Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 309 The George E. Wibecan Preparatory Academy
Elementary 16K309
794 Monroe St.
Brooklyn
NY 11221
Principal: Tanya Bryant

Dates of Review:
December 14, 2016 - December 15, 2016

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


School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>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>
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</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
</tr>
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### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff, students and families and provide comprehensive training aligned to those expectations.

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

Supporting Evidence

- The principal’s weekly newsletter is one method used to communicate expectations which staff members agree, “Keeps them on the same page so they know what is expected.” Each week, in addition to events and announcements, the principal offers a “Professional Growth” column aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and to school goals. This section conveys clarity regarding practices that should be evident in classrooms such as, the instructional focus of quality interactions using questioning and discussion techniques, the Common Core shifts in English Language Arts and mathematics, and assessment of student learning through monitoring and tracking progress throughout each lesson. Teachers affirm that the classroom walkthrough checklist is another example of the types of protocols used by school leaders to provide consistent messaging of what is expected regarding lesson planning, questioning and discussion, instruction, assessment of student learning, as well as incorporating the shifts.

- School leaders use classroom observations and Advance data to determine professional development needs across the staff. Teachers articulate that the principal provides learning opportunities that “bring out the best” in teachers, sharing that training activities are specific, hands on and engaging. There are many lunch and learns and opportunities for teachers to support other teachers. Administrators enhance teacher growth through regular attendance at grade meetings. Teachers further state that after walkthroughs and observations, they receive timely follow-up training, guidance for areas of improvement, tools to implement and time to make corrections to grow.

- Progress reports are shared with parents three times per year and indicate student reading levels as compared to the expected grade benchmarks, math assessment scores for the recently completed unit, and what students will be learning in the next unit. Suggestions, aligned to Common Core expectations of the grade, are offered for parents to help their children. The progress report format has been expanded to include additional content area data and better inform parents regarding their child’s performance levels towards meeting grade level standards.

- Interviewed parents expressed they regularly access the school website to keep informed about what their children are learning related to Common Core Learning Standards and how families can help. Parents access the school calendar on the website to keep aware of events, including school leadership and parent teacher association meetings. Parent members of the School Leadership Team collaborated with the principal to develop school goals. One parent recommended the Reading Plus online program which is now utilized across the school. Parents regularly access this program, in addition to Mathletics and myON, noting the growth they see in their children’s vocabulary, reading skills, and math knowledge. A change was implemented in the pre-kindergarten drop off procedure based on parent suggestions.
Findings

Across classrooms teaching practices, student work products and discussions reflect the schoolwide instructional focus on using questioning and discussion techniques to engage students in their own learning.

Impact

While discussions and meaningful work products reflect high levels of student thinking and participation, opportunities for enhanced student thinking and student ownership across the vast majority of classrooms are not yet informed by discussions across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have articulated the belief that students learn best “in a supportive child-centered environment that will allow them opportunities to share ideas with peers without ongoing mediation from the teacher.” The instructional focus is centered on the Danielson component: using questioning and discussion techniques. Teachers have incorporated the principal’s expectations for “a system of equity for speaking and listening” through utilization of name sticks to elicit student responses and turn and talk opportunities. The principal acknowledges the need for continued professional development, deeper discussions across the school and among teacher teams, to extend levels of teacher questioning, including planning more complex questions to facilitate student engagement in critical thinking and in-depth content-related conversation over the vast majority of classrooms.

- Opportunities for student-to-student discussions leading to meaningful work products were evident across classrooms. In one second-grade class, pairs and triads of students shared responsibility for reading excerpts presented about the explorer Henry Hudson. Students initiated conversation about what they read, and helped each other find information in the text as they wrote postcards from the point of view of an explorer. Second graders in another class, were asked to turn and talk to a partner to respond to the teacher question, “How can you tell the two maps of New York City are different?” As random names were selected from a cup, students shared out their partners’ responses. After a teacher read-aloud, students wrote their understandings of how life in New York City is different today. A kindergarten teacher randomly picked student name-sticks to have students lead routines of the Fundations curriculum, requiring their peers to respond in chorus to practice letter sounds, letter names, and key words. After focused instruction on the letter s, students were asked to turn and talk with partners about words that begin with the /s/ sound, draw a picture of a word that starts with the letter s, label the picture write a sentence about their picture.

