Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 191 Amsterdam
K-8 03M191
210 West 61st St.
Manhattan
NY 10023

Principal: Lauren Keville

Dates of Review:
January 10, 2017 - January 11, 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

P.S. 191 Amsterdam serves students in grade PK through grade 8. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>School Culture</td>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Rating</td>
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<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<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>Proficient</td>
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<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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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Systems for Improvement</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<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>
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<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>
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<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>
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<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>
<td>Proficient</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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

School leaders and staff work as a unified team to ensure a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment for students and adults. Professional development is aligned to the needs of all constituents promoting students’ personal growth and academic development.

Impact

Students and adults treat each other respectfully and student voice is welcomed and valued resulting in effective academic and personal growth of students and adults.

Supporting Evidence

- There is a new school culture plan in place to ensure that the Museum Magnet School has a safe and inclusive environment. The school acknowledges the diversity of their students and families in a number of ways; through the celebration of all holidays, the school’s multi-cultural fair presenting/exhibiting unique customs and students’ narrative writings about their families and traditions. In addition, the school encourages students to be active contributors and participators in the school community. Following a trip to a school with new resources, students provided feedback on the tools that would be most useful to them to support and enhance instruction.

- During the 2015-2016 school year as part of the new culture plan, was the adoption of a new school-wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program, rewarding students for positive academic and social behaviors. This has led to a school culture demonstrating an atmosphere of positive, supportive and respectful behaviors throughout the building. A significant impact of this work is confirmed by the decrease in school-wide infractions and incident levels. During the 2015-2016 school year, there were 111 incidents compared to the prior year which had 209 reported incidents including a level 5 infraction. The impact of this was the school’s removal from the Persistently Dangerous Schools list.

- The school exhibits a dynamic and supportive environment where staff and students effectively sustains a community that ensures the academic and behavioral success for all learners. The school focuses on four key expectations: “stay safe, take responsibility, act respectfully, and be ready to learn.” During morning announcement, these key expectations were reiterated and students confirmed these expectations are part of the daily announcements. In all classrooms visited, students proudly spoke about their input in the development of classroom rules and the creation of their class charter, promoting student ownership for their academic and social/emotional behaviors.

- Professional development for teachers and parents allows the school to provide academic and social learning experiences for all community members. The Learning Environment Survey shows 95 percent of parents agree that school staff consistently communicates with them about their child’s progress and how they can help their child. In addition, 97 percent of parents feel respected by school leaders and teachers. The survey also indicates that 92 percent of students agree that they are safe in school and 89% agree that they are safe in school and 89 percent agree that their teachers want them to become better thinkers, not just memorize “things.”
### Area of Focus

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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#### Findings

Teachers utilize data from common assessments and rubrics aligned to their curricula, to provide actionable feedback to students. Teachers consistently use ongoing checks for understanding, but student self-assessment practices vary across classrooms.

#### Impact

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

#### Supporting Evidence

- The school utilizes common assessments aligned with the school curricula, such as, Fountas and Pinnel Running Records, Spalding Reading Assessment (K-5), Degrees of Reading Power (6-8) Writing Pathways on-demand, and end-of-unit assessments. After analyzing the data from the baseline assessments, the school developed a yearlong assessment plan that outlines in detail the ongoing assessments, the purpose of the assessment, and the target population. Teachers stated that these assessments provide information on students’ strength and weakness, enabling them to develop action plans. Feedback to students from teachers are actionable, however, when students were asked to share feedback provided in their portfolios, they stated “adding more details” or “citing evidence.” Some of the students could not explain what that meant.

- Teachers did an in-depth analysis of multiple sources, and used this data to create tiered groups in their lesson planning and design small group instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of students. To support this practice, teachers created a Monthly Data Driven Instructional Plan form; identifying student groups, why they were grouped together, and next steps for this group. In a second grade class, five students were grouped together based on data demonstrating the need to work on the use of addition and subtraction strategies to solve word problems. The teacher noted in her lesson plan that next steps were to use number lines or connecting cubes and creating anchor charts for effective strategies.

