Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 197 John B. Russwurm
Elementary 05M197
2230 5th Ave.
Manhattan
NY 10037

Principal: Natasha Spann

Dates of Review:
December 1, 2016 - December 2, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Clarence Williams
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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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use ongoing 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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</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<td>Proficient</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to college and career readiness and successfully collaborate with families. Teacher teams and staff create a culture for learning that systematically interconnects a cohesive set of high expectations for all students.

Impact

The school faculty supports student progress toward high expectations and provide clear, focused, and effective feedback and guidance/advisement supports to see that all students own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- The Principal has stated that there are clear expectations for college and career readiness for students. The school community has adapted a program called college and career network (CNN), the program sponsored a trip to Yale University for grades three, four and five. During a student meeting, students discussed the trip and stated that it motivated them for college. One student said they would like to attend Yale. A college corner wall was an additional component of CNN that was evident in all classrooms visited. The college corner consisted of each class adopting a college, a college word wall, and CNN motto: reach believe and achieve. All students interviewed related to the motto and were able to speak about the different colleges that they adopted. One student stated, “we hear about this program all the time and I am looking forward to visiting colleges when I reach the fourth grade.” Another student stated, “This program made me realize the importance of college.” A parent stated, “The school does a wonderful job preparing all kids for college.”

- Students own their educational experience and are preparing for the next level. The school community utilizes a program entitled self-organized learning environment (SOLE). The program allows students to facilitate their learning and take ownership of what they study. Expectations that the facilitator provides are, “say it in your own words, and cite your resources.” A demonstration of a SOLE classroom was observed. Students decide on their own research questions. The research questions were “What does a paleontologist do, How are Dinosaur fossils discovered and collected and how do scientist know where to look for fossils?” After students generated their own questions, they went to their computers to work in groups or individually, the choice was theirs. Some students used the discovery website, some used YouTube and others used Google. One student stated that the SOLE class was beneficial to her learning experience stating, “This class lets me work with who I work best with and helps me prepare for college by learning how to do research.” A teacher stated that the program prepares students for college because they have to do their own research and work independently.”

- The school faculty communicates with parents on college and career readiness. The school has a college and career advisor that communicates with parents. Letters went out to parents to inform them of a trip to Philadelphia to the National Constitution Center and the United States Mint. Every parent interviewed expressed appreciation for the college and career advisor and stated that this trip and others are helping expand their child’s scope. This was impactful as a parent stated, “I came to this school because of how the school prepares children for the next level and the life experiences they receive.” As a result, the school demonstrates 88% of students passing courses for next level readiness.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: | Developing |

Findings
Curricula and academic tasks highlight rigorous habits and higher-order skills inconsistently across grades, and subjects, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

Impact
Access is beginning to be provided to students across the curricula, and tasks are being developed to cognitively engage a diversity of learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Common Core Learning Standards are written into the curriculum including resources but do not show instructional practices or differentiation for students with disabilities and English Language Learners. A grade three unit of study on crafting true stories includes resources such as Teachers’ College: changing the launching work on perspective speeches and a reading and writing project website. There is also a section for student goals but it does not include strategies for diverse learners.

- Teachers and school leaders are developing the curriculum to cognitively engage students, however the curriculum inconsistently reflects rigor or higher order skills. An English Language Arts unit on the art of informational writing uses the following essential questions: “How can I learn to draft and revise speeches in which they are trying to convince the audience,” and “How can I raise the level of my opinion writing, in particular by working on structure, development and language conventions.” Other sections of the lesson include summative and formative assessments, academic vocabulary, teacher resources and student goals but does not show rigorous or higher order practices for the diverse student population.

- A pre-kindergarten curriculum is beginning to demonstrate rigor. An example was seen in a pre-kindergarten unit. The topic was “All about us” and includes the essential question: “Who am I and who are the people in my life?” the unit includes the focus questions: “what makes me important and why?” “What feelings do I have and why?” and “What makes my family important and unique?” Vocabulary words include adopted, individual, community, prefer and self-portrait. This was inconsistently evident in other units and plans.

