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

M.S. K394 serves students in grade K 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>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>
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</tbody>
</table>
## School Culture

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

## Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></th>
<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>
<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>Developing</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>Developing</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>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Findings
School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students.

Impact
School leaders and staff offer ongoing feedback to help families understand student progress toward those expectations, and offer ongoing and detailed feedback and guidance, particularly about high school and college, that prepares students for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- Parents reported that school leaders and teachers consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path of college and career readiness. School leaders and teachers offer parents two workshops a month, one of which is always focused on literacy with an eye toward helping parents to help students develop a love of reading. During these literature workshops, parents are exposed to the school’s literature program and taught strategies that they can use to read together with their child. The school also offers workshops on other academic subjects, like math and science, and Saturday school to teach parents about the New York State exams. Parents also reported that monthly breakfasts with the principal help to make expectations clear. Parents make appointments to visit the classroom and the school also invites them into classrooms a few times a year to be “Learning Leaders,” where they spend two hours learning alongside their children.

- Parents receive timely and regular feedback about student progress through report cards and progress reports. Middle schoolers get four report cards and two progress reports and elementary school families receive three report cards and two progress reports. In the meeting with parents, several parents stated that between the parent handbook, monthly calendars, report cards, Tuesday afternoon meeting times with teachers, parent-teacher conferences, and information about high school, families understand the expectations. One grandparent at the meeting stated that her granddaughter wasn’t doing so well at the beginning of the year, so the teachers developed a weekly progress report to keep her up-to-date on daily classwork progress and homework assignments, demonstrating consistent communication between teachers and families.

- Students are getting guidance about what is next, whether the next grade level or preparing students for college. Beyond the school’s Career Day, a focus on high school is present in the curriculum, through personal essays that students write that mirror the personal essay in the Common Application. Students also reported that teachers talk about high school in their everyday lessons, and allow students opportunities to research high schools. As one student stated in a student meeting, “The teacher lets us see if a school is right for us and is aligned with what we are passionate about; like nursing school.” Students shared insights from visits to high schools, such as Brooklyn Lab, where students were given a tour, attended classes, and had the opportunity to talk with students and teachers. In addition to the guidance counselor providing guidance about the high school directory, students are also encouraged not apply to schools with low graduation rates.
Area of Focus

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

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and are beginning to reflect the school’s beliefs that students learn best from instruction that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teaching practices include opportunities for children to engage in rich discussions and small group instruction through the workshop model.

Impact

Students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, are not consistently demonstrating high levels of thinking in work products as outlined in the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Across classrooms, discussions continue to be teacher-led, and reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers articulated beliefs that students learn best when students have opportunities to work in small groups, have high levels of peer-to-peer interactions, and engage in discussions with accountable talk stems and scaffolding questions. In a fourth grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, students worked in small groups on a collaborative task involving problem solving with division. Some students worked in groups with minimal levels of teacher interruption, allowing students to engage in problem solving together and share their mathematical thinking with each other, in a clear articulation of the school’s beliefs. Other groups of students in the class were led by an adult, either a teacher or paraprofessional. In five of the nine classrooms visited, students were seated in small groups or asked to work in groups but were given independent tasks, limiting the peer-to-peer interactions. Across other classrooms, teachers directed the class discussions, promoting little student to-student interaction and few opportunities for students to produce meaningful work products without teacher prompting.

- While student discussions in the classroom and student meetings demonstrate clear student use of accountable talk strategies, student-to-student discussions were infrequent across classrooms. In a seventh grade English Language Arts (ELA) class, the teacher used the turn and talk strategy a few times in her lesson to give students an opportunity to talk with a partner about a non-fiction text on single-gender education. Although the questions came from the teacher, students had opportunities to bring in prior knowledge and engaged with their own ideas, and ideas in the text about the pros and cons of gendered education. In another second grade ELA class, students worked together in small groups to differentiate characters and their point of view in Charlotte’s Web. Some group members were encouraged to engage in more rigorous work of backing their claims with evidence from the text, while others simply shared their thoughts. Teaching strategies on other classes did not give the questions and tasks over to students to grapple with in student-to-student discussions, or in ways that pushed students to create meaningful student work products.

