Quality Review Report

2016-2017

N.Y.C. Museum School
High school 02M414
333 West 17th St.
Manhattan
NY 10011

Principal: Darlene Miller

Dates of Review:
December 15, 2016 - December 16, 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

#### Instructional Core

<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>1.1 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>Well Developed</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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### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></th>
<th><strong>Area</strong></th>
<th><strong>Rating</strong></th>
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<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>
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### Systems for Improvement

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

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

School leaders steadily articulate high expectations and other elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching to the entire staff, and provide support. School leaders effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

School leaders promote a culture of mutual accountability for high expectations, and provide supports to achieve those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal communicates high expectations to all staff members. A principal submitted a memorandum to all teachers that stated all bulletin boards must be reflective of the current unit plan and the Common Core Learning Standards. Also, all boards must include instructive feedback and rubrics. The principal also stated the following in the memorandum; “major projects might include a formal essay complete with rubrics and instruction, a class wide mathematical jigsaw where groups of students solve one problem in different ways with explanations of the commonalities in all.” This was impactful as all teachers interviewed stated that the expectation of the principal was that all bulletin boards should reflect the unit of study, instructional feedback and rigor. One teacher stated, “I agree with this initiative because it allows our students to showcase their work.”

- The principal articulates high expectations to the entire staff based on the Common Core Learning Standards and the Danielson Framework for Teaching. All staff members received a memorandum categorizing standards provided by the principal that staff members mutually agreed upon. Examples of the standards reflect high expectations for all staff members included, “1.1, students are engaged by the module’s course of study, 2.1, presentations reflect a full eight-week course of study, 1.2, student learning is challenging and represents higher-order thinking, and 3.3 presenters have high expectations and have established appropriate norms of audience behavior.” Teachers have mentioned standard 1.1 in relation to building effective interventions for students.

- The college counselor sends out an overview of planned activities for the 2016-2017 school year to the entire staff that reflects expectations for college and career readiness. The planned activities are broken into months. September expectations included, “Prepare informational materials for seniors and their parents for the college application process.” October expectations included, “outreach to community based organization college advisors, confirm all interns have placements and signed contracts by October 1st.” November expectations included, “mid-point site evaluations for internships.” Parents also received this information. During an interview, senior and junior parents stated that they were aware of all important dates revolving around college and career readiness. One parent stated, “The college/career counselor keeps me informed throughout the year of important dates.”
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 5.1 Monitoring and Revising Systems | Rating: Proficient |

Findings

School leaders and faculty have a system in place to consistently evaluate the quality of school culture and the ways expectations are structured among members of the school community, school leaders also evaluate and modify the use of organizational resources, and the quality of teacher teamwork, and professional development practices.

Impact

School leaders and staff are increasing the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with attention to the Common Core Learning Standards, however they are not purposeful.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal used different methods of communication to evaluate culture within the school community. A monthly assembly is held to discuss culture within the school. The meeting is structured as a town hall meeting, and students’ express concerns. Issues that come up are bullying and student activities. Administrators also supervise lunch duty to gauge the climate of the building and listen to student concerns. Although these systems are in place, they do not demonstrate purposeful structures that are specifically designed for evaluating culture. For example, the town hall meetings serve different purposes and are not designed for evaluating culture.

- The principal has a bi-weekly cabinet meeting that includes guidance counselors and the dean. The administration also meets with the dean daily. The guidance counselors and the dean have stated that the principal meets with them on a regular basis. Although documents from these meetings were not provided, the dean stated, “the principal is very interested in the safety and the environment of the school building”. The dean also stated, “The principal wants to know what’s on the radar and what have I noticed during frequent classroom visits.”

- Teachers on a teacher team and department chairs stated that they meet with the principal and assistant principals on a regular basis. They have stated that the administration asked about resources that are needed to perform their tasks. The principal stated that she meets with various teams once per week to look at professional development needs for teachers of students with disabilities and English Language Learners. During an interview, a teacher stated, “During these meetings we discuss what professional developments needed and what resources we will require.”
Findings
Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects and are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact
The curricula are engaging, rigorous, and coherent for all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards.

