adjustments to curricula and instruction and provide students with actionable feedback regarding their academic progress.

Supporting Evidence
- Across classrooms, teachers use and create rubrics that align to the specific content or genre specified within the curricula. Teachers use rubrics to provide students with feedback on their performance levels on assigned tasks. Most rubrics assess student performance on a scale from zero to four and align student performance to grade level expectations. For example, a social studies “Different Communities” rubric assesses student performance on four components from level one, below grade level, to level four, above grade level. Components include social studies writing, use of diagrams, aligned literacy focus standards, and social studies unit concepts. A “4-Square” math rubric assesses student performance on a scale of zero to three and includes descriptors for a student’s capacity to explore, plan, solve, examine and organize a mathematical task.

- Teachers also provide students with oral and written feedback that highlights student strengths, areas for improvement and next steps for learning. Teachers provide verbal feedback in one-on-one conferences with students and record students’ next steps in teacher conference notes. Teachers’ written feedback accompanies rubrics and assessed student work. Teacher feedback on one “4-Square” math rubric highlights a student’s capacity to solve the problem and recommends revisions to the planning and examination section to clarify the student’s plan to solve the problem and ensure that his explanation aligns to the steps taken in the solve box. Teacher feedback on an argumentative essay commends the student for stating a clear position with evidence and recommends more elaboration using quotes and examples. A review of student work demonstrates that students use teacher feedback to revise their work.

- Teachers analyze pre- and post-unit assessments, reading benchmarks and progress monitoring data in ELA and math to revise curricula and instruction. Progress monitoring data is readily available using an online platform. Teachers review this data weekly and use the information to assign students to small groups for intervention and targeted instruction. A review of lesson plans and teacher notes reveals that teachers assign students to small groups and provide instructional supports based on assessment data. Teachers also review unit pre-assessment data and create an instructional plan. Instructional plans reviewed identify students with lower-, middle- and higher-levels of performance, and highlight their skills in need of improvement, as well as how each teacher will provide support over a six-week period.
## Findings

School leaders provide training and consistently communicate high expectations to all staff via assistant principal logs, principal letters, professional development and observation feedback. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to students using rubrics, conferences and goal setting.

## Impact

Clear communication, feedback and support hold teachers accountable for expectations and prepare students for the next steps in their learning process.

## Supporting Evidence

- School leaders provide training to support articulated expectations for teaching and learning. Professional development sessions for 2016 – 2017 include training on data analysis and the use of the Data Analysis and Instructional Plan template, as well as sessions on the implementation, use and resources of the online progress monitoring tool. The professional development plan for 2016 -2017 outlines the Determination of Need, specific topics and Danielson Framework for Teaching domains aligned to each professional learning session. A January session on questioning identifies that the Determination of Need is based on Advance teacher data and classroom walkthroughs, which highlight Danielson Framework for Teaching Domain 3, instruction, and questioning as areas of need.

- School leaders share expectations for teaching and learning in weekly faculty meetings, observation feedback and written logs and letters. The school leader and assistant principal distribute weekly assistant principal logs and bi-weekly principal letters that highlight expectations as they align with instructional foci and the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP). A review of logs and letters provides evidence that leaders consistently remind staff of pending professional development sessions, outline the focus of instructional walkthroughs and observations, and hold faculty and staff accountable for the implementation of professional learning. In a March 2017 letter, leadership reminds teachers to use assessment during instruction by monitoring student learning, looking carefully at what students are writing and listening to the questions they are asking to gauge student understanding.

- Teachers use conferencing and feedback to help students make plans for their next steps in learning. Together, teachers and students plan revisions to their work and set learning goals that prepare students for learning. Teachers post students goals in classrooms so that students are reminded of their goals daily. In one classroom, the teacher placed students’ names on an “Our Reading Goals” chart that highlighted the specific component of reading upon which each child needed to work. Reading goals fell into one of five categories: comprehension, fluency and expression, visualizing, decoding, and getting started and reading the whole time. Students interviewed shared their current goals and the strategies needed to meet them.
### Additional Finding

#### Quality Indicator:

| 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: Proficient |

#### Findings

Feedback from leadership and PCTs captures the strengths, challenges and next steps for teachers as they align to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. School leaders have an effective system that uses observation data to inform professional development and support.

#### Impact

Clear articulation of expectations for improvement in instructional practices and data-informed professional development support professional growth and teacher development.

#### Supporting Evidence

- **School leadership** shares effective feedback with teachers following formal and informal observations of instruction. A review of Advance and informal feedback reveals that leaders consistently cite teacher practices and student work to provide evidence of teacher strengths, challenges and areas for improvement as they align to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. In addition, leaders provide teachers with clear next steps and articulate expectations for implementation by including plans for follow up visits. In a March 2017 observation report, school leadership highlights the teacher’s planning for engagement and use of the small group structure to reteach. The leader also notes that the teacher’s efforts to get students to respond to one another and explain their thinking was met with uneven results and shares strategies and sample questions as next steps for improvement in instruction.

- **PCTs** meet with peers to provide support, demonstration lessons and opportunities for intervisitation. PCTs maintain an online log of support that highlights the specific level of support provided and the next steps for each teacher. A review of PCT support logs reveals that they provide support via co-teaching, lesson planning and observation, and one-to-one coaching. Recommended next steps observed from PCTs include common planning, lesson adjustments, modifications for students, and data analysis to assign students to small groups.

- **School leadership** has developed a template for the 2016-2017 school-wide professional development plan. The template establishes a clear and transparent link between assigned professional development sessions and observation data. The professional development template includes a “determination of need” section for each professional development topic and cites the analysis of formal and informal observation data and observations from learning walkthroughs as the basis for specified topics. The 2016-2017 professional development plan cites observation data as the determining factor for sessions on data analysis, rigorous instruction, questioning and discussion, and Danielson Framework for Teaching, Domain 3: instruction.