Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Red Hook Neighborhood School
Elementary 15K676
27 Huntington St.
Brooklyn
NY 11231

Principal: Deanna Thompson

Dates of Review:
March 23, 2017 - March 24, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Edward Hazen
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Celebration** to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Focus** to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as **Additional Finding**. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School


School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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</table>
### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</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>
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</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>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>Area of Celebration</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: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings
School leaders support the professional growth of teachers using a cycle of observation that provides actionable feedback to teachers, including next steps for improvement using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

Impact
School leaders have an effective system that uses the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to observe teachers and support their practice through follow up professional learning opportunities, resulting in the adoption of common instructional practices schoolwide.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have established an observation cycle to support teachers by using formal feedback shared on Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) evaluation forms and informal feedback from instructional walks. The school leaders rate selected components of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* based upon level of effectiveness and specific evidence collected during the classroom visits. Formal observations, along with additional evaluators’ notes, are then shared with teachers during a post-observation meeting. At which time, school leaders provide teachers with rationale for the level of the rating, along with actionable feedback for teachers that includes recommendations for improvement.

- School leaders conduct informal observations, or instructional walks, regularly and provide feedback to teachers. The faculty receives a memo stating what the instructional “look fors” are going to be ahead of time, so that the expectations are clearly articulated and remain aligned to the agreed upon instructional priorities of the school. Teachers receive timely, actionable feedback as a result of the informal instructional walks by school leadership. This then captures areas of strength and recommended next steps for improvement, such as the use of higher level questioning techniques. Teachers that receive feedback from an informal observation are encouraged to have an intervisitation with a colleague that has been identified as pedagogically strong in an area in which the teacher should improve their practice.

- Teachers stated that expectations are set high when it comes to pedagogical practices. The school leaders have expectations for rigorous instruction and high levels of student engagement. They noted that the instructional walks are focused on the school’s prioritized instructional goals or on a teaching strategy that was learned at a professional learning session. Teachers stated that the feedback and next steps, such as observing a colleague, has been effective in improving their practice. Teachers expressed an appreciation for the support system for the teaching staff that has been implemented schoolwide, such as the mentoring program and ongoing professional learning opportunities. A teacher new to the profession stated that she was grateful to be participating in the mentoring program because it has been helping her improve her practice.
Area of Focus

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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Findings

Teaching practices are becoming aligned to the school’s belief about how students learn best. Pedagogy is inconsistently differentiated and does not consistently utilize strategies such as inquiry, cooperative learning structures, questioning, and discussions to promote high levels of thinking and engagement for a diversity of learners.

Impact

Across grades and contents areas, teaching practices do not consistently leverage school identified best practices, resulting in missed opportunities to provide all students with challenging learning tasks that require them to use critical thinking, analysis, and problem solving. Tasks inconsistently encourage inquiry, collaboration, and ownership among students.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grade levels and content areas, teaching practices are inconsistently aligned with the school’s articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best in the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP). Although the school’s leadership team identified differentiated instruction to ensure that teachers address students’ individualized learning styles, needs, and modalities, this practice was not observed in most classrooms visited. In some classrooms, students were provided with manipulatives, graphic organizers, and visuals. However, this was not prevalent across most of the classes. In most of the classes, instruction was not differentiated to allow multiple entry points into the lesson, nor were there scaffolds or specialized instructional strategies or language objectives identified in teacher lesson plans for students with disabilities or English Language Learners (ELLs).

- In a fifth-grade co-taught English as a New Language (ENL) math lesson, students’ expected outcomes were identical. The lesson plan cited “videos” and “colored pencils or crayons” as differentiation for the class although a video was not shown. Although there were ELLs in the class, there were no specific supports provided nor identified in the lesson plan. Similarly, in a third-grade math lesson, all students were provided with the same sets of materials and expected to complete the same set of tasks.

- The level of structured group work that holds students individually accountable and the work of their team for participating at high levels varied across classrooms. In a science lesson about continental drift, students were asked to do a turn and talk with their partner to state things they remembered about the Earth’s layers. Not all of the pairs of students engaged in discourse with one another and were not redirected by the teacher. During a second activity in which students had to think-pair-share, some students still did not engage in conversation with their partner, while other students were overheard discussing topics unrelated to the task. In a math lesson in which students were required to complete a math problem as a do now activity, several students were observed with incomplete solutions to their problem, while others had not written anything.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum  
Rating: Proficient

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Rigorous academic tasks are planned for all learners.

