Quality Review Report

2016-2017

J.H.S. 052 Inwood
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 06M052
650 Academy St.
Manhattan
NY 10034

Principal: Lupe Leon

Dates of Review:
December 6, 2016 - December 7, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Mitchell Center
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

J.H.S. 052 Inwood serves students in grade 6 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>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<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>Developing</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>Proficient</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings
Teachers engage in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations where student work is analyzed and assessed.

Impact
Teacher teams meet regularly to align instructional practice within and across grades. Teacher capacity is developed during these meetings and through a collaborative lesson plan structure, positively impacting teacher practice.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers who teach the same subject participate in Lesson Labs as part of their professional learning and growth. During Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings teachers co-create a lesson and determine which teacher will lead it. Other teachers observe the lesson as it is taught by one teacher, and in a follow-up meeting teachers work together to revise the lesson based on the feedback of the educator who taught the lesson, as well as the observing teachers. The lesson is refined based on feedback and then taught again. Teachers report that this cycle of lesson creation and peer feedback strengthens their instructional capacity.

- The school's goal of increased student engagement was furthered during a PLC that included English Language Arts (ELA), social studies and English as a New Language (ENL) teachers. Teachers looked at samples of student writing from each grade and identified successes and areas that students needed to continue working on. For example, they cited as strengths students' ability to craft an introduction, use transition words, cite relevant text evidence, provide context and write evidence-based essays free from opinion words. These were skills that the teachers had determined were priorities earlier in the year, and which they had been teaching towards for several weeks. One area they agreed students need to keep working on is explaining quotes effectively. These conversations around student work strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers and support the achievement of schoolwide goals.

- Teachers meet by subject three times per week to engage in PLC’s. PLC meeting notes show teacher teams engaged in consistent analysis of student assessment data. On October 5, 2016 the ELA team reviewed common diagnostic assessments and the rubrics used, and worked collectively to review the results of writing diagnostics and begin to set writing goals/learning targets. They set a goal for their data meeting on October 17, where each teacher was expected to come to the meeting prepared with learning goals for the meeting based on diagnostics used. This shows the link between the data analysis the team engages with and the learning targets that are set accordingly.
### Findings

School leaders and faculty are developing a process to regularly evaluate the quality of school culture and the use of organizational resources.

### Impact

There are missed opportunities to meet the needs of students through coherent policies and practices, including scheduling teacher teams effectively and making the best use of the instructional materials available to the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school leadership described the surprise they felt when seeing student responses on the previous year’s school quality survey, as they felt they were incongruous with the actual experience kids have in the school. They described their plan to develop or adopt a survey to capture the thoughts and experiences of students in the building, but have not done so as of yet. As the leadership described, the goal of the survey is to help them evaluate school culture so they can meet the needs of all students.

- Teachers developed units of study with a consultant approximately five years ago and the school is developing a process to evaluate its effectiveness. For example, grade eight social studies themes align with the books read and discussed in ELA, but in grades six and seven alignment is not yet evident. The principal described their approach as starting alignment with one grade and then evaluating and rolling out to other grades. In this regard, the alignment between grade eight social studies and ELA may be mirrored for the other grades as curriculum is revisited and revised.

- Teacher team schedules were adjusted this year to provide departments with more time together. As a result, teacher teams now meet three times a week. Administrators participate as members on these teams and the school leadership is developing a process to evaluate the effectiveness of this new time structure.