- Teachers consistently use conferencing, ongoing checks for understanding, and exit slips. School leaders and staff stated the next step is to work on strengthening student self-assessment practices across classrooms to increase student ownership over their goals and performance. Students are provided with checklists and rubrics for writing assignments and large projects, to assess their own work and improve. One student stated, “Rubrics describe what you need to do to get a better score.” Teachers stated that they believe student self-assessment will empower students to make decisions for themselves and promotes ownership of their work. However, in a few classes, the teacher assigned the rubric score. School leaders stated that the school is moving to student-led conferences with their parents in the spring, to ensure they are taking ownership over their data, their work, and their education.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: Proficient |

Findings

School leaders and staff ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Analysis of student work and data inform curricula modifications which facilitate access and cognitive engagement for a diversity of students.

Impact

All students have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged. The school’s decisions build coherence around the instructional shifts and promote college and career readiness skills.

Supporting Evidence

- The school supports the building of coherence through professional development workshops, vertical planning, and by creating horizontal planning time for grade level teachers to plan and infuse the instructional shifts. The school utilizes *Investigations* math to support skill development, exploration, and application to real world problems. In the sixth grade math curriculum, mathematical practices include; making sense of problems and persevering in solving them, constructing viable arguments and critiquing the reasoning of others, thereby, promoting college and career skills.

- Across grades and subjects, teachers utilize a standard unit plan template. Unit plans contain the: essential questions, guiding questions, enduring understandings, unit rationale, culminating projects and assessments, key terms/vocabulary, and the Common Core Standard being addressed. School leaders and teachers work collaboratively to adjust their Common Core aligned materials and meet their students' needs - eight percent of students are English Language Learners, and 27 percent are students with disabilities. In addition, based on the school's belief in educating the whole child, the *Second Step* curriculum which supports the positive social-emotional component of education, was implemented ensuring all students have the skills they need to succeed in high school, college, career, and beyond.

- Unit plans in literacy, writing and math illustrate multiple ways to present academic tasks with a variety of scaffolds for all students. In one class, a group of students were citing evidence from text utilizing an adjusted version from a long epic to a shorter more accessible piece of literature. This supported the students who need to first increase stamina, yet meet the Common Core standards. This modification to materials utilized, makes the lessons more student-centered instead of teacher directed. Teachers integrate supplemental articles and photo-documents, to increase opportunities for students to read and respond to informational text. Also evident in the school's curricula maps, unit plans, and lesson plans, is the inclusion of specific skills, such as, annotation and finding text-based evidence. This ensures all students have access to the Common Core aligned curricula and are cognitively engaged.

- Teachers use student data to make adjustments and revisions to the curricula. Teachers use Rubicon Atlas, an online curriculum-mapping program to make adjustments. In addition, the principal uses this tool to monitor and assess curricula revisions through classroom observations, feedback from teacher teams, and the instructional cabinet.
**Additional Finding**

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**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 challenging tasks, discussions, and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The continued focus on Danielson *Framework for Teaching* Domain 3b, is evident across classrooms. For example, in a 12:1:1 class, students were reading *A Long Walk to Water*. Students were engaged in high-level group discussions to determine how culture, time, and place influence the development of the character’s identity. Students were asked to make assumptions about the relationship of the main characters, and what evidence supports the groups’ claim. The teacher demonstrated making connections between the two main characters, with text-based evidence. The assistant principal noted that the frequency of such questions has improved in both lesson plans and in actual classroom instruction.

- During a turn and talk activity in a first grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math class, students were practicing different strategies to add two or more numbers. Students were asked to turn and talk to their partner about a strategy they would use for adding on. Students were then directed to small groups to play math games based on the students’ area of need. For example, students struggling with identifying smaller and bigger numbers played the *Ladder Number* game. Another group played *Build It 2*, to help students represent a teen number as one ten and some number of ones. This supports students with the concept of “counting on” as a strategy for adding numbers.

- The school encourages critical thinking and inquiry by asking open-ended questions. In a fifth grade class, students were asked to explain what it means to have an opinion, and how researching, reading, and discussing a topic can change their opinion about certain issues. Students read and annotated an article on animal testing, wrote their opinion, then discussed it in their writing groups. Students shared their thoughts about the importance of supporting their opinions with facts. Students were then asked to rewrite their opinion to note any changes. Results of this strategy have yielded writing gains based on improvements in focus, organization and framing conclusions.

