Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 770 New American Academy
Elementary 17K770
60 East 94th St.
Brooklyn
NY 11212

Principal: Jessica Saratovsky

Dates of Review:
January 31, 2017 - February 1, 2017

Lead Reviewer: AJ Hepworth
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>To what extent does the school...</strong></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>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>Additional Finding</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</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>
</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>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>
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</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings

The principal and master teachers support the development of all teachers with effective feedback and next steps via instructional collaborations that are integral to the school structure. Additionally, school leaders and master teachers accurately capture teachers’ instructional glows and grows.

Impact

Support and supervision of teachers elevates schoolwide instructional practices and feedback articulates clear expectations and supports professional goals collaboratively developed between teachers and school leadership.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers who are hired are designated as either apprentice, associate, partner, or master. To support the development of teachers, the highly skilled master teacher sits in on every team meeting to provide coaching and feedback during the meeting, serves respectively as a mentor to the other team teachers, and transitions the work back into the classroom for instructional support. Additionally, all teachers also plan and collaborate with master teachers during weekly meetings and frequent intervisitations. During instruction, master teachers often lead a part of the lesson or pull a group of students aside who are in need of additional support, in addition to giving feedback to the teacher. All teachers immensely value the collaborative structure working with a master teacher provides them and stated that they benefit by developing their practice and increasing their toolkit to meet the needs of all their learners. They understand they will “never be left alone to sink or swim at the expense of student learning.”

- Feedback is formally provided to teachers through teacher-team discussions and principal observations. An Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) evaluation form given to teachers after formal or informal observations includes specific glows and grows and recommendations for improved instruction. Additionally, questions are posed to teachers on the feedback forms for them to be reflective moving forward. Feedback often includes schoolwide expectations to ensure instructional coherence among all staff. For example, a recommendation on an APPR evaluation form suggested a teacher “make[s] sure a teaching point is clear and evident with evidence of explicit modeling,” which aligns with the school’s instructional expectations. Other APPR evaluation forms recommend teachers use graphic organizers or turn-and-talks to assist students to demonstrate their thinking and raise their level of engagement in the lesson.

- During two-on-one meetings, held three times yearly, teachers rate themselves according to the Danielson Framework for Teaching rubric. They engage in conversations with school leadership and their master teacher, using given feedback to guide their professional development, make informed decisions about their assignment, and set attainable professional goals to support their growth as pedagogues.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use assessment strategies that align with the school curricula and classroom practices reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding. Students self-assess and reflect using rubrics and checklists.

Impact

Assessment practices provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement and allow teachers to make effective adjustments to meet students’ learning needs. However, some of the feedback is not promoting critical thinking and insight for all students to articulate next steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers and school leadership use online diagnostic data to identify students in need of intervention services with a focus on using data to address students’ instructional needs during lessons that are co-taught with the master teacher. Additionally, student growth reports indicate student gains between diagnostics and measure progress towards end-of-year growth targets for all proficiency levels. Teachers use this data in conjunction with formative assessments to redirect instruction for specific groups of students to increase their achievement. Further, departmentalization of grade-level teachers, enables the sharing of assessment findings to ensure student groupings and targeted instruction remains consistent across all content areas on a daily basis. Therefore, when a student rotates to another teacher, they experience uniform support from a variety of scaffolds or differentiated tools during both whole group instruction and independent work. Furthermore, data discussed during team meetings, Response to Intervention (RtI) meetings, and used during guided reading groups, focuses on what students are doing and how teacher practices are providing meaningful feedback. Although the data informs teachers of their students’ learning needs and actions necessary for mastery, students often conveyed they are limited in their understanding of how to interpret teacher feedback to improve their work. For example, one student stated he did well on a writing assignment, however, he was only provided feedback to add more details next time. Similar responses relative to feedback were communicated by the majority of students during the student meeting, hence not always providing them with a clear understanding of what to do next.

- Teachers are constantly taking the pulse of the classroom. A grade two teacher modeled how to make connections from two different non-fiction sources using specific questions and the document camera. The teacher checked-in to make sure students were fully able to explain the task and how to use the checklist. Students also selected their findings and tracked similarities working independently; however, similar ongoing checks for student understanding, were not as effectively observed across other classes. Many teachers use thumbs up and down to check for student understanding, but often students appeared to be in compliance with the requested action, visually modeled by the teacher. Also, teachers infrequently logged student progress with task completion during instruction, thus limiting their opportunity to make students aware of their next learning steps. However, during a co-teach situation, the master teacher often intervened by pulling some students aside who appeared to be struggling for clarity and in need of a reteach.

