Quality Review Report

2016-2017

J.H.S. 143 Eleanor Roosevelt
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 06M143

511 West 182nd St.
Manhattan
NY 10033

Principal: Lakisha Mcdaniel Luke

Dates of Review:
November 17, 2016 - November 18, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Clarence Williams
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

J.H.S. 143 Eleanor Roosevelt 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><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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td></td>
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<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>Area of Focus</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>Additional Finding</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>
</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: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: Proficient |

Findings

Teacher teams regularly study assessment data and student work for students they are focused on. Distributed leadership structures are evident.

Impact

The work of teacher teams results in improvements in pedagogy and student performance. Teachers impact key decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- During a grade eight common planning meeting, teachers discussed iReady data. The math coach facilitated the meeting. The objective focused on how to use iReady to differentiate instruction to meet students’ diverse needs. One teacher stated that based on the iReady data and classroom instruction, “Students have been struggling with fractions and decimals. They just want to use the calculator. So students are weak in multiplication and I’ve given flash cards.” The coach suggested printing the lessons and implementing stations to reteach and work with small groups. The team stated that based on data and student work, students also struggle with number sense. They discussed using a graphic organizer that writes out the word problems as well as a guided lesson on solving word problems.

- Teachers make decisions that positively impact student learning. For example, grade eight teachers wrote a writers’ handbook. Written in the handbook is the Red Flag Format for writing: red is the claim, white is textual evidence and blue is insightful explanation. The impact is seen in student writing samples and all students interviewed in grade eight made direct reference to the handbook stating that it has improved their writing from grade seven. The team presented data showing that seven students scored level four on the 2016 English Language Arts (ELA) exam, compared to zero level fours the previous year. Also, nineteen students scored a level three compared to four students the previous year.

- The minutes from a grade six-eight ELA common planning showed teachers reviewing iReady data and an analysis of the June instructional report to determine students in need of additional support. The minutes stated that teachers noticed that students were struggling with analysis questions such as, “How does the author develop the theme?” The team suggested examining questions that are standards-based and creating a document with question stems and frames to help form questions. Similar practices were evident in most minutes read by various common planning teams. Teachers stated that they examine their interventions during instruction and interim assessments to gauge student learning.

- Distributive leadership is evident within the school community. The principal has stated that teacher teams have selected their curricula for their subject areas. This was impactful as the social studies team stated that they purchased the Passport to Social studies curriculum for their team. The science department purchased Smart Science for their team. They have stated that both decisions were based on their instructional needs. Samples of unit plans from each curriculum were presented.
Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best. Student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Students inconsistently produce meaningful work products and student work and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and engagement.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal stated that students learn best by working in groups, having frequent assessments and by being engaged. However, in a grade eight math class, students were at computers working on individual areas of weakness. One student stated his area of weakness was fractions, another student was working on patterns and another student was working on dividing fractions. Although students were engaged, there were few opportunities for discussion or peer collaboration. Students worked in solitude during the observational period. One student stated that they will remain at their computers the entire period.

- In a grade seven science class, students were in small groups engaged in dialogue. They were discussing how to measure earthquakes. When a student was asked why learning about earthquakes is important, another student responded, “A seismograph measures earthquakes.” Another student said, “I agree because it is telling us the strength and size of the earthquake.” Although students were actively engaged and on task, they did not demonstrate clear understanding of the importance of measuring earthquakes. In addition, students were not provided many opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge of the subject matter. For example, the teacher did not provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate their thinking via questioning in order gauge their comprehension level.

- In a grade six social studies class, students were working on the question of how skulls from different eras are different. Students were actively engaged and working in groups. Each group had a facilitator, though their role as facilitator was not really clear and they did not lead the meeting. Students worked on Venn diagrams to compare and contrast the skulls. Because every group had the same resources, there was not a clear example of differentiation. The teacher asked if everyone understood what they were doing, although all students said yes, there were no additional checks for understanding to support the students’ claim.
Findings
Curricula and instructional resources inconsistently highlight rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects for all students, and are not always planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact
The curricula are not consistently accessible for all learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards for a diversity of learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. Some students have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged, however this is not consistent in all instructional documents provided.