- As fourth-grade students worked in pairs on differentiated activities, one student was overheard explaining to her partner, “3 is not a factor of 10 because there is nothing you can multiply by 3 to get 10. And 3 is a factor of 12 because 3 x 4 = 12.” Student work demonstrates that most students were able to give examples of factors and multiples but are working to improve explanations. Students in a fourth-grade Integrated Co-Teaching class (ICT) engaged in a hands-on activity to identify, compare and contrast the properties of conductors and non-conductors. Conversations in pairs and groups reflected the use of academic vocabulary to explain their thinking. Student diagrams conveyed scientific understandings.

- Yet school leaders strive to expand opportunities for student ownership in genuine student-led discussion, students questioning each other, and more in-depth content-related conversation across the vast majority of classrooms.
## Finding

School leaders and faculty make purposeful decisions to effectively align the curricula to Common Core Learning Standards and ensure the integration of the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks for all students are planned and refined using student work and data.

## Impact

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

## Supporting Evidence

- School leaders determined the need to ensure the Common Core Learning Standards and integration of the instructional shifts were explicit in curricula planning documents and provided training to strengthen teacher knowledge of the curricula. School leaders facilitated professional development sessions to introduce and unpack the instructional shifts in both English Language Arts and mathematics. Grade teams discussed and noted what each shift means for their practice and identified potential evidence of incorporating the shifts into classroom instruction. School leaders and faculty collectively determined that as a school they would focus on selected shifts in English Language Arts: building knowledge from informational text; reading, writing and speaking based on evidence from text; regular practice with complex text; and academic vocabulary. The mathematics shifts of focus: building fluency through speed and accuracy; reading, writing and speaking about mathematical understandings; using multiple strategies applying mathematical content in real world situations.

- School leaders and faculty made adjustments to curricula planning documents. A revised fifth grade English Language Arts unit plan clearly articulates the Common Core Standards of the Ready Gen curriculum module. Teaching points align to standards and reflect focused instruction. For example, teachers crafted individual teaching points for each of the five elements of the grade standard for writing narratives. A first-grade curriculum map reflects rearrangement of GOMath! units, a focused reduction of essential questions and lessons for each chapter, and incorporating the National Training Network approach to problem solving, based on consultant training. Revisions were made to fourth-grade performance-based assessment tasks to increase rigor by requiring students to read and use evidence from two texts, read more informational text, and include domain-specific vocabulary to support their response.

- Lesson plans reflect differentiated tasks for student groups based on pre-unit assessment data in English Language Arts and math, as well as other formative and summative assessment. Rationales for grouping include student performance on, above or below grade level for the standards to be taught; types of supports planned to facilitate learning such as graphic organizer with prompts and questions for English Language Learners; independent work for some students; partnerships based on Individualized Education Plan goals. Post-assessment data is used to identify areas in need of continued attention across each class and with individual students.
Findings
Teachers use or create assessments and rubrics aligned to the school’s curricula. School leaders and teachers use common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

Impact
Assessment results are used to adjust curricula and instruction. Students and their teachers are aware and informed of strengths and next steps in learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers consistently provide written feedback in the form of, glows and grows based on the use of a range of rubrics that are best aligned to the assessment tasks. An example of practice, a glow statement seen across grades, “You used text based evidence correctly to answer the question,” reflects criteria of a two-point rubric used to assess short responses to reading and standards-based rubrics for informative and opinion writing. An area to grow for a fourth grader, “You demonstrated organization in parts of your writing. Great writers write in an organized manner throughout their writing.”

- The science teacher utilizes a rubric to assess knowledge, application and communication of content studied. A rubric is used with students to assess their ability to apply steps of the National Training Network approach to problem solving. Grows for a third-grade student informed that she organized the facts, but needs to line up a plan to show what she will do to solve the problem. An interviewed student shared, “I'm a practitioner,” reflecting that she was on grade level on her math assessment, which was scored using the Exemplar student rubric to assess problem solving, reasoning and proof, communication, connections, and representation. “To become an expert, a level 4, I have to solve problems in two ways.”

- Teachers conduct pre-assessments to determine what they need to focus on within each unit. For example, a first-grade teacher document identified the need for whole class instruction for three of the skills embedded within the operations and algebra standard. The document further identified specific students targeted for small group instruction for other skills within the standard. A fifth-grade teacher document reflects the need for whole group instruction in two of the standards and lists students targeted for focused instruction in small groups or individually. Post-assessments are used to measure student progress within the unit and to identify areas in need of continued attention across each class and with individual students.

- School leaders decided to adjust the length of instructional periods and create an additional math enrichment period in each class schedule. This period allows for targeted support through additional small group re-teaching or enrichment activities based on student need.