Impact

The curricula reflect planning, tasks with rigorous habits that build coherence across subjects and grades, and supports the engagement in higher-order cognitive engagement for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricula and academic tasks are planned to align with the Common Core across grades and content areas. Many teacher lesson plans utilized Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* to plan higher level questions for students. For example, in a second-grade math lesson, the teacher had planned to have students answer the questions, “What are you asked to find?” and “Why is subtraction used to solve this problem?” which she had identified as Webb’s DOK level two and three questions. To implement the instructional shifts, school leaders require that unit and lesson plans include instructional outcomes that require students to think, problem solve, and engage in purposeful discussions and reflections on concepts and skills they are learning. The instructional shifts were evident in a review of unit and lesson plans. Across grades and content areas, teachers plan tasks that require students to cite text-based evidence, make claims, and use accountable talk when participating in class discussions.

- The school’s instructional leaders have opted to supplement their English Language Arts (ELA) curricula by utilizing the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program (TCRWP). Teachers use *ReadyGen* as its core ELA curricula but opted to add TCRWP to increase opportunities for students to engage in writing tasks and guided reading using a workshop model for instruction in reading and writing. Similarly, the school leaders adopted Open Court in kindergarten through second grade to build students’ foundational reading skills. In math, teachers in grades one through five have chosen to develop curricula maps using the *GOMath!* program. Teachers administer the program’s mid- and end of unit assessments which they analyze, leading to the adjustment of the curriculum and modification of their scope and sequence as necessary.

- School leaders have a regular cycle in place to review and revise curricula documents, unit plans, pacing guides, and lesson plans based on the analysis of student data and work products, so that lessons are accessible for all students. A review of curriculum documents and meeting agendas indicate that grade level teachers meet weekly to collaborate to revise the curricula and create supplemental instructional materials and resources. This is to provide multiple entry points into lessons for student with disabilities and ELLs, such as inclusion of specific instructional strategies in lesson plans, translated student materials, graphic organizers, guided notes, sentence frames, and discussion starters.
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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Findings

Feedback to students does not consistently align to rubrics or provide specific, actionable next steps for improvement. Teacher monitoring of student understanding during lessons is not always visibly active and continuous, nor does it result in a change in instruction.

Impact

Limited actionable feedback results in limited opportunities for students to improve the quality of their work products. The uneven ongoing checks for understandings result in partial adjustments to instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grade levels and subject areas, teachers use rubrics to assess student work. However, the level of actionable feedback for improvement provided to students varied from class to class. A review of student work samples indicated that students tended to receive feedback mainly on their writing tasks in their English Language Arts (ELA) and social studies classes. Moreover, feedback and scoring was not consistent across grades or classes and often did not always align to the rubric criterion itself. For example, students that had received different leveled scores on a four-level opinion essay rubric in which they had to write a short essay on what they believed to be the world’s grossest job, had identical feedback. Students that had received scores of level two, level three, and level four, respectively, had all received the same feedback statement from their teacher despite the range of their scores and depth of their writing such as, “Next time please add more details to your writing.” Students could not articulate how the feedback statement could help them move to the next level with their writing.

- Across grades and subject areas, next steps for students to improve their work was not consistent, as evidenced by the feedback provided by teachers. Some students received specific, actionable feedback statements such as, “Next time, try using transition words like, 'In addition,' to bring your thoughts together,” while other students received a checkmark on their writing task with no comments or reference to a rubric score or grade. Some students had received rubrics stapled to their work with the scores for each criterion area circled or checked off with no rationale for the scores or next steps for improvement. Most students stated that the use of writing checklists have been helpful in framing their thoughts prior to starting the writing process; however, they were primarily used in ELA and social studies.

