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

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<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>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 Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</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</td>
<td>Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in grade-based teacher teams that meet to review curricula, differentiation strategies, as well as best practices and student work. Teacher teams consistently analyze data and student work for students they share.

Impact

Teacher collaborations have resulted in teacher intervisitations and the sharing of best practices, positively impacting teacher practice. Grade level teams have addressed student need through an inquiry-based process resulting in improved reading levels and math fluency.

Supporting Evidence

- Grade level teacher teams meet weekly to analyze assessment data, student work, and discuss problems of practice. Review of grade three team agendas and meeting minutes reveal that team discussions have resulted in the analysis of benchmark assessment data, the adoption of Number Talks as a strategy to address students’ fluency, and the establishment of an enrichment bin to ensure that there are materials that will challenge students who are meeting and exceeding standards. In addition, teachers have reviewed rubrics and have highlighted the need to visit a school that is successfully implementing station-based learning. Grade two agendas and meeting minutes reveal that methods of differentiation were planned for implementation during this year as student work analysis showed that students needed targeted support in skip counting, place value, basic facts in addition and subtraction, as well as identifying different methods to arrive at the same number.

- Within grade teams, teachers are sharing best practices, visiting each other, and implementing colleagues’ feedback. One teacher reported that in her math class, a colleague worked with her on how to use a rubric not only as a rating tool but also as a checklist for students. Another teacher spoke about the benefit of having a colleague visit her class to help with her concerns over timing with the mini-lesson which was consistently going slightly too long. After a colleague visited her class, they met to review the notes taken during the observation and concluded that if the teacher were to decrease the number of examples provided during the modeling portion of the mini-lesson, the students would have more time to implement the strategies that had been covered. This teacher reported, “The notes were effective because they were objective. They helped so much. I’ll definitely have her, and others, come again.”

- The grade three teacher team conducted an inquiry cycle that revealed students’ need for support with rounding two or three digit numbers to the nearest ten and hundred and in the use of a number line as evidence that their answer is correct. After implementing the lessons designed toward this purpose, teachers administered a post-assessment. Whereas the pre-assessment had revealed that only one out of nineteen students were proficient in this skill, the post-assessment showed a gain for students in that eleven out of nineteen students reached proficiency.

- The speech teacher team found that the kindergarten students were struggling with acquisition of early literacy skills and administered the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment. The resulting data revealed that students were struggling with letter sound recognition. The speech teacher team established an after-school intervention program that targeted sixteen students. These students were then divided into differentiated groups based on their assessment results. At the end of the sixteen-week program, fourteen of the sixteen students involved in this initiative showed gains in fluency in both letter naming and letter sound recognition.
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

School leaders and faculty are in the process of aligning curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards, content standards, and instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are inconsistently emphasized across curricula.

Impact

As a result, while curricula are consistently aligned with the Common Core, the instructional shifts are inconsistently embedded in that curricula. In addition, curricular documents evidence an inconsistent focus on rigorous instruction for students of all levels, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the school, some classes are utilizing a Common Core-aligned curriculum in which the instructional shifts are embedded throughout the units. The math, science and social studies curricular documents show evidence that alignment with the Common Core and content specific standards has begun as per the indication of which standard(s) are covered next to each unit's theme. However, these documents do not evidence how the instructional shifts have been purposefully integrated into the instructional strategies to be utilized in the teaching of these units.

- Review of curriculum maps for kindergarten through grade five evidence the essential questions, themes, tools and strategies to be covered during the reading workshops, writing workshops, shared reading activities, read alouds, and word studies designed to ensure that rigorous content is emphasized for ELLs and students with disabilities. However, there is no mention of the tools and/or strategies to be used in ensuring that rigorous content is emphasized for ELLs or students with disabilities in the math, science, or social studies curriculum maps.

- Whereas many lesson plans indicate the assignment of students into groups based on academic proficiency, specific information as to differentiated materials or strategies designed to support students needing either interventions for those who are not meeting the standards or extensions for those who are exceeding the standards were inconsistently evident in those plans. A kindergarten math lesson plan indicates which student groups were either for students exceeding standards, meeting standards, or not meeting standards as well as each groups’ corresponding differentiated activities. For example, the group comprised of students exceeding standards were to work independently while the group not meeting standards was assigned to decompose numbers with partners. The lesson plan for a class comprised of a combination of grades three and four students indicates that students with disabilities are held to a lower standard as stated in the section titled Modifications for Diverse Learners, stating that these students could complete half of the page instead of the full page. Additionally, review of curriculum maps for grades kindergarten through five evidence no mention of tools and/or strategies to be used in ensuring that rigorous content is emphasized for ELLs or students with disabilities.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. In addition, students are engaged in creating meaningful work products.

