Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 108 Assemblyman Angelo Del Toro Educational Complex

K-8 04M108

1615 Madison Ave.
Manhattan
NY 10029

Principal: Rafael Gondim

Dates of Review:
January 24, 2017 - January 25, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Buffie Simmons
The Quality Review

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

P.S. 108 Assemblyman Angelo Del Toro Educational Complex serves students in grade PK 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><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>Area of Focus</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</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

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings
The school leadership uses the Danielson Framework to analyze learning outcomes and elevate school wide 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 foster professional growth, thus leading to improved teaching practice.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders maintain a chart displaying the number of completed formal and informal observations, including who is observing which teachers, to ensure continuity of feedback and next steps across observations. They calibrate their expectations while visiting classrooms, using the Danielson Framework to assess all competencies. Both principal and assistant principal observe classes together, focusing deeply on each teacher in the room, and, at times, observe all teachers in one department in one week and then provide individual and department feedback to surface gaps in teaching. Both verbal and written feedback is detailed, consistent, actionable, and precise, highlighting next steps, especially for competencies rated as “developing.” For example, in one observation report the principal commented on the need for students to develop the skills to engage in conversations. Comments such as, “They need opportunities to engage in scaffolded discussions and to write about what they learn and how it can be applied” and “advanced learners need extension work, creation of projects, and ways to apply advanced level math…not [by] giving them additional problems” convey equally specific next steps for improving the teacher’s practice.

- During observation conferences administrators also 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 “your development of a rigorous and differentiated lesson delivery.” During feedback sessions, teachers are also encouraged to seek support from teacher leaders who are an integral part of the feedback loop. These strategic and collaborative endeavors allow administrators and selected teacher peers to provide meaningful feedback to all teachers, in alignment to their goals, resulting in their improved levels of effectiveness across domains evaluated by observations to date, as evidenced by Advance data.

- Administrators give detailed feedback to teachers, 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. Moreover, teachers select their own professional goals after reflecting on their practice and having rich conversations with the administration. 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 calibrated what effective teaching looks like and have provided ample opportunities for teachers to grow through observing best practices by intervisitation and providing literacy coaching and professional development to ensure the consistency of teacher development and practice. In meetings with teacher teams, they expressed that they are more confident in their teaching as a result of transparency around the classroom observation process and feedback from school leaders focused on improving their instructional practice.
Area of Focus

<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 and 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, department teams are at different stages in developing Common Core-aligned curricula and performance tasks. The school has engaged in the development and calibration around a school-wide definition of rigor by having these teams reflect on their own understanding of rigor within their content areas.

- School leaders are developing literacy-based curricula that focuses on building reading stamina through the use of complex texts and establishing protocols for discussions and writing. They are unpacking the CCLS, focusing on the important components to emphasize, and identifying specific learning that promotes active student engagement activities leading to self-assessment. Additionally, teachers are developing writing-specific, purposeful learning targets aligned to the CCLS for each day’s lesson and 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. Teachers use learning goals to describe the knowledge and skills that students are required to learn.

- 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 a social studies class, the students received a packet of documents about “Native Americans Early Encounters and Colonial Formation.” Though the activity called for students to review various sources and answer questions, students were unable to complete the task without assistance. Though students were sitting in a group formation, some tried to complete the activity independently and others just did not work on the task. When asked what the document is stating, a student said, “I do not know what it means.”

- Across classrooms, teaching strategies, questioning, and discussion inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. In math class, the teacher posed rapid fire questions and students, including English Language Learners (ELLs), responded chorally to the teacher. Students sat in groups but worked independently. Questions included “Who can tell us the first step?” “Delta y = change in what?” and “What do we do next?” Other students finished the activity but were not provided with extensions to support their learning. Problems were not tiered, nor were there additional, differentiated problems to challenge more advanced students. Consequently, classrooms across the grades and subjects inconsistently use extensions for learners. Students are given limited opportunities to experience differentiated applications for access to learning.

