Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 154 Harriet Tubman
Elementary 05M154
250 West 127th St.
Manhattan
NY 10027

Principal: Elizabeth Jarrett

Dates of Review:
January 26, 2017 - January 27, 2017

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


School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</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>
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</table>
## School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>
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## Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings
The school community creates an environment of discipline, safety, and emotional support based on a theoretical approach. School teachers and leaders strategically incorporate strategies for family outreach, professional development, and student learning.

Impact
The school staff purposefully involves students in decisions that positively impact the school community. There is a culture of learning that encourages effective academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal has stated that the theory to school safety is related to socio-emotional support and schoolwide activities for all students. This year to date, the principal stated that they have not had any suspensions as compared to one for the entire previous year. Students have stated that this is due largely to efforts by staff to make sure that all students are safe in the building. Programs that promote safety used by the school include Harlem Grown, an organization that provides mentorships for students and provided socio-emotional support, and Girls on the Run, a program that ties team building and athletics to positive behavior reinforcement. All students interviewed stated that students are treated with respect in the building and that they respect their teachers. A student stated, “Because we believe in respect for each other, we don’t have conflicts.”

- In the fall, parents attended various workshops including an open house, English as a Second Language classes, and workshops on health. The principal stated that almost all parents attended the open house. This was supported by the parents during an interview. One parent stated, “I liked the family art night. I worked with my daughter on art. I can’t draw but it helped me to be involved with the school.” All parents interviewed stated that the school provides many opportunities for parent engagement. The school community also initiated a family reading night. Teachers and administrators referred to it as a significant event to help build culture in the building and to help families support their students. The school also provides translators in multiple languages including Arabic for various events. This is impactful as parents stated that it has improved attendance at functions.

- Administrators and staff include students in decisions that impact the school. This was evident during a student interview. Students stated that the fifth graders took part in a school initiative that required them to visit the Long Island City food service program. Students met with officials and decided on the menu items for the upcoming school year. This was impactful as most students stated that this was an important area in school culture for them. Students also worked on the design for the new playground with the organization Land for Public Trust. In addition, students mentioned that all students are part of decision-making in the school through surveys.

- All students participate in Mindful Mondays and Zumba Fridays. Mindful Mondays require students to start the week off by doing breathing exercises with positive reinforcement to have a positive outlook for the week. Zumba Friday was witnessed. This included parents, teachers, and staff participating in dance in a “feel good, party-like, non-intimidating environment.” Students stated they look forward to Friday mornings to participate.
Area of Focus

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

Findings
Teacher teams evaluate student work of students that they teach. There are some examples of distributive leadership, however, they do not yet lead to significant contributions.

Impact
There is little evidence that the teacher team work this year is leading to improvements in pedagogy or student learning. Distributive leadership practices are evident in some areas within the school structure; however, there is inconsistent evidence that they are resulting in teachers making key decisions for the school community.

Supporting Evidence

- A grade three teacher team meeting was observed. Meeting objectives included analyzing and unpacking the reading standards to identify targeted skills, analyzing the test questions, and reviewing and revising the curriculum. One teacher stated, “It is important to know the numbers associated with the test. Grade three students need at least 60 percent of their total 47 points.” Although teachers analyzed student data and discussed their progress, they did not discuss classroom practices to improve data. For example, teachers noted that some standards showed a 50 percent level of mastery which reflected a 14 percent increase, though teachers did not address instructional practices for the other half of students that were not meeting mastery levels.

- To reflect distributive leadership in the school, teachers collaborated and brought the Mighty Milers program to the school. It’s an exercise program that's associated with the New York Roadrunners Club. It promotes students getting to school on time by having sports activities in the morning before classes. Although the initiative was started by teachers, there was little evidence to show that it positively impacted student learning, although some students stated that it is a good motivator to come to school. Teachers also have lead teachers in literacy and math to support teachers across the curriculum. Their roles include facilitating meetings and modeling best practices for teachers.

- Teachers use action plans to address the instructional needs of students. A grade three to five English Language Arts (ELA) action plan was submitted. It was broken up into three sections including a standard analysis, why students did not learn, and a plan for the next seven to eight weeks. The plan showed that one student was having trouble referring to details in a text and drawing inferences from the text. The data was comprised from school level interim assessments running records. The plan for next steps included using closed reading and chunking; however, the plan did not focus on scaffolds or differentiation for different groups of students.
## Additional Finding

### Quality Indicator:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### Findings

The curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. The curriculum exposes all students to higher-order thinking and rigor.