- Across classrooms, teachers adopted the workshop model, opening the lesson with a “do now” activity to promote student thinking, a mini lesson or guided practice, and planned opportunities for student independent work-time and a share, the latter of which were rarely observed. Across classrooms, teachers led guided practice or discussions with few student responses that limited student independent practice time. An example typical of many classes visited, in a math class, students were only given five minutes of independent work time in a forty-five minute period to complete a math journal, limiting students’ opportunity to produce meaningful student work products.
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 standards aligned and integrate the instructional shifts, with a focus on informational text, writing from sources, and deep understanding in math. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects, and for ELLs and students with disabilities.

Impact
School leaders and teachers ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, with a focus on citing textual evidence and explaining their mathematical thinking. Curricula are accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to the Common Core.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers ensure that the curricula is aligned to the Common Core, and integrate the instructional shifts, particularly citing evidence from the text across grades and subjects. Students in a fourth grade ELA class were tasked with citing evidence from a non-fiction science text, *The Tarantula Scientist* that is a part of their Common Core-aligned curricula. The lesson plan included five questions for students to explore during independent practice that required students to go back into the text to support their answer, such as, “Why might Amanda have decided to study the mating behavior of Heterothele Villosela? Find a reason on page 69 to support your answer.” Similarly, in an early childhood classroom for students with learning disabilities, the lesson plan tasked students with making visualizations from the text, a close reading strategy that helps students to make inferences, and draw conclusions. This strategy for young learners aligns with more complex close reading strategies in later grades, demonstrating coherence that promotes college and career readiness.

- Mathematic units and lessons across the grades are also aligned to foster deep conceptual understanding of core mathematical concepts. Lesson plans across the grades focus on problem solving and tasks are designed to move students from more basic understandings to explaining their mathematical thinking and strategy use. For example, a third grade math lesson on using money to add and subtract through problem solving included questions ranging from, “When you add money, what place value do pennies represent?” to more complex questions to elicit deep understanding, such as, “Explain how you could have used another strategy to solve the problem?” Similarly, in an eighth grade Regents math lesson on linear equations, students were asked to identify errors and misunderstandings pertaining to the steps used in modeled problems to elicit deep understanding in using a multi-step process. Students were also asked to evaluate mathematical statements and cite evidence to justify their responses.

- Across grades and subjects, the curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasized rigorous habits for all learners, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs). Evidence of differentiation of tasks in planning, such as tiered activities aligned to the same learning targets in the form of “I can” statements were observed, as well as purposeful questioning that utilized Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* to ensure a range of questions were present in lesson plans. Plans frequently included below level, on level and above level tasks to meet the rigor needs of various learners, as observed in a third grade science lesson on the use of scientific tools for measurement. While all students were asked to measure with a metric ruler, questions about their measurements varied in the rigor demands for students. While all students were asked about why a paleontologist might carry a ruler, some students were given additional questions about metric rulers and meter sticks.
Findings

The school is developing in their use of common assessments to measure student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas. Across classrooms, teachers’ assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

There are common assessments in place but results are inconsistently used to adjust curricula and instruction. Teachers inconsistently make effective adjustments to meet students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- While teachers have many assessments in place to measure student progress, use of those assessments to drive adjustments to curricula and instruction are still taking shape. One common assessment used, Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) data suggests that as 55 students slipped in progress in the upper grades, about the same made gains in the upper grades, making it unclear how use of this assessment is driving instruction improve student learning outcomes. In response to stagnant reading score growth, the school leaders and teachers have put new independent reading structures in place, but it was too early to tell if they will demonstrate progress for students during the time of the review. Running Records were used to measure reading progress in the lower grades by some teachers, others focused more on STAR assessments, and other teachers were looking for new assessments to add to their repertoire, demonstrating a lack of coherence in common assessments to measure progress for students across grades in reading.

- Similarly, in writing and math, there is a wide number of assessments that students take in each grade, many of which measured the same skills and standards. The number and frequency of assessments demonstrate a lack of refinement and focus that does not allow teachers and students to apply assessment results and understand whether adjustments to curricula and instruction are helping students to progress toward grade level goals.