Supporting Evidence

- A grade six unit on geography states that “Students will be able to develop geographical reasoning skills through map and spatial relationships and describe the human and physical characteristics of places in the eastern hemisphere.” The unit provides summative assessments and reflects rigorous and higher-order thinking, though it does not provide instructional strategies or practices for students with disabilities or ELLs. In addition, the unit is not aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards.

- A grade seven science unit on geology was refined to include a Spanish reference form that gives a lesson in Spanish on seismographs. The unit is also aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, incorporating standards in reading, writing and math. The unit does not show rigor or higher-order thinking skills or reflect methodology for engagement of students. For example, the unit does not demonstrate scaffolds, differentiated instruction, or grouping strategies for diverse groups of students.

- A grade seven unit on the civil rights movement lists the following essential question, “How do I make the reasoning in my arguments sound and relevant?” The unit instructs the teacher to ask, “Has the civil rights movement been successful?” and “Are blacks and whites equal today?” Students must cite articles about the civil rights movement to support their arguments. Although the unit demonstrates higher-order thinking skills in the task, it does not reflect planning or refinement for students with disabilities or ELLs.

- A self-contained English lesson plans’ language objective was, “I am able to explain the importance of developing my skills using technology.” The lesson plan included small group instruction for students who are struggling. The plan also provided differentiation for students with disabilities. Modifications included online learning tools and conferring. The plan demonstrated how the teacher will work one on one with a student with special needs to complete a diagnostic assessment.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers utilize assessments, rubrics, and schoolwide grading policies. Teachers use common assessments to ascertain student progress toward goals for all students.

Impact
Assessment practices and policies ensure that students and teachers are provided with actionable feedback regarding student achievement. Assessment results are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use rubrics in the classroom to assess student learning. A short response rubric presented was broken down into the areas of content, analysis and coherence, command of evidence, and control of conventions. Each area was rated on a scale of zero to five. One student’s work showed a two in content analysis and coherence. The teacher provided feedback stating that the student was making progress despite the language barriers and is beginning to show some improvement in understanding the text. During a student meeting a student stated, “The rubrics help us see where we are and helps us understand what we have to do to improve our work. Most of our rubrics range from zero to four or zero to five.”

- Actionable feedback was evident in student work posted in the classrooms. A student writing sample based on the book *Chicken Soup for the Soul* was posted. The teacher provided actionable feedback to the student stating, “Nice job providing an explanation to your evidence. Awesome work showing textual evidence to support your thesis. Next steps are to shorten your introduction. You gave too much detail. Work on your punctuation.”

- Common assessments are used across classrooms. Exit slips were used in most classes visited. An example was seen in an ELA class. The exit slip stated, “Write down one or two changes you made to your explanations today as per the feedback from your peers.” The student stated, “We’re working on showing more insight and we added more things for our explanation and we infer.” During a team teacher meeting, teachers stated that the short response rubric, and informational and argumentative rubrics are used across grades and subjects. This was impactful as the short response rubric was seen across all grades.

- In most classes visited, students use exit slips to demonstrate how they make adjustments to their work. A teacher presented exit slips that asked students to list the adjustments they made to their writing based on the feedback they received. One student wrote, “One of the changes that we did was we used the text-to-world and text-to-self connection.” Another student wrote, “In the explanation we changed our writing style to a more insightful explanation. Another change was using high academic language.”

- Common assessments are used for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating student progress which results in curriculum modifications. An example was discussed in a team teacher meeting. Teachers looked at ELA base line data which is used across the school. Students struggled with citing textual evidence and supporting claims. This was added to the curriculum and reflected a modified base line assessment that is now being used.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
</tr>
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Findings

School leaders are working towards consistently communicating high expectations to all staff members. School leaders and staff are developing expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness and provide continuing feedback to families.