- The school recently received iPads for every student and is in the process of evaluating how this resource will best be used to support student mastery of the Common Core Learning Standards. The school recognizes the benefits of using them in the classroom and is considering allowing students to bring them home to further their learning. The school is in the process of evaluating the feasibility and benefits of utilizing this resource in this fashion, and plans to monitor whether students are learning more in these classes than in others.
Findings

Curriculum is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

Impact

Lessons and units aligned to the Common Core are coherent across grades providing for a consistent experience for students as they move through the school. Higher-order skills are emphasized across grades and subjects making the learning accessible for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- A math unit plan details the key ideas and guiding or focus questions embedded in the unit. For example, two of the key ideas in a grade six math unit are that multiplication and division are inverse operations and that division can be represented using multiple formats. Some of the guided questions in this unit include, “How do we divide fractions?” and “How can we use models to divide fractions?” The unit goes on to describe the focus standards in the unit, as well as the foundational or prerequisite standards from the prior grade that are needed for this current unit. By linking pre-requisite skills to new skills and by aligning the key ideas with the guided questions in the unit, the plan is building coherence across grades and is supporting students with college and career readiness.

- Lesson plans across grades and subjects reflect the integration of the instructional shifts. A science lesson plan emphasizes both the content standard, such as “S4: Students will understand and apply scientific concepts, principles and theories pertaining to the physical setting and living environment and recognize the historical development of ideas in science,” and the Common Core standard, such as “RST.6-8.1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts.” Staff align curricula to standards across grades and subjects on lesson and unit plans. Higher-order thinking skills are emphasized in lesson and unit plans to engage students at the higher levels of Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels 3 and 4. For example, in a science lesson plan, students were tasked to "conduct an experiment to view the interaction of cells with each other," after describing different parts of the cell. Higher levels of DOK tasks were also observed in lesson plan utilizing Socratic Seminar, where students were to “demonstrate evidence of close reading that purposefully supports ideas.”

- A grade six overview of an ENL unit of study describes foundational strategies, processes and supports that are utilized for this subgroup of students. Included in these strategies are descriptions of think-pair-share protocols which are described as specific times during a lesson for students to engage in discussions of higher-order thinking questions with their partners before sharing out. The document describes the how and the why of when students should engage in conversation. A lesson plan for a grade eight ENL class reflected this emphasis on discussion, detailing that, “students work collaboratively to predict, summarize, make connections and pose questions.”
Findings

Teaching practices are aligned to the school’s belief that students learn best when they are involved in discussions. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points for students to engage in tasks that demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.

Impact

Across classrooms students engage in interactive lessons that promote student dialogue and participation so that all learners produce meaningful work products and students have the opportunity to demonstrate and deepen their higher-order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers implement protocols that promote discussion and higher-level thinking. One student described a Socratic seminars by saying, “In our groups we express our opinion about what we are learning. It lets you say what you think about the topic, and it makes me feel, like, kind of professional.” In a science class, students engaged in a structured Socratic seminar where they discussed whether or not NASA should invest in going to Mars. Students argued for and against the mission citing evidence from the text they were reading. For example, one student shared, “I think we should go because if anything happens to our planet we could go to Mars for a nice place to live.” Another student, building off what was said by a classmate, said “Back to her point, I don’t think we should go because the thirty billion it would cost could be spent on fighting disease.” This type of discussion encouraged students to read critically, support their responses with evidence, and to evaluate what they read based on what they believe.

- Students actively engage with their reading and writing using consistent approaches across the school. For reading, a Close Reading Annotation Symbols chart was seen on walls and on sheets of paper in a variety of settings. The chart shows nine different ways students could annotate text while they are reading. For example, students should write a question mark where they have a question, or a C where they have made a connection. In a bilingual transitional class the notes were translated, so that next to “!” the text reads, “This is interesting and surprising,” as well as “Esto es interesante y sorprendente.” For writing, all students are taught the acronym R.A.C.E. (restate, answer, cite evidence and explain evidence) which teaches them a structure for answering questions.

- Teaching strategies promote entry points for all learning. In a transitional bilingual class, a cooperative learning structure was established to support students as they engaged in a conversation about the book When I Was Puerto Rican. A group boss assigned the roles of questioner, summarizer, connector and predictor to each student in the group. Students read passages in either English or Spanish, and some students used the Google Translate feature on iPads to support with translation and understanding. In another class, the teacher utilized the jigsaw technique to engage learners in a discussion of the book The Giver. Students split off from their group to work with other peers on questions at varying levels, with some students answering who, what, where, why and when questions, and others analyzing the text as they compared Jonas and the giver.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating: Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

Across grades and subjects, assessment practices are aligned with the school’s curricula and provide students and teachers with actionable feedback. In addition, students consistently self-assess their own and each other’s learning.

