Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 020 Anna Silver
Elementary 01M020
166 Essex St.
Manhattan
NY 10002

Principal: Sarah Pinto Viagran

Dates of Review:
April 6, 2017 - April 7, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Buffie Whitfield
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>Developing</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>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>Area of Focus</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>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

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

Findings

The school leadership uses the Danielson Framework to analyze learning outcomes and elevate schoolwide teaching practices with effective feedback and intentional, targeted use of observations.

Impact

School leaders strategically use data from observations and the Danielson Framework to provide meaningful feedback to teachers and to foster professional growth, thus leading to improved teaching practice.

Supporting Evidence

- During observation conferences, administrators refer to student work and previous evaluator notes to ensure clarity of expectations for teacher growth. For instance, one teacher was reminded that the previous evaluator had suggested using specific videos, websites, and staff to support “how to engage in guided practice, during small groups, visit the TC website.” Feedback gives tools and strategies to improve instruction. For example, an administrator wrote “Try using this format when conferring with a student – Research, Compliment, Select a Goal, and Record.” During feedback sessions, teachers are also encouraged to seek support from teacher leaders who are an integral part of the feedback loop.

- Administrators give detailed feedback to teachers by capturing their strengths and indicating support with suggested examples for their instructional growth. In the teacher meeting, teachers stated that feedback is clear and purposeful with concrete examples for improvement. This year, teachers are continuing to focus on questioning and discussion techniques, as well as data-driven instruction. Through ongoing focused observations and follow-up support, supervisors have developed a cycle of continual improvement where feedback is specific, evidence-based, actionable, and timely.

- The cabinet has calibrated what effective teaching looks like and has provided ample opportunities for teachers to grow through observing best practices by intervisitation and by providing coaching to ensure the consistency of teacher development and practice. In a meeting, teachers expressed that administrators are modeling instruction resulting in transparency around feedback from school leaders that focused on improving their instructional practice.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics that are loosely aligned with the school's curricula. Teacher assessment practices inconsistently show the use of ongoing checks for understanding.

Impact

Students receive limited actionable feedback, and checks for understanding do not always lead to effective adjustments to instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Many of the rubrics showed criteria circled and/or highlighted with no teacher feedback. In places where the teacher provided rubric-aligned feedback, the feedback was about spelling, grammar, or conventions and not about analysis, explanation, or connections to textual evidence. In a student meeting, students were unable to state a next step for improving the quality of their work other than to cite grammar and punctuation or to add more details. Feedback did not provide students with examples to improve their outcomes. For example, a student stated that she needed to use transitional words on a writing work product. When asked, about transitional words, she was unable to describe them.

- Across classrooms, varying use of teachers’ feedback to students hinders their next steps. Feedback was inconsistent where the presentation of student work was either devoid of rubrics or meaningful feedback including next steps. During the interview, students shared their work. Student work comprised of ungraded work, fractions denoting how many questions the students answered correctly (such as “40/100” or “3/4”), lack of rubrics, lack of task specificity, or had a check or comment like “excellent work” or “study more to improve.” In some classrooms, students were using rubrics to guide their work and received verbal and written feedback for their next steps. Some students could identify a skill or rubric-measured trait they were trying to improve. However, most student responses indicated the feedback was not prescriptive in nature. Specifically, one student stated that the teacher told them that they are progressing. Students struggled to explain how they would progress to the next level. Across the school, the feedback on student work posted on bulletin boards, provided during the student meeting, and viewed in notebooks or in portfolios was not consistently clear or actionable.

- In a few classrooms visited, teachers were observed conferring with students and noting their answers. However, this practice of adjusting instruction is yet to be implemented across all classrooms. In many of the classrooms, teachers walked from group to group and spoke with students, but there was no recording of student questions or misunderstandings. In a math class, while students were working in groups, the teacher circulated around the room to interact with students. Teachers circulate as students work, but this practice did not always yield adjustments to lessons, or mid-lesson interruption to share teacher observations that reinforce keeping students on track.
Additional Finding

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

Findings
Curricula and academic tasks reflect the process of planning to provide students' access to the curriculum and to ensure alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards. However, curricula and tasks inconsistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects.

Impact
Consistent access to, and ownership of, rigorous curricula that cognitively engage all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, are uneven and hinder college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence
- A review of sample unit plans shows that the school is making progress in developing units aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). However, grade teams are at different stages in developing Common Core-aligned curricula and performance tasks. The school has begun to develop conversations around the definition of rigor and will begin to have teams reflect on their own understanding of rigor within their content areas.
- School leaders are unpacking the CCLS, focusing on the important components to emphasize, and on identifying specific learning that promotes active student engagement in activities leading to self-assessment. Additionally, teachers are developing writing-specific, purposeful learning targets aligned to the CCLS for each day’s lesson, and are creating rigorous learning tasks that allow students to demonstrate mastery of the day’s learning target (formative assessments). According to the school leaders, the instructional focus this year is to continue to develop improved, CCLS-aligned lesson plans containing student activities focused on specific teaching points.
- A review of English Language Arts (ELA) lesson plans indicated modifications and revisions to address classroom learners, especially students with disabilities. For example, an ELA plan included modifications to address special needs students’ learning needs by providing scaffolds during the lessons to answer the essential questions being addressed. A math lesson plan indicated the manipulatives for students to use while problem solving. However, extensions are not yet evident across all classes. The principal stated that the school is in the process of reviewing, modifying, and revising the curriculum to strengthen access for all learners and engagement in rigorous tasks.
**Additional Finding**

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

**Findings**

There is an uneven application of differentiation and other instructional strategies across classrooms to provide appropriately challenging and rigorous learning opportunities that promote high achievement.