- In an eighth grade class, students were studying a unit on industrialization, immigration, and progressivism (1800s-1900s). The objective of the lesson was to evaluate NYC’s sanitation in the early twentieth century. Students were analyzing three photo-documents in their groups in order to describe the possible causes that led to the development of public health services in twentieth century NYC. Each group was given a focus question such as, “How likely is it for twentieth century New Yorkers to survive a widespread epidemic?” as a writing assignment.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 3.4 High Expectations
Rating: Proficient

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training for those expectations. Expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness are communicated by school leaders and staff as they partner with families.

Impact
There is a system of accountability for the school’s high expectations and ongoing feedback helps families understand student progress towards expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders provide consistent communication of high expectations to all staff through several measures including staff handbook, weekly emails noting focused expectations, conferencing and professional development workshops based on the expectations. A weekly newsletter had the following statement, “It will be important that you implement the strategies shared during professional development within your classrooms. Please be reflective and review Danielson Framework for Teaching as you create your lessons.” School leaders support staffs' implementation of these expectations through a consistent cycle of observations, providing immediate actionable feedback regarding the utilization of strategies addressed during professional development sessions.

- The school’s vision, values, and mission include providing a quality interactive educational program for all students including, English language learners, students with disabilities, and gifted 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 student now and in the future. Teachers utilize the Responsive Classroom approach to teaching and learning that emphasizes the social-emotional and academic growth of students. There are seven principles to this approach, such as; how students learn is as important as what they learn, the greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interactions, to be successful children need a set of social skills, etc. Based on this approach, all students in the middle school participate in advisory and work in small groups of eight to fifteen students in order to build an environment of trust and respect. In addition, all advisory groups have adopted a lower school class and once a month partners with them. This approach to teaching and learning demonstrates the connection to a path to college and career readiness.

- School leaders and staff communicate with families via the parent handbook, school website, social networks, Engrade, ClassDojo, and classroom newsletters. These points of contact inform parents of the week’s instructional content and ways to support learning at home. In addition, a list of parent workshops on the Common Core Learning Standards, such as, understanding the instructional shifts and preparing for the New York State exams are posted. Parents shared that the workshops helped them to better understand the work that their children receive in different subject areas and the social-emotional component of the school’s educational philosophy.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured inquiry-based professional collaborations that promotes the achievement of school goals and the implementation of Common Core. 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 students’ writing showing growth.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet on Mondays, for cross-grade team meetings and Tuesdays, for grade level meetings, to analyze student data and student work with the focus on understanding the standards. For example, the second and third grade teachers are working together analyzing data, looking at student work, and examining the skills needed for the third grade in all content areas. Based on the school goal of using assessment data to make adjustments to the curriculum and unit plans, the second grade teachers are looking at the third grade standards so they can introduce specific standards/skills to their students.

- To ensure consistency, teacher teams use a common teacher team template and update the agenda minutes on GoogleDocs, which is reviewed by school leaders. For example, a second grade team focus addressed “How can we effectively scaffold nonfiction writing based on the Common Core Standards?” The fourth and fifth grade focus was “How can our students use checklists to build strong and consistent self-assessment?” The middle school team’s focus was “How much support do our seventh graders need in informational writing?”

- Teacher teams are structured by grades, content areas, or area of need/focus, such as, Academic Intervention Services, attendance, and targeted social-emotional behaviors. Teachers look at student work and student data identifying patterns and trends, then discuss and design instructional strategies they will use within their classrooms. This has enabled teachers to provide direct feedback to each other, share best practices, and individualize instruction to meet students’ needs. The special education teachers and the English as a New Language (ENL) teachers shared they utilize this information to ensure their Individualized Education Program (IEP) and ELL goals and services are meeting the needs of their students.

- The entire school community is focused on students becoming thinkers, goal-setters, collaborators, and independent individuals preparing for college and career. The school created a social-emotional team to support this endeavor. The school has developed a Kid Talk protocol to focus on shifting the way they address the needs of their most struggling students. During the social-emotional team meeting, staff discussed a student who struggles with interacting positively with other students. The team suggested the student be referred to the Jewish Board Family and Children Services, who partners with the school and provides support.