Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 346 Abe Stark
Elementary 19K346
1400 Pennsylvania Ave.
Brooklyn
NY 11239

Principal: Kevin Caifa

Dates of Review:
October 18, 2016 - October 19, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio
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. 346 Abe Stark 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</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>Developing</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>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>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</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:** 1.3 Leveraging Resources

**Rating:** Proficient

**Findings**

The use of resources and other school organizational decisions on the types of professional support, family support and academic intervention services to meet student learning needs are aligned to and support the instructional goals.

**Impact**

Effective learning opportunities for adults lead to increased reading levels and volume within writing products which allow a path towards college and career readiness for student sub-groups.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders obtain various resources to support literacy goals in English Language Arts (ELA). The literacy coach supports teachers with the second yearlong implementation of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) curricula and instructional strategies. In addition, TCRWP professional consultants conduct study groups and lab-sites with grade-lead teachers. Other resources such as two technology centers and furniture such as small tables are available to provide options for small group, guided reading instruction and close reading using reading software programs.

- To support the goal of increasing parental involvement, the parent coordinator works collaboratively with the school community to build awareness of schoolwide academic goals. This year, the parent coordinator has planned several literacy and math workshops to support and increase ELA and math scores. The parent coordinator communicates workshops using a monthly calendar and fliers. Parents reported that the parent coordinator is very helpful and serves as an advocate for parental involvement in the school. This September, 196 fathers attended a Dad’s Day at School which focused on literacy and parent involvement activities.

- To align with the literacy goals and increase student outcomes, school leaders have grouped students by reading level in each class. The assistant principal reports that this approach will ensure there isn’t such a large range in each class which will allow for small group planning and instruction. Based on mid-year student reading levels, the school implemented a kindergarten – grade three afterschool reading intervention program for students who needed support in this subject area. The majority of students who attended, demonstrated progress towards end of year benchmark goals in reading. This approach to intervention will continue this year. In addition, based on last year’s state math performance, teacher schedules contain a double period in math. Furthermore, when hiring and placing teachers, staff members involved in this process consider the candidate’s strengths, former classroom experiences, student data and licensing to inform their decisions. This year, based on teaching ability, two teachers moved from the upper grades to grade two to increase student performance prior to reaching the testing grades.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Developing |

Findings

Teaching strategies such as the use of explicit modeling, scaffolds and the facilitation of the student to student discussion have yet to consistently provide all learners with full engagement into challenging tasks.

Impact

Uneven use of multiple entry points and student to student discussion lead to missed opportunities for high levels of thinking, participation in work products from all students.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade two math class, the teacher used scaffolds and strategies such as a graphic organizer, repetition and the use of think aloud to model step-by-step math approaches while teaching place value. Students were able to identify and recite the value of three to four digit numbers using the graphic organizer and base ten blocks to guide their thinking. In addition, the teacher prompted the students to support one another through partner work during the mini-lesson. During one turn and talk, as a child was demonstrating difficulty, the other student was able to explain how to find the value of one of the digits. Further, the children worked together using an interactive whiteboard math application to solve questions which asked them to synthesize two numbers to determine how the values in certain digits related to each other. The majority of the students were able to complete the task correctly.

- In some classes, teachers took the lead in the majority of the activity leaving students small pockets of time for peer-to-peer engagement. In an Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) math class, one teacher led the mini-lesson and the other coached students in the meeting area and at tables. The majority of the lesson was directed by the teachers through question and answer prompts to the students. Some students were not engaged or watching the teacher during the lesson.

- In another ICT class, the teachers shared a visual to assist students with introducing a book with their partner during a reading workshop lesson. The graphic contained who, what, where, when and why questions which the application of the strategy was modelled by both teachers during the mini-lesson and revisited before beginning the independent portion of the reading workshop. While attempting the independent task, some students required redirection as they were unclear of what to do. Other students did not follow the directions provided on the chart and skipped answering some of the questions.
Findings

School leaders and faculty’s purposeful decisions ensure the curricula is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards, integrate instructional shifts such as using key details and consistently emphasize rigor in tasks across grades and subject areas.