- Students self-assess and reflect on tasks they complete in class, although most students shared they primarily do it in the upper grades. Additionally, students demonstrated some confusion with how to use the assessment and reflection tools when they were asked to explain during the meeting. A review of several checklists provided to students on assignments, were not completely filled out. Students were also unable to fully explain how they used their rubrics as an opportunity to grade themselves in addition to being used as a guiding tool, although teachers stated they purposefully create rubrics to be age appropriate and student-friendly.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

Findings

Staff ensure curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts through interdisciplinary and departmentalized planning, including the use of student work and data when making adjustments.

Impact

Coherence of curricula across grades and subject areas promotes college and career readiness, while strategically making sure accessibility to the curricula and opportunities for cognitive engagement exist for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Coherent unit plans and lesson plans are developed collaboratively across grades to strategically ensure integration of the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Lesson plans in all content areas emphasize what students will be able to demonstrate aligned to skills for college and career readiness. Additionally, essential questions for each unit map are listed along with the specific skills students will be able to demonstrate through strategically designed performance tasks that are intended to challenge students' thinking and real-world skills. For example, an interdisciplinary grade four and five unit plan on geography and early societies of the western hemisphere include an emphasis on informational text requiring students working in groups to develop a research question using a graphic organizer. Similarly, a lesson plan developed using the EngageNY math curriculum includes an instructional shift addendum added by the teacher, for her special education students, to explain how they can compare lengths of an object.

- Benchmark diagnostic results are used to refine and revise a writing unit and allow for grouping of students according to their individual needs. Students are grouped as either in need of identifying text features, needing assistance with looking across texts to understand subtopics, spelling, building stamina, or support with big idea questions. Similarly in a math lesson addressing unit place value, students were grouped by either needing support with bundling, comparing three-digit numbers, needing help with fluency, or assistance with modeling base-ten with money. Results from progress monitoring highlight increased achievement for groups of students, especially those identified as economically disadvantaged. Additionally, data trackers are maintained to provide information to teachers regarding if their design is appropriate and allow for student access and cognitive engagement during instruction. Differentiated lesson plans are created according to student reading levels, achievement levels on benchmark assessments, and/or observed student misconceptions.

- At monthly meetings, teachers look at data for students considered to be high Level 2’s on State assessments and use this information to plan for adjustments to curricula with particular attention to Common Core Learning Standards skills in English Language Arts (ELA) and math. Specifically, running records from two leveled reading assessment programs are used to further plan for students Response to Intervention tier two scaffolds to move them to tier three. Additionally, the leveled reading assessment programs are used to plan additional challenges for students demonstrating mastery on current units so they are also cognitively engaged in their learning.
Additional Finding

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

Teaching strategies across classrooms include appropriately challenging resources and tiered questioning during whole group instruction, small group discussions, and independent work.

Impact

 Appropriately challenging tasks engage learners and allow them to demonstrate higher-order skills in their work, thinking, and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Teaching strategies used across classes are intended to assist students with engaging in their assigned tasks more critically and prompt higher-order thinking. Students in a grade two class were provided visual support when the teacher used a document camera to model the difference between force and motion by using her finger to follow along as she read aloud the text. Once completed, students were provided a graphic organizer to take notes and tasked with making connections between the provided books. Across most classes, students were provided scaffolds to engage in their classwork, although some were not high-quality supports to deeply engage all learners. For example, students in a grade three class were identifying why people and animals rely on roots, although during discussion no note catcher was provided for students to concretize their thinking. Students with disabilities were provided manipulatives to further engage them in representing their understanding of measurement terms shorter and longer, while paraprofessionals and the teacher worked with small groups of students to provide individualized instruction and questioning to promote student thinking.

- Opportunities for student to share and reflect on their learning were evident in all classes. During whole group, small group, and independent work, students were observed sharing their thinking and inferences as an outgrowth of the activities in which they were engaged. A group of kindergarten students working together explained they were editing and correcting their classmates work relative to making appropriately sequenced events in a narrative. A checklist was also provided to help them identify and fix their mistakes, although some students could not explain how to correctly use the checklist. Conversely, students in a grade three class seated in small groups reflected on their use of a rubric and expressed to their partners how they could improve their work. Partners provided additional feedback and explained their thinking about giving a grade aligned to the checklist.

