Quality Review Report

2016-2017

The School For Future Leaders

Elementary 20K310

942 62nd St.
Brooklyn
NY 11219

Principal: Yuqing Hong

Dates of Review:
February 7, 2017 - February 8, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Thomas McKenna
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

The School For Future Leaders serves students in grade K 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

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</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></td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well Developed</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>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<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></td>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

High expectations, connected to a path towards college and career readiness, are regularly communicated in verbal and written form by the school leadership team and staff. Teacher teams and staff use the framework and language from The Leader in Me program to communicate a unified set of high expectations for all students and to provide feedback and advisement to students. Families are also provided training in the Leader in Me program.

Impact

The language and framework of The Leader in Me program, along with the school communication plan, allows parents to engage and partner with the school in supporting student progress and allows students to demonstrate ownership over their own educational experience.

Supporting Evidence

- The 7 Habits of Happy Kids for The Leader in Me – Be Proactive, Begin with the End in Mind, Think Win-Win, Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood, Synergize, and Sharpen the Saw – are communicated continually as a tool for conveying high expectations for both adults and students in the school. Displays in hallways and classrooms, daily announcements using language of the 7 habits, as well as awards ceremonies rooted in the framework, are a continual reminder of the schoolwide expectations for professionalism, rigorous instruction, and clear collaboration and communication. Staff is provided with continual professional development related to the program, and teacher teams own areas of the program to further embed into school culture. Most staff interviewed can speak to the connection between the Danielson Framework for Teaching and Covey’s 7 Habits. Students and parents can also speak clearly as to the connection of the 7 Habits to their school experience.

- Parents are consistently provided with their child’s progress, benchmark goals and applicable strategies their children can use to improve their learning. As demonstrated by agendas and attendance reports, parents have access to Achieve 3000 data and are offered trainings in understanding the pedagogical strategies and assessment tools. Of 335 parents who responded to the Learning Environment Survey, 99 percent stated, “the school keeps me informed about what my child is learning.” Across the entire school, 96 percent of the parents completed the Learning Environment Survey, showing a strong home-school connection and partnership in supporting student progress.

- Expectations are effectively communicated with parents through newsletters, the school website, and at regular open-door sessions between school leadership and parents. In addition, the school is developing a personalized communication phone app and is eliciting parent input in its development. The app is in English, Spanish, and Chinese to support the language needs of the community.
Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs informed by the instructional shifts that fosters higher order thinking. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Challenging tasks, which are hands on and include strong language development components, consistently provide multiple entry points.

Impact

Throughout the school, teacher practice is informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts, and refined through discussions at the teacher team and school leadership levels. All learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks that result in quality student work products; however, there were missed opportunities for deeper engagement and extension activities in some classes.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices reflect the school's belief that students learn best when they take an active part in what is being learned, comprehend what they are learning, associate it with the world around them, and are provided with a learning environment that is risk free, positive and engaging. In almost all classes, movement and interaction with various learning stations was observed. In several English Language Arts (ELA) classes, lessons related to analyzing and citing evidence regarding an author's purpose, included students making connections to their own points of view and experience.
- Multiple entry points allowed all learners access to the material. In response to the large percentage of ELLs in the school, as well as in service of students with disabilities and all students in the school, many classes provide differentiated texts based on the Lexile levels of students. In the assignments that focused on making a claim and citing evidence that were observed, all classes provided differentiated texts to meet the learning needs of particular students. Several classes also incorporated writing checklists, graphic organizers, and visual supports for language development into instruction.
- Across classrooms, students were engaged and conducted targeted turn and talk conversations with partners to further their learning. While this was evidenced in 7 of 9 classroom observations, there were missed opportunities in some classes for students to engage more deeply with peers in their learning. In one math class, students were using a clock manipulative to learn about time and were instructed to share with a partner when they had adjusted to hour and minute hand, but support and instruction was not given to students regarding questioning each other or explaining answers.
Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts into lesson planning. Across grades and subjects, rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized for all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Impact

Curricula decisions and alignment to the instructional shifts ensure coherence and rigorous habits for all learners, across grades and content areas that promote college and career readiness. Academic tasks consistently emphasize higher order thinking and skills and allow students to demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Evidence shows strategic examples of the infusion of instructional shifts in curricular documents. In social studies and science documents, clear planning is evident, incorporating shift 3 – the Staircase of Complexity and shift 4 – text based answers, demonstrating a strategic cross-discipline approach to implementing the shifts. In ELA, in addition to shifts 3 and 4, a focus on shift 5 – writing from sources is clear across multiple grades. In math, lessons focused on conceptual understanding (shift 4).

- Essential questions and tasks within lesson plans demonstrate alignment with Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels 3 and 4. Lessons included hypothesizing, investigating, citing evidence and drawing conclusions, and analyzing authors purpose. In a newcomer’s class, a lesson plan began with identifying patterns and organizing data (DOK 2), but later developed towards developing a logical argument (DOK 3).

- Documents reviewed show all curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). The school uses Journeys, a standard-based curriculum in reading, and Math in Focus, a standard-based curriculum in math. In addition, the school demonstrates a coherent and rigorous curriculum through teacher-created units of study in writing aligned to CCLS and social studies units that align to the new NYC K-8 Social Studies Scope and Sequence.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teacher practice reflects the regular use of assessments, rubrics, and grading policies aligned to the curricula and offer a clear portrait and pathway to mastery for students. Common assessments across grades and subject areas are an embedded part of school practice.