- A grade four algebra lesson plan’s learning objective was “Related multiple equations and comparison statement.” The learning target was, “How can we draw model multiplication comparisons?” The plan shows students divided into groups at different tables with assignments that included, meet with the teacher and technology. The lesson does not demonstrate the task assignments or modifications for the various groups or strategies to support a diverse population of learners.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: Proficient |

Findings
Across classrooms, teaching is aligned to the curricula and demonstrates an expressed set of beliefs about how students learn best that is related to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact
All learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, are involved in appropriately stimulating tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products and produce meaningful work.

Supporting Evidence

- Instructional shifts are evident in classrooms visited. In a grade four science class, the students worked on how to get electricity from a source to a receiver. Instructional shift six in mathematics was evident: “Students are practicing and understanding. There is more than a balance between these two things in the classroom – both are occurring with intensity.” Students were observed practicing using a battery to get a motor to run. Some students were observed practicing using the battery while trying to understand what makes it work. When a student was asked what are you doing and why, they responded: “I’m trying to get the motor to run using this battery and to continue practicing it so I can make it work and understand why it works.” When asked why this is important, another student stated, “Because if your power goes out you need to know how to use batteries.”

- The principal stated that students work best in small groups. This was evident in most classrooms visited. In a grade three collaborative teaching class, students were divided into groups based on response to intervention tiers. A tier one group was using a T chart graphic organizer to find literal and non-literal words and phrases. A tier three group was using a two sorting boxes graphic organizer to find examples of literal and non-literal words as well as provide their own examples. An example was seen in a two sorting boxes graphic organizer. The student stated that, “A literal thing is something that is true and real. A non-literal is fact and it is not real.” When asked to provide an example of non-literal, the student stated, “If I say you’re horsing around does not mean that you’re a horse.”

- In a kindergarten collaborative team-teaching class, students were actively engaged. A teacher was working with students with disabilities. When asked by the teacher the following question: The student is five years old, I am ten years old. Which one is greater?” The student responded: “You are greater.” The teacher asked why. The student responded by stating: “because five comes before ten.” When the teacher asked the student another way of stating it, the student demonstrated with blocks and counted five from ten.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments, and rubrics that are aligned with the school’s curricula. Teachers’ assessment practices consistently mirror the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement is evident in most classes. Teachers make effective modifications to meet all students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use actionable feedback in most classes visited. In a grade five writing assignment the teacher stated, “Great descriptive language, I loved the way you developed the setting. Nice use of transition words. The story ended strongly. Be mindful of punctuation usage.” An additional example of actionable feedback was seen in another writing sample in which the teacher stated, “I can see that you wrote your events in order and you even skipped lines to separate what is happening. For next steps, show, don’t tell. Instead of writing that you talked, write what you said.”

- Rubrics are used in most classrooms visited. A mathematics rubric was rated from one to four, poor to excellent. The rubric provided a space for what the student did well and what they need to work on. In one example presented, the teacher stated under what I did well, the following, “you modelled with a place value grid and you estimated to help yourself.” Under what I need to work on, the teacher stated, “You need to work on your mathematical explanation and thinking.” The bottom part of the rubric provided additional comments. “Take your time when trying to explain your mathematical reasoning. Use the math vocabulary word wall.” The overall score for the student was a two. An additional rubric was seen titled lab report checklist. The checklist had areas worth different points. For example materials and procedure was worth fifteen points, grammar and punctuation was worth ten points, and observations and data was worth twenty points. A student received eleven for materials and procedures, a nine for grammar and punctuation and a twenty for observations and data. The teacher added additional comments, “Your lab report is very well organized, next time be sure to label your diagram and answer all questions to explain the results and conclusion.”

