Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 155 William Paca

Elementary 04M155

319 East 117th St.
Manhattan
NY 10035

Principal: Francesca Joseph

Dates of Review:
February 1, 2017 - February 2, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Robin Cohen
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Area of Focus</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>Area of Celebration</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>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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## Findings

School leaders and staff work as a cohesive team to ensure a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment where the growth of students and staff is a priority.

## Impact

The positive school culture has produced a supportive and collaborative learning environment that ensures a calm and orderly milieu resulting in effective academic and personal growth of students and adults.

## Supporting Evidence

- Parents, students, and teachers say the school is welcoming and inclusive. Families stated they feel valued, and are invited to participate in the school’s life through parent meetings, family events, assemblies, notifications, class Dojo, and student-led conferences. During a group meeting, students stated, “This school is a community and this school is a family.” To ensure a positive learning environment for all constituents, school leaders and staff developed and initiated schoolwide behavior expectations. Students are expected to: listen and follow directions, come to school prepared to learn, treat others as we would like to be treated, respect our environment, make healthy lifestyle choices, and try your hardest.

- Teachers stated that positive habits such as being proactive and having a plan are integrated into their daily lessons, thus providing a common language for discussing responsibilities and strategies to meet academic and social/emotional challenges. As a result of these efforts, the number of safety behavior infractions has decreased by 50 percent as evidenced in the school’s Online Occurrence Report System and minimal disruptions in class. Parents shared that their children feel safe in the nurturing family atmosphere.

- School supports are personalized to assist students with their individual needs, such as the guidance counselor, social worker, teachers, and the parent coordinator. They help facilitate immediate responses, interventions, and contacts with families of identified students. The staff also provides families with external resources as needed. The Learning Environment Survey indicates 93 percent of parents agree that the school communicates with them in a language that they can understand. In addition, 89 percent of parents agree that the school creates a physically and emotionally secure environment in which everyone can focus on student learning. Eighty percent of parents agree that teachers incorporate materials about different races, ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, and families into the curriculum to make learning more meaningful.

- To support the positive school culture, the school has established certain structures such as; morning announcements, professional development for staff including positive framing and team building, monthly awards assembly that celebrates students holistically, monthly perfect attendance awards and trips. In addition, the school was awarded a Violence Prevention Grant to ensure students make conscious choices and understand the concept of consequences as embedded into their behavior program.
Findings

Teachers use data from common assessments and rubrics aligned to their curricula to provide actionable feedback to students. Teachers use ongoing checks for understanding to make effective modifications for students.

Impact

Teachers’ use of assessment data supports effective adjustments to the curricula and instruction, however, student self-assessment and peer-to-peer assessment practices vary, limiting students’ awareness regarding their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classroom, teachers use various assessments, such as conference notes, checklists, behavioral data, and rubrics. Teachers administer running records to assess student fluency and comprehension of fiction. This data is used to determine strategic groups, refine whole class instruction and determine student need for additional instructional support. Students are provided “glow and grow” feedback, based on the rubric used, from their teachers verbally and in writing. For example, students were asked to cite evidence from the text. Using a two point holistic rubric, a third grade student received the following feedback. “You glowed by providing examples from the text to support your thoughts”. “You can grow by splitting up your ideas into paragraphs – we will teach you using POW/TIDE.”

- At the beginning of the school year, each teacher receives a copy of the Assessment Calendar, which lists the assessments to be administered by grade. The analysis of assessment results has led to the development of instructional goals for teaching and reinforcement of skills across all subject areas. Teachers gather data that includes formative assessments, rubrics and student work to ascertain levels of student learning. The use of data to inform and adjust instruction in all content areas is consistent across classrooms and classroom checks for understanding lead to instructional adjustments that support all learners. For example, schoolwide teachers are working with their students on finding the main idea and key details in the text. For students in need, during after-school and Saturday academy, instruction is provided to target the learning standard.

- All teachers utilize item analysis and disaggregated data to identify learning gaps, trends, and patterns. Analyzed test scores of specific subgroups of students enabled teachers to pinpoint the level of which standards have been mastered and which groups of students require re-teaching, remediation, and enrichment. Teachers consistently administer end-of-unit chapter tests in math and publish students’ writing pieces scored by the teachers. Teachers, on an ongoing basis through guided practice and one-on-one conferences, monitor student progress. Teachers have rich sources of data and use common practices such as; turn and talk, exit slips, rubrics and conference notes. Rubrics are aligned to the school’s curricula; however, student self-assessment and peer-to-peer assessment practices vary, thereby, limiting students’ full picture and ownership of progress toward their next learning steps.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating: Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure their selected curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts to promote college and career readiness skills. Tasks are planned and refined, using student work and data.