### Impact

The curriculum demonstrates work that reflects coherence and college and career readiness, as well as supports the cognitive development of students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs).

### Supporting Evidence

- A grade five lesson plan objective was “Students will be able to understand massive resistance, they will be able to define segregation, civil rights, desegregation and integration, and connect modern day police brutality as a civil rights issue.” By having students tie into the historical aspects of civil rights and police brutality by reading about it, the lesson is focusing on the instructional shift that requires students to “build knowledge about the world through the text rather than the teacher or activities.” Students were also required to use Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* high-level skills by making a connection to modern day police brutality and civil rights.

- Most curriculum materials reflect the usage of Common Core Learning Standards. An example was seen in a grade four reading unit. The unit incorporated skills related to a literacy standard that includes referring to details in the text with examples, explaining what the text says explicitly, and drawing inferences from the text. Within the unit there is a section titled, “What skills will I teach?” In this case, the skills included summarizing fiction stories and using context clues to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words. When asked how the school prepares you for college, one student stated, “By reading more and using the text to support claims, it will help us pass tests to get into good colleges.” Teachers have stated that citing text to support claims contributes to the school’s approach to literacy across all content.

- Learning targets for students with disabilities are incorporated in lesson plans across grades and subjects. An example was seen in a grade four and five self-contained class lesson plan. Students were required to write a draft of a response to an essay based on mental images. Teaching strategies in the lesson plan included active engagements, such as a turn and talk with partners. The teacher provided scaffolds in the lesson, such as sentence starters to support essay writing. For example, sentence starters for students included, “When I first read this I thought….., but now as I reread it, I realize that…” and “Later in the text…”
## Additional Finding

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

In most classrooms visited, teaching strategies reflect that students learn best through discussion. Students are engaged in work and discussions.

### Impact

There are high levels of student participation and discussion, resulting in meaningful student work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal has stated that students learn best in small group discussion. A grade three math class was observed. Students were broken up into small groups and were engaged in the lesson. They were discussing how to use fractions to describe how to distribute something in equal parts. One group was observed explaining their strategy to their classmates. One student used a number line strategy to evenly distribute twenty. The student stated, “I used a number line and jumped by fives and counted how many times I jumped.” Another student in a different group shared with his classmates the following, “I drew five boxes and put four in each box using the equal groups’ strategy.” When the teacher asked if anyone came up with a different strategy, one student responded, “I skip counted by five.” Students were encouraged to use the different strategies that best suited their learning styles.

- A grade two and three self-contained class for students with disabilities was observed engaged in a turn and talk discussing fact versus opinion. The teacher asked the teams of students to discuss the differences between fact and opinion. One student stated during the turn and talk, “An opinion is when you think of something you can prove. But if I support it that’s an informed opinion.” Another student said, “I agree because if I say basketball is the best sport, that’s my own belief.” Another student said, “A fact is something that can be proven, like a dog has four legs. I can count them.” The teacher interjected and asked the students, “If I say I love dogs is that a fact or an opinion?” One student stated that it was a fact. Another student stated, “I disagree because you may love them but I may not.”

- A kindergarten collaborative team teaching class was observed discussing setting. The teacher was engaged in a whole-group discussion. She discussed the book *Corduroy* and asked students about the setting of the story. One student stated, “It was in a department store.” The teacher told the students to turn and talk to discuss the book, *Bailey Goes Camping*. She asked the students to discuss some of the things that they do at camp and to identify the setting. In the turn and talk one student stated, “They are roasting marshmallows, eating hot dogs, and playing.” Another student stated, “But we have to tell what the setting is.” A student responded by stating, “It is on the camp ground” and showed a picture in the text to cite the evidence. Students were able to look at the text and the visuals provided to support their claims.
Findings

In most classrooms, teachers use rubrics and other assessments that are directly related to the school's instructional units and plans. Teachers use checks for understanding during instruction and student self-assessments.