Impact

Instructional leaders are developing systems for training and accountability for schoolwide expectations. Families are beginning to understand expectations regarding student progress toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal communicates expectations to staff by distributing an instructional focus memo. The instructional foci for the current school year are divided by students, teachers, school leaders and parents. The expectations for students consist of supporting each other using a cooperative learning model. The memo states that teachers are expected to serve as facilitators for students and utilize differentiated instructional resources. Teacher expectations include providing feedback to teachers and engaging in collaborative instructional planning. The memo further states that parents are expected to participate in educational decisions relating to their children, such as Parent Teacher Association meetings and parent teacher conferences. Most teachers discussed these expectations during teacher interviews; however, not all parents and students were aware of the memo, and only some spoke to expectations during the interview.

- The principal uses initial planning conferences to develop a system of accountability for high expectations. A September 6, 2016 letter went out to staff stating, “As part of the Advance teacher evaluation and development system, all teachers will receive an initial one-to-one meeting with the administration at the beginning of the school year.” The letter also states that the meeting will include expectations for professional development and training and measures of teacher effectiveness, which include evaluations aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The letter further states that all teachers are expected to prepare for the meeting by reflecting on instructional practices using the Danielson Framework for Teaching as a guideline and review previous ratings from administrators. Teachers have stated that these meeting are in progress.

- The principal stated that they utilize the Department of Education initiative, College Access for All, for expectations connected to college and career readiness. The program provides students with opportunities to visit a college campus. Teachers stated that they will be going to City College in November and Syracuse University in the spring. Although parents were able to discuss a workshop they attended about college and career readiness, they did not discuss information regarding College Access for All. However, some students feel that there are clear expectations for college and career readiness. One student stated “Teachers expect us to do hard work, and we also have College Access for all.”
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings
School leaders provide support for the progress of teachers, including first year teachers, with effective feedback and next steps. Feedback accurately articulates strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact
Teacher support systems strengthen instructional practices and ensure the implementation of strategies that encourage professional growth and reflection. Feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practices.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal has stated that informal observations are done and all teachers receive feedback within the time frame of twenty-four to forty-eight hours. An annual professional performance review of an informal observation demonstrated feedback to the teacher, highlighting strengths and weaknesses. Using the Danielson Framework for Teaching, the principal stated that the teacher was highly effective in growing and developing professionally. She wrote, “The teacher initiates important activities to contribute to the profession. The teacher is piloting the use of constructive short responses in the social studies bilingual class and is sharing with teachers in other content areas.” The principal also defined next steps by adding, “We discussed questions to help you differentiate, the purpose of the groups, and the information you are using to group the students.” During a teacher team meeting one teacher stated, “The administration constantly provides feedback to us that we use to improve instruction.”

- The principal has stated that support systems are in place to develop pedagogy in new teachers. An informal observation shows that the principal provided feedback to a beginning teacher. The principal cited the area, using assessment in instruction from the Danielson Framework for Teaching, as an area that is developing, noting that “students appear to be only partially aware of the assessment criteria” and that “students had difficulty understanding the difference between contrast and contradictions.” Comments for next steps included, “Plan modifications for specific groups of students with the necessary scaffolds to support/enhance their learning.”

- The school community uses three peer collaborators to provide support to teachers around the Danielson Framework for Teaching one period per week five days a week. The peer collaborators model instructional practices for teachers and also provide feedback after observing teachers. Instructional coaches are used in areas of math and ELA to provide support and teacher feedback. This was impactful as teachers discussed the need for the peer collaborators and modifications to the schedule were made to allow teachers to come to their classroom to observe best practices. Teachers have stated that the peer collaborators provided modeling lessons in all subject areas. One teacher stated, “The peer modeling is useful because it allows us to learn from each other and share best practices.”