Impact

The consistent use of manipulatives and student-to-student discussion protocols result in students demonstrating higher-order thinking in work products and in discussions reflecting high levels of thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- During a grade four writing lesson, students sat in groups while watching a video presentation detailing steps that are being taken to save the Arabian oryx species. During the three showings of this video, students were to take notes on evidence that the Arabian oryx species was facing a crisis as well as solutions that are being taken to curb the crisis. After each showing, there was time for students to work with partners to share the notes they had taken. Two students in this class were using assistive technology in order to support them in meeting the same standards as all classmates. Additionally, an English as a New Language teacher was seated with ELLs in a separate section in order to provide vocabulary assistance.

- During a grade two integrated co-teaching math lesson, student groups were differentiated based on the in-school created and administered math benchmark assessment and assigned to different stations. To begin the lesson, the teacher facilitated a turn and talk student discussion and then students worked at stations. Each station involved either the use of manipulatives or guided student-to-student discussions with the additional support of a teacher or paraprofessional at each of the stations at all times during the lesson.

- During a grade two math lesson, students worked through a problem involving the addition of three two-digit numbers. Using the Number Talks protocol, all students participated in working through the problem in pairs, sharing responses, and identifying how a shared response was incorrect. Soon after, use of this protocol resulted in all students coming to consensus on the correct response. High participation was observed as all students used the appropriate Number Talk protocol hand signals to indicate their agreement or disagreement with those students who shared responses, as well as high levels of student thinking as the class worked through an incorrect answer by again using the protocol hand signals.

- In the kindergarten math lesson, each group was engaged in constant on-task discussion. One of the groups working on two-digit addition was also engaged in playing a game during which each student challenged the other on finding as many ways to represent the product of addition problems. The student pair that worked on determining which of two single-digit numbers was greater than the other was playing a game of war during which they explained, with each turn, which student had the greater number and identified why it was the greater number.
Additional Finding

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

Findings
School leaders and teachers use common assessments to determine student progress toward goals. Across classrooms, teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact
Across all classes, a strategy is being implemented to address students’ math fluency that was determined based on data. Teachers’ use of assessment practices results in the design and delivery of instruction directly connected to student need.

Supporting Evidence

- The school administers common assessments in writing and math. The resulting data is used to adjust curriculum and teaching strategies. All teachers worked together to design a benchmark math assessment, using data from last year’s state exams and teacher-designed assessments where state exam data was not applicable. Teachers also use the assessments that accompany the curricular program utilized for reading and writing. Data has shown that students are having difficulty in explaining themselves both for the processes they use to solve mathematical equations and in their written responses to reading tasks and writing prompts. Additionally, students were having difficulty in reaching on-level ratings for their written constructed-responses to math prompts. As a result, the school has implemented the Number Talks strategy across all classes. Data has revealed that students were having difficulty in reaching on-level grades for their written constructive responses. In response to this, the decision was made to adopt a new writing curriculum across all grades.

- Teachers continually check for understanding throughout daily lessons and make adjustments or redesign student groups according to the results. In a grade two math class, the teacher implemented the Number Talks protocol, asking students to use the prescribed hand signals to indicate whether they understood the current topic, agreed or disagreed with the student speaking at the time, or had further questions. At the end of a grade three mini-lesson on understanding writers’ purpose, the teacher asked students to use a hand signal to show if they had any questions or felt confident to transition to the lesson’s next step. This check for understanding revealed that four students wanted extra help. The teacher formed a new group with these four students and instructed the remaining students to begin reading with the focus of identifying the writer’s purpose. The teacher then retaught writers’ purpose to the small group.

- In all classes visited, students were seated in differentiated groups. Evidence revealed that students are assigned to different groups in relation to the lesson’s topic. Reading, writing, and math assessment data is used to determine the groups to which students are assigned. Additionally, these groups are flexible and are adjusted either in the course of a lesson based on in-class assessment or when the administration of assessments reveals changes in student need.

- Students reported that self-assessment practices helped them improve their work. One student stated, “I used my writing checklist and saw that I had problems with punctuation and capitals. I used the checklist to correct all the problems before I turned in the assignment.” Other students reported using rubrics to assess and refine their story writing ideas as well as in developing organization in writing fiction and non-fiction pieces.
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 convey high expectations to staff through ongoing feedback and professional learning aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. The school provides ongoing information to families regarding student progress towards college and career readiness.