- Checks for understanding were evident in most classes visited. A teacher in a kindergarten/grade one bridge class used clarifying questions to check for understanding. Students were working on describing characters and major events in a story. The teacher stated that they would hear the word office. She asked the class to explain what an office was. She also modeled what it is to be worried about something. She stated that she was worried about lightening. She asked students to provide their own examples of what worry means. One student stated, “I worry because I’m shy.” Another example was seen in a grade four math class. While students were working on multiple equations, the teacher asked displayed a student work product and asked, “Does this look correct, do you agree or disagree and tell me why.” A student stated that “it was correct because five times six is thirty.”
**Additional Finding**

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

**Findings**

School leaders support the growth of teachers, including those new to teaching, with effective feedback and next steps from frequent cycles of classroom observation and study of student work and data. Feedback to teachers precisely captures strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

**Impact**

Feedback enunciates clear expectations for teacher practice and supports teacher growth and development.

**Supporting Evidence**

- An informal observation on a new teacher stated that the teacher needed support on using student assessments to inform instruction and improving on questioning skills. The assistant principal stated, “It was evident that the teacher’s questions lead students through a single path of inquiry. Most students’ responses were limited to one or a few words.” The administrator provided in writing Bloom’s *Taxonomy* question stems for math to provide further support, stating, “Bloom’s *Taxonomy* question stems is another technique that can be used in eliciting evidence.”

- An administrator provided feedback and next steps for a teacher using an informal observation. The administrator stated that under domain 1a of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, demonstration of knowledge of content and pedagogy, “Instructional strategies in unit and lesson plans are entirely suitable to the content.” The school leader provided feedback under 3c, engaging students in learning, “Even though the learning task are partially aligned with the instructional outcomes, there was not enough evidence of accountable talk during the lesson.” Suggestions for next steps included using level three and four depth of knowledge questions and use open-ended text dependent questions.

- To demonstrate knowledge of content and pedagogy, school leadership uses an instructional round walk through check off sheet. One that was presented documented that the teacher’s bulletin board was complete with the rubric the standard and the task. Follow up comments to the teacher included, “As a reminder, we are getting our students ready for third grade. Begin to build stamina so that students are able to write for long periods of time. Continue to provide writing booklets to your students.” This was impactful as teachers stated that there students on various grade had difficulty finishing writing sections of classroom assessments.
Findings

Most teachers are engaged in organized, inquiry-based professional collaborations. Teacher teams consistently interpret assessment data and student work for students.

Impact

Teacher collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of Common Core and instructional shifts strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers that usually result in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- A grade four team teaching group presented an analysis of student work and next steps. The content area of focus was Teachers College writing on demand. The unit chapter was opinion and argument writing. The form stated student successes, challenges, previous instructions and new strategies. In this example, the analysis listed that under success, students were able to state their opinions. The challenge was in elaboration. Previous instruction included students working on paragraph structure, grammar, vocabulary and punctuation. New strategies included, “make an explicit process chart that shows words used in an opinion writing essay.” New strategies also included looking at other grade four student writing.

- The kindergarten grade level team presented minutes of a team meeting to discuss student writing. They presented various student-writing samples and what they noted. For example, one mid-level student writing showed that the drawing match the thinking. A follow up was to use spaces and stretch sounds into words. A high-level student sample showed that the writing was readable and the picture that accompanied the writing was detailed. Follow ups included using spaces between words. The noted that the low-level student needs to improve on shapes to draw pictures and use words and sentences to tell a story and to increase writing stamina. As a grade, the team decided that students would benefit from using knowledge of letters to build words to tell their stories. The team stated that they would incorporate shared writing; they also stated that they would make charts for stretching sounds. From there they will build groups for small group instruction.

- Grades three four and five literacy teams met to look at student data that included running records. It demonstrated that many students were reading below grade level in reading. The team made the decision to target two groups: the lowest performing in reading and the next to lowest group. They discussed using guided reading for these groups. The lowest level students would receive level literacy intervention in groups three times per week for thirty minutes. The team also decided that the next to lowest group would be placed in reading groups two times per week for thirty minutes. The team documented that they will monitor student progress by looking at the next cycle of running records in seven weeks.