Impact

Planning and decision making promote coherence for student sub-groups to ensure their exposure to rigorous writing tasks and build a pathway to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- This is the school's second year in implementing the TCRWP curricula in ELA. In addition, kindergarten through grade two teachers supplement the reading and language arts curricula with the Fundations program. In math, the school uses the GO Math! curricula. In social studies, the school follows the New York City Scope and Sequence and uses the unit themes and resources from ReadyGen to generate unit plans for this content area. The school utilizes the FOSS program for science. All curricula programs are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards.

- Instructional shifts such as writing from sources and text based answers are integrated within the literacy unit plans. In a grade three reading unit plan, learning objectives focus on adding key details to make mental images which support content related skill building such as making inferences and predictions. Similarly, a grade four reading unit plan contains a focus on text evidence and idea development about characters. Consequently, these shifts integrate into the writing curricula as well.

- Essential questions and tasks reflect alignment with Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Level 3. In a grade five ICT math lesson plan, the essential question is, “How can you estimate products by rounding and determine if exact numbers are reasonable?” In a grade one science lesson plan, the objective of the lesson and task require students to explain why a habitat might or might not be appropriate for a particular animal which requires connecting and synthesizing prior knowledge of different types of animals to lead to a determination.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 2.2 Assessment  
Rating: Developing

Findings

Although the school-wide cross-grade literacy and other subject area rubrics are aligned to the curricula, the use of common assessments across grades and subject areas is in the process of development.

Impact

Limited actionable feedback serves as missed opportunities for students to improve the quality of their work products. The uneven use and analysis of common assessments across subject areas results in partial adjustments to the school-wide curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses running records to assess reading levels which are administered three times a year. In addition, teachers administer the TCRWP baseline, interim and end of unit tasks to assess student understanding in reading and writing. During grade meetings, teachers review the results of the assessments to determine where students are demonstrating progress towards areas of strength and determine where there is a need for improvement. Similarly, in math, GO Math! midline and end-of-chapter assessments are reviewed to modify instructional practices. In grade five, teachers determined that based on student responses from their writing assessment, students would benefit from explicit modeling. They revised the first reading and writing units to include step-by-step questions to walk students through the process of envisioning their stories prior to writing them. Although this process is prevalent in reading, writing and math, science and social studies formal assessments have yet to be developed and/or analyzed for student progress.

- The school uses rubrics with performance levels of one to four to assess student understanding on unit objectives based on the criteria. Teachers use TCRWP writing rubrics to determine how this performance compares to the grade-level expectations. Feedback is provided via glow and grow comments yet only some comments align to the grade-level criteria or provide strategies to lead to actionable next steps. In reviewing one narrative writing piece, a grade four student received feedback to “be careful when publishing, to write neatly and copy the correct spelling.” Yet, on the writing rubric, the student received a check next to the lead category where it indicated that the opening frame aligned with the expectations for a beginning grade three student. This was not mentioned in the grow comment to the student.

- Students are aware of the grading in their rubrics. In addition, students reported that their teacher provides them feedback on the quality of their writing. One student reported that his teacher provided him with feedback by sharing that his writing could be enhanced by including a variety of words for dialogue tags other than the word said. The teacher provided him with sample words to use in future writing pieces such as exclaimed or murmured. However, another student reported that he needs to include more details in his writing but was not provided a clear strategy to follow up on in this area of growth. Similarly, other students were unable to report strategies they could use to enhance the “grow” area in their writing. Furthermore, a review of student work products across other content areas such as math and social studies did not contain the same level or amount of feedback from teachers in writing.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide training towards school literacy and math goals to the staff. The school staff consistently communicates high expectations to families through parent workshops and conferences to help them understand their children’s progress.