- Student achievement in reading is tracked based on results of running records. Progress is measured by increase in reading levels for individual students and by class. School documents reveal teachers have set goals for increasing student levels by the next quarter and by the end of the year. School leaders also examine data from running records across the grades. Sample analyses show increases from September to November in the percentages of students reading at or above grade levels based on the Teachers College level benchmarks.
Findings

School leaders and teacher peers support the development of teachers with effective feedback and next steps from the strategic use of frequent cycles of classroom observation and analysis of student work/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, evidenced in student work, that promote professional growth.

Supporting Evidence

- At the beginning of the year the principal held initial planning conferences with teachers individually to reflect on teachers’ past and present performance, to identify areas of strength and improvement, and for teachers to determine academic targets for their students based on formative and summative assessment data. Early in the year, the principal conducted formal observations of all staff, then engaged in walkthroughs with the assistant principal to norm their observation practices. Each administrator reads and follows up on the feedback previously provided to teachers, as they conduct subsequent observations. School leaders conduct approximately 15 classroom visits per week, in cycles of four to six weeks. To date, more than half of the staff have had two observations. School leaders analyze Measures of Teacher Practice and have documented overall groupings and individual ratings in each domain and component of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The document also reflects professional development offered by focused areas of need.

- School leaders offer written feedback, generally using the school’s glow and grow format with additional next steps that communicate clear expectations for higher levels of teacher practice and support teacher growth. In one instance, a teacher received a developing rating for the use of questioning and discussion techniques. The rationale includes specific examples of questions that led down a single path of inquiry, and a recommendation to grow by “refraining from asking too many yes/no questions.” Next steps offered expectations for students to engage in genuine discussion that is facilitated by the teacher. On a subsequent observation report, the rationale shows that the teacher posed questions designed to promote student thinking, understanding and discussion, and received an effective rating. For another teacher, rated effective in this component, next steps offered recommendations for further enhancing questioning and discussion techniques. “To receive a highly effective rating, allow students to formulate questions and ask them of each other… Students themselves should ensure ALL voices are heard in the discussion.”

- Guided reading observation feedback of teacher peers, reflect low inference observations of a first grade intervisitation. One glow stated, “Children doing guided reading were involved completely as were two students on the MyON computer program.” A suggestion for growth was to partner students for independent reading to keep them on task.

- The classroom walkthrough checklist is also utilized to offer consistent and immediate feedback regarding instruction, assessment and student learning. Teachers note that school leaders conference with students and listening in on student conversations during walkthroughs and observations and discuss their findings in feedback sessions.
Additional Finding

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

Teachers, including cluster teachers, are involved in structured professional teamwork that strengthens instructional coherence and teacher capacity. Consistent analysis of assessment data and student work across grades are the focus of inquiry work.

Impact

The work of collaborative teacher teams leads to improved teacher practice, progress toward the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, including the instructional shifts.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers plan during scheduled common planning periods and in teacher teams at a minimum of twice per week. The first cycle of teacher teamwork focused on collectively designing coherent instruction to infuse the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts into planning documents. In addition to adjustments to unit plans, lesson plans were crafted to reflect the: I do, we do, you do model of instruction, evident across grades and content. The science cluster teacher plans curriculum with fourth and fifth grade teams to align hands-on lab work with science instruction facilitated by classroom teachers, sharing recommendations for websites, and offering insights regarding the science standards and the Scope and Sequence curriculum.

- Minutes from the fourth grade inquiry team provide an example of teachers’ engagement in a student work analysis protocol using student responses on an English Language Arts pre-assessment. Teachers examined the assessment prompt to clarify consensus about what students were expected to do and which standards were being assessed. Teachers discussed and normed expectations for proficiency as defined in the task bullet points and informational writing rubric. Teachers sorted student work based on degrees of the objectives met, partially met and not met, which led to grouping students into three levels: high, expected and low. Looking at samples from each level, teachers discussed and identified prerequisite knowledge that was demonstrated, misconceptions, wrong information and expectations that students did not meet. Teacher documents offer evidence that this analysis led teachers to regroup students. Based on the team’s diagnosis of students’ performance, each teacher considered patterns and trends, identified instructional strategies that would benefit their classes and the grade as well as students at each level. A math item analysis organizer of fifth grade teachers reflects the common practice of using the results of math chapter assessments to determine the needs for whole class and small group re-teaching.

- Minutes of a first-grade common planning meeting reveal an examination of reading levels based on running records and comparison of September to November results. Teachers set individual goals for the students to reach by the next assessment. Reading skills for group and individual growth were discussed as were instructional strategies. Minutes of the kindergarten team show the examination of data from running records as well.