- Across classrooms, teachers inconsistently used ongoing checks for understanding to adjust instruction to meet the needs of all students. In a third-grade math class, students were required to use the circle the numbers, underline the question, box the key words, evaluate, and solve (CUBES) strategy to solve math problems, after the steps were modeled for the class. Prior to students starting their independent practice, the teacher asked students to give a thumbs up if they understood the activity and their next steps. However, the teacher quickly glanced around the room and did not address students that had indicated that they were confused. Similarly, when asked to provide a “thumbs up if you understand,” later in the lesson, insufficient time was provided to see all student responses. Not all students, raised either a thumb up or down, indicating some students did not understand, but they were not addressed. When students were asked to share their answers, the teacher called on volunteers with their hands raised and accepted answers from the same student on three occasions. Similarly, during a science lesson about the Earth’s layers, the teacher checked for understanding by calling on volunteers and accepted multiple answers from the same students.
Findings
School leaders and staff are establishing systems to try to communicate expectations to families that are connected to a path to college and career.

Impact
School leaders are developing a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to students and their families that will lead to students being prepared for college and career.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders are developing systems and structures to communicate high expectations to families that lead to college and career readiness for students. School leaders stated that family engagement in their students’ learning needs to improve and stated that historically, family involvement in their child’s education has been low at the school. This was evidenced by very low turnouts to school sponsored events, such as curriculum nights in a review of sign-in sheets, and no non-employee parents attending the quality review meeting. To encourage more families to become involved with their child’s academics, school leaders have implemented an online grade reporting system. Some teachers have begun to use Class Dojo, which allows them to connect online with parents to share their class academic and behavioral expectations and keep them updated on their child’s progress in real time.

- Teachers and school leaders are establishing a culture for learning that communicates high expectations. At the beginning of the school year, a school pledge was developed that is read over the school’s public address system by students every morning. The principal stated that she started meeting with students, regularly, using a town hall format to remind them of the schoolwide academic and behavioral expectation and the importance of adopting effective personal habits that will lead to college and career readiness. School leaders noted that staff have started to develop a sense of school pride and mutual respect. Teachers and school leaders reported that they have begun to see a difference in how some of the students feel about school and learning, noting that students have begun to be more engaged in lessons by actively listening and participating.

- School leaders and teacher teams are developing a system to provide guidance and support that adequately prepares them for the next level. School leaders reported that in the absence of a guidance counselor, teachers have been picking up the slack by infusing college and career preparedness into the curricula by teaching students effective habits. As an example, teachers use excerpts from the book of the month, which identifies key character traits that lead to the adoption of personal behaviors and mindset that students need to prepare for the next level.
**Additional Finding**

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured inquiry-based collaborations that align to the school goals.

**Impact**

Increased professional collaboration among teachers has resulted in the integration of the instructional shifts across subjects and the promotion of a goal on improving student learning across grade levels.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Grade level teacher teams collaborate to review student work samples and data. Analysis of Fountas and Pinnell reading, Open Court ELA, ReadyGen, and GoMath! assessments are used to revise curricula and academic tasks using a “looking at student work” protocol. School leadership provides scheduled common planning time for collaborative teams to meet horizontally by grade level and vertically, in grades kindergarten through fifth. Teachers report using their professional collaboration time to revise their pacing guides and work on vertical alignment of the curricula to the Common Core as well as identify specific instructional strategies such that can be used to help struggling students understand a concept or plan to be higher achieving students.

- Teachers and school leaders reported that collaborative teacher teams have a formal meeting once a month. Teacher teams also meet formally during weekly professional development sessions, and informally during common lunch or prep periods. A review of meeting agendas and minutes indicate that teacher team meetings frequently used the analysis of assessment data to inform whole class instruction and plan for individual and small group instruction. Teachers also noted that common planning time is often used to create materials and instructional resources that support students’ content knowledge and skill development such as scaffolds including graphic organizers, writing prompts, sentence frames, and visual aids. To assist teacher teams, school leaders have provided professional development through consultation with outside educational experts and on-site coaching in effectively analyzing student assessment data and implementation of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program’s workshop model for teaching writing.

- Teacher teams meet consistently to analyze assessment data to identify patterns and trends in student achievement schoolwide. School leaders and teachers reported that the decision was made to adopt the Open Court reading program after an analysis of kindergarten through second grade reading data revealed that students were struggling with phonemic awareness and decoding words, a trend that had continued throughout the grades. Similarly, a decision was made to have kindergarten teachers loop into first grade with their students to build instructional capacity for the teachers and ensure students would be reading at grade level by the end of first grade.