Impact

Schoolwide communication structures result in a system of accountability for staff and parental awareness of their child’s academic progress towards high expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate literacy and math goals via memoranda and monthly grade-level meetings led by the assistant principals. Topics for these grade meetings include sharing school goals and the instructional focus on higher order thinking and deep discussion. In addition, professional training provided by the literacy coach, a math consultant and TCRWP coaches, offers staff strategies and methods to improve the quality of their teaching and enhance the quality of tasks. One September training session focused on aligning teacher-created questions to the standards and lifted the level of rigor within them. During a review of evaluation sheets, one teacher commented that the training was extremely useful in showing how the progression of each standard is amplified each year helping students build on their past learning.

- Debriefed conversations from observations provide teachers with information on schoolwide expectations related to the instructional focus and are held accountable to them. During these sessions, teachers receive feedback to improve the quality of their teaching. One teacher received feedback that she needed to differentiate her lesson to support the needs of her students. During a follow-up observation, the teacher was observed instituting instructional ability-level groups that were appropriately planned for the students in the class. A review of teacher feedback shared similar types of comments where strategies for explicit modeling were shared.

- The school staff communicates high expectations via newsletters and workshops which are provided by the parent coordinator and literacy coach. The parent calendar lists offerings for this year to include literacy sessions and an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Horizon parent workshop. In addition, an online communication software application and school messaging system provide reminders to parents of upcoming events. Parents report that they learn of what is expected from the school and the grade-level teachers during the September open house. Furthermore, phone calls, one-to-one meetings, and other communications such as progress reports provide information on how their child is performing as compared to grade-level expectations. One parent reported that meeting with her child’s teacher was helpful when he was struggling, and has improved in school as a result.
## Additional Finding

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

### Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaboration in literacy that promote the school goals. Distributive leadership structures on grade-level teams build leadership capacity and allow for teacher voice.

### Impact

Grade-level professional collaborations have strengthened teachers’ instructional capacity in literacy and curricula decisions that positively affect student learning outcomes.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly during their professional period to review student work using a *Looking at Student Work* protocol. Guidelines for reviewing student work and focusing questions for conversation are provided by school leaders. In addition, the guidelines provide guidance for the types of student work to collect and how to present during team meetings. Grade leaders facilitate each meeting and provide notetaking documents for the purpose of reflection. Each teacher has a role during the meeting including a time keeper and note taker. During an interview, grade one teachers reported that after looking at the recent pre-assessment in writing, students demonstrated a need for more practice and development in producing stories that stretch across pages and included specific details. After reviewing the interim assessment last week, all teachers noted improvement in getting students to stretch their story across several pages.

- During a grade two team meeting, teachers reflected on the interim writing assessment for areas where they felt their students were doing well and those skills in need of further instruction. Several teachers shared that their students were in need of support in adding key details which will be a continued focus towards the end of the unit. During one teacher’s presentation of student work, she shared that her target student uses labels well and starts off writing with a strong lead yet each page, appears to start a new story versus stretching across pages. She shared that she taught him how to plan his writing using a five finger strategy yet he continues to struggle with this skill. The teachers provided strategies to assist the student including using a mentor text such as *Shortcuts* by Donald Crews to demonstrate what a small moment sounds like and labeling the primary writing paper pages with the letters B, M, and E to mark the beginning, middle and end. The teacher agreed to try the strategy and bring in the results after using it with the child.

- Grade level team leaders and a literacy coach meet regularly to review, plan and revise literacy unit objectives and activities. These teachers make instructional decisions for the grade such as extending deadlines for each unit, adding more days on skills students struggled with during last year's units such as generating ideas for writing. In addition, the literacy coach and teachers took the lead in developing a crosswalk of all units of study across literacy, social studies and science to align themes and resources together. In grade two, during November and December, grade two students will be engaged in reading activities to make them experts on certain topics using nonfiction books that will align to a social studies theme on New York City and plant diversity for science and art. Changes to units by teacher teams and grade leaders are welcomed by school leadership.