- In a few classes, students who participated in class discussions are beginning to use accountable 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. In another class, the teacher pushed students to cite textual evidence and posted students’ responses. In a science class, students were tasked to persuade classmates to visit their group's respective landforms. 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.
Findings

School leaders and staff align assessments and grading practices, analyzing data from student learning outcomes to make curricula and instructional adjustments on the grade and classroom level. Teachers use ongoing checks for understanding to inform their instructional practices, ensuring that they meet the needs of all learners.

Impact

The use of these formal and informal common assessments and the data analysis that follows allows teachers to make effective instructional adjustments at the classroom and grade levels to improve students’ achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- During classroom visits, there was evidence of teachers checking for understanding throughout the lesson. The use of checklists, exit slips and conferencing with students to assess their understanding during the lessons was observed across classrooms. In a grade four math class, students self-checked their understanding. The teacher walked around the class to observe students’ answers. The classroom teacher made “in the moment” lesson adjustments when a few students couldn’t express their understanding. In an ELA class, the teachers used a quick-check sheet to assess students’ learning. The sheet included the names of the students, and a check was placed next to those students who missed or were unable to answer certain questions from the assigned lesson. Teachers used the data gathered to develop differentiated student groups.

- Schoolwide performance assessments are administered. The results provide school leaders and teachers with item analysis data for each student. The analysis of this data is used to adjust teaching points at the classroom and grade levels as well to develop student learning groups across the grades. In addition, the school uses Fountas and Pinnell assessments for ongoing monitoring and assessing students’ reading levels throughout the school year.

- The principal and assistant principals collect and provide useful achievement data to students and teachers to foster academic improvement and achievement. The administration analyzes common assessment outcomes and meets with teachers. Assessment practices are used to highlight trends in student performance and to adjust curriculum and instruction. For example, item analysis in Go Math! revealed that students had difficulty with problem solving strategies. Teachers use the data to identify topics that require re-teaching and plan student grouping. Teachers then adjust lesson planning to address student deficits, supporting learning more effectively based upon assessment results. The principal also meets with students to discuss progress and to ensure that students are receiving the necessary support to realize improvement.
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 administrators have developed structures to communicate and monitor implementation of expectations and provide training to staff to support set expectations. Teachers provide oral and written feedback on student progress towards school expectations connected to college and career readiness.

**Impact**

Teachers conform to a culture of learning aligned to verbal and written expectations set by school leaders. Families understand students’ progress towards the next level of learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The principal shares his high expectations with staff during faculty and professional development meetings. The school leaders’ theory of action is if they provide clear expectations for literacy instruction, literacy-based professional development, and actionable feedback around literacy instruction and structures, then teachers will be able to create lessons that are authentic and student-centered. Consequently, students will then build their understanding of complex text and reading stamina will increase. 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 observation of teacher practice.

- 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 school-wide 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.

- Teachers shared the high expectations that the principal has developed and communicated through training. They stated that the principal modeled, videotaped their pedagogy, and made them feel comfortable. Moreover, teachers revealed that the principal allows them to come up with their measurable next steps. One teacher offered, “I am learning the standards and no longer teaching in isolation.”
## Additional Finding

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

### Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in professional collaborations during common planning times where they discuss student assessment results and jointly plan lessons based on learning outcomes and the schoolwide goal of increasing rigor. 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 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. Teachers are embracing the new ELA curriculum: “We adopted the new curriculum in September so next year we will truly know the content.” Consequently, teacher team meetings are structured to include changes to lessons or strategies to improve teaching and learning based on student work. 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.

- Teacher teams have acknowledged that meaningful student engagement is a product of designing coherent instruction. They work together and with school administrators to construct lessons supporting instructional outcomes that generate thoughtful learning groups and activities that represent high level thinking. Teachers admit that next steps must include more consistent use of student work products to inform and improve teacher practice and student learning outcomes. The teachers and school administrators are beginning to deepen the work across teacher teams so that it consistently impacts student progress and improves teacher practice.

- Grade teams look at student writing to measure improvement in terms of the use of richer vocabulary, the presentation of a stronger point of view, and the development of better organization to match the assignment. 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.