Impact

The school’s adoption and refinement of curricula enable schoolwide coherence and college and career readiness for all students. Planned academic tasks provide opportunities for all students to be cognitively engaged and challenged.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders shared that they and teacher leaders work collaboratively to support staff to adjust the Common Core-aligned adopted reading program *Journeys & Senderos*, since 47 percent of students are English Language Learners (ELLs). In addition, the school uses *Teachers College Writing Program*, *GO Math!* and *EngageNY* for math. Staff noted the need, based on classroom assessments and data, to adjust certain readings from long epics to shorter, more accessible pieces of literature since 30 percent are students with disabilities. This has allowed all students to meet the same standards while building their reading stamina and building college and career readiness skills.

- The school uses the New York State Scope and Sequence in Social Studies and Science. Curricula mapping in all grades and subjects are guided by the standards and tailored to meet the diverse learners. In addition, the school utilizes *ReadWorks.org*, a series of articles that focus on reading comprehension and develops specific skills, such as, demonstrating prior knowledge, making connections, envisioning, inferring, and synthesizing. In a 12:1 first/second grade class, students were asked, “What do you know about polar bears?” and “What would a baby cub look like when it is born?” One student wrote “I know baby cubs are born with their eyes closed and they drink milk.”

- Curricula and academic tasks are planned using student work and data. Teacher teams reviewed student work and assessment data to gain a better knowledge of their students’ abilities and challenges. Teacher revised performance tasks, created standard-aligned rubrics and refine lessons to accommodate all learners. Teachers identified schoolwide key focus standards to incorporate along with integrating the instructional shifts. In grade one, students are challenged with understanding operations, algebraic thinking and providing explanations demonstrating their understandings. In a kindergarten class, students were solving subtraction word problems by completing the equation.

- Curriculum maps and lesson plans indicated that tasks are differentiated for ELLs and students with disabilities. A review of lesson plans indicated that across the school an agreed-upon format was implemented with a focus on engaging students, turn and talk, practice, and then summarize. Each addresses access for all learners, with activities for high, medium, and low learners (tiers 1, 2, and 3). Curriculum maps in literacy and math indicated that instructional shifts especially in the areas of building fluency, perseverance, and constructing arguments are evident. Further evidence is lesson revisions based on student work and data to support re-teaching.
## Additional Finding

### Quality Indicator:

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

### Findings

Curricula-aligned teaching practices reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. High-level participation and critical thinking are reflected through student discussions and student work products.

### Impact

Teaching practices are informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts. All students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks, discussions, and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal and teachers state there is a common belief system that all students learn best when they are engaged in challenging activities and rich academic discussions that develop and promote critical thinking. This belief system was reflected in instructional practices in classes visited. For example, in one class students were asked to explain the commutative property of multiplication and demonstrate their thinking. Some groups drew arrays while other groups were able to verbally make a connection with the related property of addition. One student stated that in both operations, “You can switch the numbers around and the answer is still the same.”

- In a fourth grade science class, students were working in small groups investigating the concept of static electricity. The objective of the lesson was to have students write a question, develop a hypothesis, and test their hypothesis on how the motion of an object can be changed by pushing or pulling. Materials used were; breakfast cereal, a plastic comb, a dryer sheet, and a wool cloth. One group deliberated, and then wrote as their question, “What would happen when you rub the wool cloth and the plastic comb?” Their hypothesis was “I think the dryer sheet and the plastic comb will have an effect to the cereal.” Students were actively working, rather than watching while their teacher works.

- There is a schoolwide visible focus on student engagement and discussion and critical thinking skills. During a fifth grade social studies lesson, students were asked to analyze the effects of the last Ice Age on the Western Hemisphere. Students worked in pairs annotating the article *Ice Age in Depth*. Each pair of students shared their annotations with the whole class and responded to questions. The teacher then asked the students to identify the most important information, and create an Ice Age infographic.