**Impact**

The delivery of instruction inconsistently provides multiple entry points for students; the use of scaffolds and extensions is uneven, and questioning techniques do not always foster discussions that are appropriately challenging for all learners.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders believe students learn best when skills are modeled and students are given the opportunity to grow independently. Although the school has shared beliefs about differentiation and scaffolding instruction to provide appropriate entry points for students, the implementation of agreed-upon strategies for supporting and extending higher-order thinking was not present in a number of classes visited. For instance, in an Integrated Co-Teaching ELA class, the teachers engaged in parallel teaching. One teacher read an excerpt to a small group. The teacher asked students to turn and talk with their partners about their decision on what would their topic sentences be. The teacher asked students, “What are we working on today?” However, students were unresponsive to the questions. The other teacher shared with a small group that Austria-Hungary was a really big part of Europe. However, the teacher did not have a map for a point a reference and such created a missed opportunity to provide context for students.

- Across classrooms, teaching strategies, questioning, and discussion inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. In two ELA class, students were introduced to the poetry unit. The teacher shared that poets look at things with poet eyes and look at things in new and different ways. The teacher mentioned to the students to describe inanimate objects. Though the teachers’ referenced simile and personification in examples provided to students, the teachers did not state or mention the poetic devices. Additionally, the questions asked to the students were low-level and did not challenge students. For example, “What does this scissors look like?” Students responded, and the teacher said, “Good,” and elicited other responses. One student said the scissors look like a crocodile. The teacher responded, “Wow, which is really advanced; let’s just focus on the color of the scissor.”

- In a few classes, students who participated in class discussions are beginning to use accountable talk conversation prompts. For instance, in some classes students were prompted to turn and talk, but the conversation resulted in students being off track, without mutual accountability. Absent accountable talk stems to provoke discussions and tiered questions, student engagement waned. Student-to-student interaction and discussion were inconsistent across the classrooms. Teachers in numerous classrooms essentially repeated answers and evaluated the accuracy of student responses themselves rather than inviting the class to agree, disagree, elaborate upon the responses of their peers, or ask questions of one another.
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 to the entire staff via explicit expectations. School leaders and staff effectively communicate to families the expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness.

**Impact**

Teachers receive training and there is a system of accountability to share meaningful feedback to families about students’ progress towards goals.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders communicate explicit expectations via bulletin boards, monthly newsletters, assemblies, and workshops for students and their families. Students and their families speak highly of the school and the communication received concerning academic and social-emotional support. Parents discussed attending parent and school leadership team meetings, and appreciate the open-door policy at the school and opportunities to engage in their children's learning and progress. The P.S. 020 news and monthly calendars distributed to parents convey details on assessments, on school and district events, and on other information. Support for families include family curriculum nights, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten orientation, and dual language classes to gain language proficiency.

- The principal shares her high expectations with staff during faculty and professional development meetings. School leaders expressed the expectation that teachers understand each student's entry point to support continued growth. This was evidenced by a review of the professional development plan and agendas from professional learning sessions as well as feedback on teacher practice. Teachers shared the high expectations that the principal and assistant principal have developed and communicated through explicit training. “Administration modeled which makes me comfortable and demonstrates their expectations of teaching and learning.”

- Parents shared that teachers offer guidance and support and regularly send updates on their children's progress via phone and email outreach. Parents stated that the school offers workshops on the Common Core Learning Standards to help them better understand the expectations of those standards. Another communication system, an online grading program used schoolwide to monitor student progress and track student data, has increased communication between the school and parents. During the parent meeting, it was shared that school leaders and teachers have an open-door policy, allowing parents at any time of the school day to discuss their children’s social and academic progress.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Distributive Leadership | Rating: | Developing |

Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in professional collaborations during common planning times where they jointly plan lessons based on learning outcomes. However, their work is not inquiry-based and reflects minimal analysis of student assessment and work.

Impact
Lack of inquiry-based investigation limits identification and promotion of pedagogical practice aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and school goals. Collaborations do not typically result in improved teacher practice or progress for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence
- Teachers are developing team structures, though meetings are mainly about discussing individual students and planning lessons in accordance with curricula expectations. Teachers make some suggestions loosely presented through discussion about adjusting pedagogy, in certain instances, based on analysis of student progress, errors, and/or misconceptions. However, the systematic data-based refinement of curriculum that builds towards rigorous habits that cognitively engage all students, including struggling students, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities, is still evolving.

- Team meetings lacked an inquiry approach. At an observed team meeting, teachers discussed class composition and articulation of students for the next school year. Teachers shared wonderings about student progress and next steps for students who are struggling in the dual language program. A follow-up for this meeting about how students ought to be placed was to invite administration to the next meeting to discuss queries. Agendas varied across grades in terms of specificity. For example, a grade three agenda only stated, “Fairy Tales for Reading and Writing” without details. Grade one minutes posted for the month indicated notes on shared pacing conflicts among different classes and the possibility of vertical planning.

- Some grade teams look at student writing to measure improvement. However, the teachers have not yet determined the best way to help students write better or how to document their instructional practice well enough to examine and gauge for true effectiveness. Furthermore, a review of the teacher team agendas and notes revealed a loose connection between data analysis and the creation of goals about students’ writing products for groups of students.