Impact

High quality assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers’ assessment practices result in effective instructional adjustments during classroom instruction and in modifications to subsequent lessons and units, meeting all students’ needs as evidenced by the schools increase from 64 percent to 75 percent of students scoring a 3 or 4 in the New York State Math assessments and in increase from 32 percent to 57 percent of students scoring a 3 or 4 in the New York State ELA assessments.

Supporting Evidence

- The school utilizes the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), Achieve 3000, and *Math in Focus* data to track student progress and guide curricular decisions. The teachers perform an item analysis review over the summer of their end of year data in order to group students and, as the principal said, “hit the ground running” at the start of the school year with assessment based planning.

- Across classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher written actionable feedback, such as, “Next time, explain your evidence so the reader will understand why the details are so important.” Students also engage in both self and peer reflection for the majority of tasks. Teacher feedback takes into consideration the completed task and the reflection pieces. All feedback guided students to the next level in their work.

- Across classrooms, rubrics and self/peer assessments are used as tools of supports for student growth. Rubrics and checklists have been individualized to specific assignments as well as the different target audiences for which they are designed. Across grades and subjects, rubrics asked students to self-assess and set goals. Postings across classrooms indicated that student groups were based on assessment data while at other times they were based on writing, reading, or math goals.

- Teachers collaboratively developed and implemented grade level curriculum maps, content area pacing calendars, and standards-based rubrics that allow a clear path for students to mastery. All teachers use a schoolwide grading policy and task specific rubrics. Every class provides examples of the rubric and mastery level work for assignments.
Additional Finding

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

Across the school, grade teams meet on a consistent basis to analyze assessment data, student work products, and to share teaching strategies. Distributed leadership structures are embedded so that there is effective teacher leadership and teachers play an integral role in key decisions.

Impact

Teachers, through strategically designed and transparent team roles, are instrumental in decisions affecting student learning across the school. Systematic analysis of student data and work products has resulted in a refinement of teacher practice and a three-year increase in student performance gains in ELA and Math state assessments in a school where almost fifty percent of the student body are English Language Learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The grade four teacher team analyzed the unit 2 Journeys exam data on targeted students. The data analysis showed lower level students consistently struggling with the sub-skill of understanding character in text, specifically how to identify character traits and how to support with details from the text. The group did two trials of interventions each with targeted students, with one intervention being intense and the second intervention being more moderate. After analyzing their findings found a consistent confusion among students between traits and feelings. The group worked on amending their shared PowerPoint adding explicit instruction on the difference between feelings and traits.

- Across teacher teams, all binders document item analysis and identification of areas of concern. Target students are identified, groups choose research based interventions, implement the interventions, collect data, and report back to the team and plan next steps. Multiple teams exist in the schools, across grade and content areas, building coherence and horizontal and vertical alignment. “We are always looking to set goals connected to standards, one teacher said. “And we always go back to assessments – pre-post – looking for needs to address – both horizontal and vertical.”

- Multiple opportunities for support for distributed leadership were observed in the school. Grade and content area teams are led by different teachers and include the curriculum team, the instructional technology team, and the teacher intervisitation team. Teachers also lead schoolwide and departmental professional development. The principal maintains an open door policy with teachers and has created a culture where teachers can step into leadership roles when ready. As the principal stated, “One teacher said she would like to start a student council. She met with me, collected the information she needed, created a plan, and launched the council. Another asked me for a leadership opportunity. I gave that teacher our Chinese Student Visitor Program.” In interviews, teachers agreed that multiple opportunities exist.
**Additional Finding**

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

**Findings**

School leaders, teacher leaders, and peers strategically use effective feedback and next steps from classroom observations to support teacher development. Clear expectations and feedback to teachers are constructed using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and are aligned with teachers’ professional goals.

**Impact**

Observation feedback clearly articulates expectations for teacher practice and supports teacher development in alignment with each teacher’s professional goals. All teachers create professional goals, aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, and regularly revisit them in order to design professional learning and track progress.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Each rated item is supported with specific detailed evidence from the observed class to support the rating. Next steps for teacher improvement are included at the close of each observation report. For example, one observation includes feedback to “After students finished reading their class text, they could have written a quick response to your question on a sticky note. This would have provided you with a quick formative assessment that you could use to determine students’ level of comprehension.” Another observation reads, “While the direct teaching component of your lesson was crucial and necessary to students, especially students with disabilities and English Language Learners, asking students to respond to each other’s answers or to justify their thinking should be evident in the classroom. Develop routines for pausing the use of manipulatives to have a discussion with students.” Both administration and teachers reported that school leaders and teacher peers frequently use classroom observations to support teacher growth in targeted ways.

- To improve the pedagogical practice, the administrative team meets with all teachers at the beginning of the year to discuss their professional goals and develop a series of actions and a timeline to accomplish the goals. During the year the administrative team diligently conducts classroom observations and provides teachers with immediate face-to-face specific, actionable feedback, and then written reports. The principal and assistant principals meet regularly to discuss findings from these observations and examine the trends of the schoolwide instructional practices. The results of these findings, together with the beginning of the year and the middle of the year surveys, are used to develop and adjust the quarterly professional development plan to support teacher needs.

- In order to better align teacher supports, the principal and two assistant principals each observe every teacher over the course of the year. For each of three cycles, each administrator has a third of teachers to observe. This allows administrators to norm on practice and expectations as well as surfaces patterns in teacher challenges that the school may need to address at scale. School leaders and teachers agree that there are three key questions asked in all observation feedback meetings. First, because of the high percentage of ELLs, what is the content and language objective of the lesson? Second, how do you know that students achieved those stated objectives? Third, what is the evidence of that achievement? This norming of observations and common set of expectations creates a cohesive instructional model.