Impact

Ongoing communication and support by school leaders around classroom visits support teachers’ understanding and awareness of expectations around teaching and learning. Communication from school leaders and teachers provides opportunities for families to understand student progress towards meeting standards.

Supporting Evidence

- Frequent classroom observations provide feedback utilizing the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* as the standard for professionalism, quality instruction, and high expectations. One teacher noted and all agreed that the principal, in addition to conducting official classroom observations, often visits classrooms outside of the official observation process. These classroom visits are followed by written feedback in an email within 24 hours of the visit. Another teacher recalled that the principal had recently visited her classroom and modeled how a number talk should be facilitated. The teacher then added, “He’s really involved and expects a lot.”

- Teachers discussed the principal’s classroom visits, in addition to those visits within the formal observation process, and explained that these were additional ways of holding them accountable to instructional and professional expectations. One teacher reported, “When the principal comes to my class he stays for 15 minutes, talks with students and then observes me. And he always has a specific recommendation and follows-up to see if I’m using it or if I might need more help.” All teachers agreed that this happens during their classroom visits as well. All teachers also acknowledged that they were expected to conduct intervisitations during this school year.

- Parents praised the school for the frequency and depth of communication. All teachers, as well as the principal, send newsletters informing parents of upcoming events as well as the topics of the current instructional unit. A newsletter from a teacher of a combined grades three and four class states, “In regard to our grammar unit we are focusing on regular/irregular nouns as well as using words in the past vs. present.” A newsletter from a grade two teacher informs parents that students are learning the method behind the algorithm with two-digit addition and will soon be learning to add three-digit numbers along with learning how communities use human and natural resources to meet their community’s different needs in a variety of ways. In addition to newsletters, teachers and school leaders communicate with families through emails, the school website, and a variety of mobile phone applications. In addition, teachers help parents understand their children’s academic progress during weekly meetings, before school in the yard, as well as in their classrooms during Family Friday events. During these events, parents visit a class while it is in session in order to observe not only what is being taught but also to see the teaching strategies being used.
Additional Finding

<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**

School leaders support teacher development with frequent classroom observation cycles. Prompt written feedback captures teachers’ strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

**Impact**

Formal and informal classroom visits result in written feedback for teachers that makes clear the expectations for teacher practice and the supports available to help teachers meet them.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Each rated item is supported with specific detailed evidence from the observed class to support the rating. Next steps for teaching improvements are included throughout the class-specific evidence directed to specific categories of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and at the close of each observation report. In addition, school leaders discussed a strategy of observation cycle planning that targets teachers based on individual need as well as student need. This involves an initial observation cycle of the gifted and talented program teachers as they have focused on implementing student-to-student discussion techniques. The goal of these initial observations is to identify best practices and models to which teachers in need can be directed for future intervisitations. This observation cycle is then followed by a cycle during which all remaining teachers, in order from the least to the most experienced, are officially observed.

- Observation reports contain feedback that captures teachers’ strengths and weaknesses and is accompanied by next steps teachers should take in order to improve their practice and impact student success. For example, one observation report details how the teacher’s mini-lesson was directly related to the lesson’s topic and praised the teacher for successfully relaying the teaching points to students. The principal then went on to recommend that the teacher consider the effect of having students return to their desks after the mini-lesson without introducing the assessment criteria for their work. In this same report, the principal also directed the teacher to the issue of lesson pacing and the amount of time that students spent on the rug, identifying two other teachers and the best practices that had been observed in their classrooms directly connected to this issue. In another observation report, the principal praises the teacher for telling a personal story as a pre-reading strategy to activate student interest in non-fiction. This report also included feedback that detailed a missed opportunity for reinforcing the value of word study and developing understanding of academic vocabulary in order to support students’ reading of non-fiction.

- In addition to the reports resulting from official classroom observations are the feedback emails that follow informal classroom visits. For example, in one such email the principal wrote about how the teacher used an appropriate amount of wait time, allowing students to find answers, and asked effective clarifying questions, leading to students’ willingness to take intellectual risks. Next steps were also offered to the teacher among which was that for the next number talk; the teacher should consider using only two problems until the students get up to speed. Also, the principal wrote, “Be careful with how many students you solicit. There was some time lost because we want to hear students’ thinking, but we also need to be mindful of time.” In another email, the principal shared next-steps on how the transition time could have been more smoothly facilitated as well as recommending that the teacher plan ahead for in-class student conferences to ensure that the students who need immediate assessment are addressed before the time runs out.