- Groups of learners were assigned mixed fraction word problems to solve. The teacher moved around the room, worked with selected students more directly, and encouraged them to put parts together and calculate the rest. When necessary she asked some students to meet in the front of the classroom to redirect their thinking and apply the read, draw, write concept with their thought process. Additionally, multiplication charts and cups filled with pencils were provided to ensure simple supports were available so as not to distract from the task. However, in another math class students were challenged with explaining their reasoning, although no sentence starters or additional supports were provided, limiting the students’ opportunity to explain their understanding of more critical concepts.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 3.4 High Expectations  
Rating: Well Developed

Findings

Communications of high expectations are provided to the staff through training, print, and support. Teacher teams also have established a culture of learning that systematically communicates high expectations for their students.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability exists among administrators and staff, and they provide clear and focused feedback, guidance, and support to students so they are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- Surveys are developed, completed, and the results are disaggregated by teachers to better understand what works, what does not work, and what is conflicting. The results are used to support a culture of mutual accountability by all staff. The most recent survey validated that the collaboration and team-based teaching across grade levels, in conjunction with the master teacher practice, works well. Following the career ladder model, and the school’s participation in the National Board for Professional Training Standards, allow for communicating key expectations with teachers. Thus, teachers value the support and training they receive from the master teachers, and master teachers value the training they receive from the principal in order to accomplish their work and succeed in their roles. Additionally, staff feels fully supported by participating in summer training, yearlong professional development, and opportunities that allow them to try new pedagogical approaches in their classes. Feelings of a “better understanding” and “life changing” opportunities were expressed by the vast majority of staff, including the fact that their professional learning is leading to more reflective and collaborative practices.

- A significant focus on social emotional learning between teacher and student has been a core value embedded in the school culture and a training emphasis for many teachers. Teachers shared how the Love and Logic approach has furthered their ability to create a safe environment. Teachers note where previously they may have assigned a consequence for inappropriate behavior they now regularly delay consequences. Teachers articulate and appreciate how their toolkit for supporting a culture where learning is valued is expanding as a result of their trainings.

- All students, including those identified as economically disadvantaged and students with disabilities, understand the opportunities offered by the school and take advantage of guidance advisement supports that prepare them to be successful. Many students identified in need of additional support attend Saturday academy for enrichment. Others attend after school enrichment for help them deal with concepts with which they struggle, including pushing their exposure so they are further ahead in curriculum content. Several students said when they attend the Tuesday after school math enrichment where they are provided focused support for concepts they will learn in class the upcoming Thursday.

- Students have the opportunity to meet every week with the principal in a town hall forum scheduled by grade level. The town hall allows for literacy-based discussions with the principal and includes focusing in on student work, instruction, and reflection. During town halls, students are also provided an opportunity to understand expectations connected to their future schooling, including middle school.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development
Rating: Well Developed

Findings

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations that meet daily and staff contributes significantly as leaders across all aspects of school systems.

Impact

Teachers’ instructional capacity is promoted and increased student achievement is evident for all. Additionally, teachers are integral members in decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- At a meeting of grade three teachers, teachers adhered to a “Learning From Student Work” protocol to develop more insight regarding students’ knowledge about how characters’ actions impact events in a story. Teachers reviewed completed exit tickets, which incorporated a writing strategy, checklist, and rubric, to assist in their realization of the task. Students were also required to write what they were able to accomplish and identify an area in which they still needed to improve. Through an analysis of student responses teachers concluded more instructional emphasis on syntax and vocabulary would strengthen students’ ability to express their thinking more clearly. Additionally, teachers noted as a result of their instructional coherence stemming from their inquiry meetings, an emphasis on the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts is more intentional. They perceive students are being more cognitive and applying strategies across classes such as restating the question, answering the question, and providing two details from the text that supports the answer, thus contributing to the significantly increased performance on the New York State English Language Arts Assessment. Proficiency for Levels 3 and 4 increased twelve percent for all students schoolwide from 2015 to 2016.

- Teachers observe one another as part of teacher rounds and they share out their findings during weekly inquiry-based collaborations. A recent noticing of several teachers reflecting on their observation of a colleague included the sharing of low-inference data, wonderings, reflection, and establishment of commitments for future instruction. The low-inference notes of the observers included highlighting the use of varied check-ins, turn-and-talks, teacher’s validation of student comments by adjusting the communication to better reflect student thinking, and purposeful naming of processes such as, “Now I am going to ask you an open ended question.” The teacher, who was provided the low-inference feedback, noted that her commitment moving forward would include more strategic use of wait time and limit summing up the lesson by front-loading it and allowing for more student input.

- Distributed leadership roles held by teachers are integral to the success of the school. All teachers are invested in the norming of their practice through taking a leadership role in promoting activities related to professional inquiry and events that positively affect school life, and participating in community projects. Several teachers have established clubs for students based on their awareness and recognition for its need, such as an after school book club. Other teachers have implemented social-emotional trainings connected to Love and Logic and purposefully integrate its principles into the school culture and all teaching across classes.

- Tenured teachers serve as facilitators for hiring, welcoming, and preparing new staff to be successful in their role. Additionally, master teachers have drafted a research-based rubric to be used in evaluating their role as leaders.