- Instruction and pedagogy are centered on providing students with opportunities to think deeply about their work as they make their thinking visible through discussions. Unique to the school is their fifth grade Book Club. Students are assigned rotating roles such as; word wizard, literary luminator, connector, summarizer, illustrator and discussion director. The teacher reminded the students what their roles were and how to carry out the assigned roles. Students were reading, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. Students were actively engaged in a range of collaborative discussions, one-on-one, small groups, and teacher led, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly. The discussion director posed the question “Can you relate to any of the characters in any way?” and “How did you feel while reading, why, and support with examples you read.”
### 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 communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide ongoing training. School leaders and staff communicate expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness to all families.

**Impact**

There is a system of accountability for the school’s high expectations and school leaders and staff provides feedback to help families understand student progress towards those expectations.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders communicate high expectations through the staff handbook, emails and professional development workshops. A weekly newsletter, the William Paca Report, had the following statement from school leaders, “It is important that you implement the strategies shared during professional development within your classrooms. Please be reflective and review the Danielson Framework for Teaching as you create your lessons.” Observations are conducted by school leaders to provide immediate feedback to all teachers regarding the implementation of strategies addressed in professional development workshops.

- The school’s vision, values, and mission include providing a quality, interactive educational program for all students including English Language Learners and special education students. The intent is to provide students challenging experiences to meet the high performance standards consisting of strategies such as making teaching and learning relevant for the students now or in the future and differentiating their teaching resources to motivate the learner. For example, the school has established a partnership with New York Therapy Animals. This not-for-profit organization is designed as a children's literacy support program. R.E.A.D. (Reading Education Assistance Dogs) is recognized as one of the foremost programs in improving children’s reading levels, communication and social skills, thereby supporting college and career readiness skills. The program requires parent permission and parents stated “The program has had a positive impact on their child both in terms of reading skills and social growth.”

- School leaders and staff communicate the school’s high expectations via the parent handbook, school website, social networks, School Messenger system, and weekly newsletters, which detail the week’s instructional content and ways for parents to support learning at home. School leaders host a monthly “2nd Cup of Coffee” to keep families informed of student growth. Tuesday afternoons are designated as parent engagement time, whereby parents can meet and/or speak with teachers and attend workshops delivered by the teachers. Teachers stated these ongoing parent activities are designed to foster the families’ participation in a culture of high expectations, deepen the families understanding of college and career readiness, and help their children to succeed. In addition, the parent coordinator helps facilitate various workshops and events such as, understanding the Common core Learning Standards, curriculum night, and family fun night. Parents shared that the workshops help them to better understand the schoolwork their children receive in the different subject areas.
Additional Finding

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has resulted in enhanced classroom instructional practices, increased student engagement, and progress towards goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- To build teacher capacity and support teacher teams in data-driven inquiry work, the school provides opportunities for all teachers to consistently meet. Teacher are engaged in various teams including: grade level teams, vertical teams (K-5), data teams, special education teams, new teacher teams, attendance teams, and safety teams. School leaders review all agendas prior to team meetings and collaborate with the teams in looking at patterns, trends, and proposed next steps. Teams’ responsibilities include ensuring that the curriculum, lesson plans, and performance tasks are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts.

- Teacher teams use a common template that includes the inquiry focus, data presented, implications for classroom practice, and reflections. One of the school's goal is for teachers to utilize a structured writing block and use assessment data to make adjustments to the curriculum and unit plans. During the fourth grade team meeting, a teacher presented varying proficiency levels for a personal narrative writing piece. It was noted that many of the students effectively sequenced their essays and students were beginning to use descriptive words. The principal noted the instructional capacity of teachers have improved as they look deeper at the work and discuss the structure and convention of the students’ writing.

- Teacher teams use the Learning from Student Work Protocol, where the weekly facilitator presents the assignment given to the class. The team interprets information from the student work presented, capturing notes on what they see, and determines implications for teacher practice, including next steps and strategies. Teacher teams created a “looking at student work follow-up form” that includes: strategies tried, how they worked, and what might they do differently in the future. The follow-up meetings begin with the discussion of next steps proposed from the prior meeting, review the new student work, and provide reflections about student progress in meeting school goals.

- Teachers stated that they share best practices and support each other’s growth. All agreed “Inter-visitations and team meetings have been the best form of professional development because we give each other feedback and see how it will improve our teaching.” One teacher shared, “The skill of retelling is different for tier 1, 2, and 3 level students. I learned to scaffold differently for each group, such as utilizing picture cues and verbal prompts”. Teachers were able to share data demonstrating student growth in their reading levels based on Fountas and Pinnell running records.