- Checks for understanding in the classroom are inconsistent, with some promising practices in a few classrooms that demonstrated how teachers were able to quickly assess student learning during instruction and make on-the-spot adjustments. In one class, the teacher visited groups of students as they worked, conferenced with students, and then stopped the whole class for a check in to help students reconnect with the lesson objective. In another lower grade ICT, after the mini lesson, the teachers held the students at the rug to watch them solve one problem independently solve on white boards before sending them off to work in pairs. This formative assessment strategy allowed the teachers to quickly assess student thinking, determine who to keep at the rug for further instruction, and who to send off to work in small groups or pairs. These assessment practices, while strong, were not observed across other classes where teachers did not check for understanding during the lesson, or collected notes on student thinking but did not make adjustments.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Developing |

Findings

School leaders support the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with feedback and next steps from infrequent cycles of classroom observation and analysis of student work and feedback that is not consistently effective. Feedback to teachers captures strengths, challenges, and next steps, but is not yet fully connected to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

Impact

Infrequent cycles of classroom observation and analysis of student work promote some professional growth and reflection. Feedback is beginning to support teacher development.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of teacher observation records and Advance data demonstrates that many teachers had not received more than one observation midway through the school year. For some teachers that were observed more than once, the two observations held were a month or a few weeks apart, and all from the months of October through December, with few observations in September, and January. Teachers at a meeting also shared that most of them had only been observed once this year. The small number of observations, and the infrequency of observations have yet to elevate schoolwide practices and help teachers to implement strategies that promote common practices.

- There is little evidence that feedback given to teachers in the observation cycle is connected to an analysis of student work and data. While the written feedback recorded in Advance is rich with information on teacher moves, and provides low inference data, some of which includes data on student participation in the lesson, there are no mentions of student work or data in the observation records observed. Teachers shared that they sometimes bring student work with them from the lesson to post-observation conferences, but the discussions shared around their students’ work is not reflected in observation records. Records of teacher support from a Department of Education literacy coach for kindergarten through grade two teachers does demonstrate that lower grade teachers are receiving observations and supports about their lessons that are connected to an analysis of student writing and reading assessment data.

- A review of written feedback given to teachers by school administrators demonstrates inconsistencies in capturing strengths, challenges and next steps for teachers that are fully connected to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. In some cases, strengths were clear and connected to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, such as, “You asked higher-order questions, encouraged and asked students questions to deepen their understanding.” In others, strengths were stated as, “there was a no-nonsense tone in your classroom,” making it less clear about specific strategies that were reflected in the lesson. A review of two teachers’ records who had been observed twice showed observations by different administrators, just a few weeks apart, with very different feedback and ratings. One, a new teacher on a formal improvement plan was observed twice within a month with differing suggestions about where she should put her focus, demonstrating a lack of consistency in promoting teacher growth. Clarity about expectations and consistency is still developing across administrators and coaches in their feedback to teachers about their teaching practices.
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations on teams. Teacher teams analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused.

Impact

An inquiry approach is developing across teams. Teams are beginning to measure the efficacy of new teaching strategies put in place or progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- It is clear that teachers are engaged in professional collaborations that are connected to the school's goals; the efficacy of their work is less clear. Teacher observed on a fourth and fifth grade teacher team looked at student data, surfacing gaps in student knowledge in the standards from review of STARS assessment reports. Teachers discussed issues in math problem solving and close reading, but their review of student data was not connected to an inquiry process that allowed them to identify teaching strategies to support student progress and monitor their efficacy over time. The teachers spoke about student deficits that continue to be an issue, but not about specific strategies that they are using and the impact they are having.

- It is clear that the work of teams is having an impact on the school's curricula, as demonstrated in coherence in lesson planning and in the presence of tiered tasks in unit maps, and restructuring of units. Teacher team meetings are allowing teachers the opportunity to share instructional practices, and this sharing is beginning to create improvements in teachers' instructional practices.

- Review of team work across the school, shows consistency in the practices above but does not demonstrate progress toward goals for groups of students. While teachers are talking about student need and sharing practices, a lack of a formal inquiry structure makes it difficult to demonstrate impact without the cycled focus on strategy and assessment. A more structured inquiry approach was more evident in the work of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) teacher's practice as demonstrated in a Principal's Choice School-Based Support Team meeting. The teacher shared her practice with the team in supporting some students in developing in phonics and reading, and articulated a process that she engaged in - giving students a pre-assessment, trying a new strategy over time, seeing success and wanting to spread the new practices across the grade. While this was a shared practice of an individual teacher, it does speak to the inquiry expertise of teachers in the building that could spread to a team to improve inquiry work within the school.

- Teachers were able to speak to how looking at student work for high, medium, and low students is informing changes to their instructional practices, such as improving their anchor charts and lesson planning. Teachers were not able to speak to specific progress for groups of students. It seems that the way in which teachers look at the data, individual reports rather than class and grade reports, is putting the work of meeting student needs on individual teachers who are meeting together and sharing their practice, rather than highlighting practices to help groups of students in class or across the grade.