Impact

Teachers provide actionable feedback to students and make adjustments to meet the learning needs of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Most classes observed used a form of peer and self-assessment. A self-assessment/peer-assessment writing rubric was seen in a classroom. A student self-assessed a short response on the ecosystem. The student scored himself a number two meaning, "Writes complete sentences, explains how the evidence supports the claim, and restates and answers the question by making an inference." The student was assessed by a peer using the same rubric. The student agreed with the assessment, adding the following comments, "You did a Venn diagram to show compare and contrast to support your claim. Good job." During a student interview, a student stated, "I like doing the gallery walk to assess my classmates because I learn from them."

- Teachers use an effort rubric in class that allows students to self-assess themselves. The rubric is rated from one to four. Level one means that the student put very little effort into the task. Level two reflects some effort, while level three states that the student worked on the task and completed it. Finally, level four states that the task was completed and that the student’s understanding was strengthened. A student in a grade four rated themselves a three. The teacher provided feedback stating the following, "Thank you for being wise and honest, not many scholars can admit when they need help. Your efforts to improve your reading shows." An additional example was provided where the teacher provided feedback on a level two stating, "You clearly know where to place capitals and periods in sentences. Let's work on a better introduction next time." This was impactful as students stated that they rely on the feedback to become better writers. Most teachers interviewed stated that they use the peer feedback to make adjustments to the lessons. For example, one teacher shared that she expanded a unit to include more time on writing short responses.

- The principal stated that teachers provide actionable feedback to help students with next steps. This was evident in a math class where student work was posted and provided next steps for students. An example was seen on a posted exemplar. The teacher wrote, "Let's work on writing a clear explanation. What do two numbers mean in your explanation?" An additional example stated, "Using pictures to help with math problems will help you become more independent when you do your math problems." The teacher also asked students if they were sure of their answer and to explain how they came up with their answers. Another example was seen on a student’s worksheet on a math word problem. The teacher stated, "Great job, next time write related number sentences, such as ‘forty-two divided by seven equals six or seven times six equals forty-two.’"

- Teachers used checks for understanding in most classes visited. In a grade four ELA class, the teacher referenced prior knowledge skills to check for understanding. The goal was to understand the elements of realistic fiction text. She asked the class, "What are the three things that we discussed yesterday?" One student stated, "How to study a character’s emotions." The teacher continued to ask leading questions such as, "What does punctuation tell us?" and "What did you notice about the character’s emotions when the author used italics?"
### Findings

Administrators articulate high expectations to staff members using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and communicate expectations for college and career readiness to families.

### Impact

School administrators provide training to staff that are related to high expectations and communicate with families to understand expectations, resulting in a system of accountability.

### Supporting Evidence

- This year the school hosted a meeting entitled “The Basics to Student Success Workshop.” The purpose of the meeting was to learn about and discuss next steps for students, which include moving up to the next level and eventually college. During a parent meeting, parents stated that they like the school because they keep the parents informed of their child’s progress and what they need to move on to the next level. Communication includes a newsletter from the principal that all parents receive, progress reports, and surveys. One parent stated, “I have had different students come through this school and they have been successful because the teachers prepare them for the next level.” The school also partners with parents by having parents participate in an open house that explains the curriculum and rules of the school. Parents are also allowed to provide input and feedback. During an interview, parents stated that most parents attend open house.

- In a memorandum from September, the principal used excerpts from the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to support work around the classroom environment. The memorandum also had a classroom environment expectations checklist. They are listed as non-negotiables. For example, the Positive Behavior Intervention Service (PBIS) matrix must be posted. Classroom libraries must have baskets clearly labeled, this was evident in most classes visited. Desks must be arranged in cooperative groups of two to six and each component of the day must be displayed. The principal further states in the memo that classrooms will be subject to regular walk-throughs to ensure that these expectations are met and kept.

- The principal uses formal and informal observations to articulate instructional expectations to staff members. A formal observation write up was presented. The principal stated that as a school community, they were working on using questioning and discussion techniques. The principal gave feedback to the teacher in this area stating, “The teacher’s use of questioning and discussion techniques was uneven. Students tended to respond mainly to the teacher and not their peers.” Next steps included increasing the level of math talk to using guided questions to challenge student thinking. To support mutual accountability, teachers work within teams to improve on areas of weakness based on observations. A teacher stated, “We support each other by having a sink or swim mentality.”