Impact

Students identify clear next steps for their learning through self-reflection and by receiving actionable feedback from teachers and peers. Assessment practices inform adjustments that meet student needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers check for student understanding by asking students to reflect on their learning. For example, a self-assessment form is used at the end of writing performance tasks where students rate themselves on the following questions on a scale of one to ten, “How confident do you feel about your writing?”, “How much effort did you put toward doing the tasks well?” and “How difficult did you find this task?” They are also asked to reflect on areas they believe they could improve on, and what their favorite and least favorite things were about the unit.

- Students also have the opportunity to receive feedback from peers. During structured Socratic seminars, a protocol used across ELA classrooms and in some science and social studies classrooms, an inner ring of students discuss a topic while an outer ring of students closely observes and assesses. For example, some of the things students who were observing and assessing included eye contact, the number of times the observed participated and whether or not they cited evidence from the text.

- A grade eight student shared feedback from his ELA teacher that he found very helpful. The teacher created a sheet with two columns. On the left side she copy and pasted portions of the students text, and on the right she identified next steps for the writing. For example, the teacher wrote, “This is an appropriate example to use, but this is one, long run-on sentence. Rewrite it.” On this form there were eight such examples of specific feedback provided to the student to improve his work.

- A uniform process that the school has in place are half-page assessment forms called the Teacher Feedback Form. These are used across grades and subjects and identify areas where the student is successful, things students could improve upon, and next steps for students. These forms were seen stapled to student work in ELA, math, social studies and science. Teachers use the feedback on these forms to develop individual, small group and whole class lessons.
### Findings

School leaders and staff consistently communicate high expectations to students and families connected to a path to college and career readiness. Teacher teams establish high expectations for learning that prepare students for the next level.

### Impact

There is a culture for learning and students are being prepared for the next level. In addition, families understand student progress towards high expectations and families and faculty support students as they work towards achieving those expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- In the student handbook, expectations for student behavior and student work habits are emphasized. By signing a school contract students agree to abide by all classroom rules, follow directions the first time they are given, and to "be responsible for my education, and make sure that I do not interfere with my friends’ education." Similarly, parent responsibilities are also clearly described. For example, parents are expected to engage with administration and staff and they agree to attend parent-teacher conferences and other functions that relate to their child’s education.

- The school uses a learning management system to communicate student progress to students and families. A student commented on the benefits, “I don’t have to wait for reports cards to come around to know how I am doing. Before I take a test I could check Engrade to see how I am doing and what grade I need to get to bring my average up.” Parents also agreed that this tool has increased their understanding of how their students are doing in school. As one parent put it, “It helps me know which teachers I need to have follow up conversations with.”

- Teachers provide written feedback to students across all grades and subjects that communicates the skill they need to work on and the specific things students could do to improve. For example, a math feedback form suggested a student needs to focus on concept and strategy, and identified the area for improvement as comparing the magnitude and sizes of numbers expressed in scientific notation. The specific next step detailed for this student on the feedback form was, “Find out how much larger one number is compared to the other number,” and “Calculate how many times longer one number is compared to the other.” This level of feedback provides students with support for the next level of learning.

- Students who need additional support receive advisement from the school’s advisor, and there is a guidance counselor and dean in place to support the school’s culture and students’ social-emotional development. The guidance counselor works with students in grade seven and eight on articulation to high school by working with them and their families, individually and in groups, so they understand the full scope of their options. For example, the guidance counselor will sit with families to go through the city’s high school book to help families understand the options so they can make informed decisions about where to apply. This level of support and guidance provides students and families with knowledge that prepares them for their next level of schooling.