Supporting Evidence

- A global history unit on China and the Mogul empire included Common Core Literacy standards such as introducing precise claims, establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone and use words phrases and clauses to link the major sections of the text. The unit also includes higher order thinking questions such as, “How is power gained, consolidated maintained and lost” and “What do different ethnic systems tell us about the ideal form of government?” The unit plan used student data from English classes to decide on the standards to use, for example, “students are required to cite specific textual evidence to support primary and secondary sources.” This was impactful as English Language Arts units required students to cite textual evidence.

- In a lesson plan for students with disabilities using a Socratic seminar, the aim was, “Students will be able to make a claim about Shi Huangdi and support it with evidence by participating in a ‘Socratic seminar’.” The lesson included scaffolds such as graphic organizers for note taking and sentence frames for participation. The unit also contained the following higher-order thinking question, “How did the Greco-Roman culture spread, and impact other regions and later periods in history?”

- A global studies teacher submitted a document entitled “global 1 specifically designed instruction.” The document lists specific instructional needs for students with disabilities. It lists the students’ strengths, needs, instructional environment, how learning is measured, and instruction. For example, one student was listed as a strong visual learner who reads below grade level and would benefit from work on organization and study skills. The instructional environment was for the child to be seated at the front because the student needs glasses. Materials included highlighted text, graphic organizers sentence starters and step-by-step directions. Instruction consisted of frequent checks for understanding, modeling and guided questions.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: Well Developed |

Findings

The vast majority of classrooms demonstrate teaching practices that are aligned to the curricula and reflect a clear set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

Impact

Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership so that all students produce meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Students and teachers stated that students learn best by discussion and participation. Across all classroom visited, students were involved in higher order thinking discussions. A grade eleven English Language Arts class was observed being engaged in a discussion and tying it to real world examples. Students were doing a jigsaw exercise using various articles to prepare them to read the text, *The Scarlet Letter*. The teacher walked around the room. She stated, “I want to emphasize that it is important to understand the main idea and understand what each person’s article is about” one student was overheard stating, “My article connects with the theme of the Scarlet Letter because it is talking about women’s sexuality compared to a man’s and the double standard that exist.” Another student added, “Society is quick to judge how Britney Spears’ performance is out of place. If she were a man it would be fine. As a female, I have concerns about this double standard.” Another group was reading the article, *should dictionaries do more to confront sexism?* When a student was asked about their thoughts on this, one student stated, “Yes it should because our dictionaries teach us about language that can turn into practices.”

- A grade nine global studies class was involved in a Socratic seminar. The topic was, “to what extent did Shi Huangdi improve China?” The teacher stated that the outer circle would be observing the discussion. The teacher asked, “Should Shi Huangdi be judged on his lasting contributions or the experience of living under his rule?” Students in the inner circle were engaged in dialogue. One student stated, “Although during his rule a lot of people died building the wall, the contributions outweigh the killings”. Another student interjected, stating, “I disagree because he killed a lot of people and his rule should not be judged by his last contribution.” The student contested stating that, “but before his rule it was a warring state.”

- In a grade ten English class, all students were involved in a discussion on the book *Of Mice and Men*. Everyone in the class was engaged in the discussion. Students were in small groups discussing the text. The teacher asked one group the following question, “Where is the person to person conflict in the story?” One student replied, “Lenny wants to keep a mouse in his pocket but George won’t let him.” The teacher asked the student to cite the text to support the claim. The student stated, “the quote is here: I don’t know why I can’t keep it because it’s nobody’s mouse.” Another student stated, the person to person conflict is on the fact that Lenny needs George to survive because of his disability and this creates conflicts with both characters when they disagree.” The student also state that there was evidence of person versus society, citing that Lenny’s behavior stops them from getting a job because he does not display what is considered normal behavior. One student stated, “This is not fair because we are all different and who should judge what’s right and wrong.”
**Additional Finding**

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Finding**

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments, and rubrics that are aligned with the school’s instructional documents. Teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

**Impact**

Staff members provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement thus, teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students’ learning needs.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Classroom teachers use rubrics to assess student work and provide actionable feedback. An example was seen in an English Language Arts class. The teacher used a Literary Essay Rubric that rated the student on intro/thesis, evidence, analysis and grammar and usage from levels one to four. One student received threes in evidence, and grammar and usage. The actionable feedback included, “Beautifully crafted, well written, argued, supported and structured. Watch small spelling and grammar issues.” Another student’s actionable feedback included, “Fantastic writing and analysis. Your paragraphs could be a bit more focused, and the counter-claim should be bought into the thesis.

- English teachers use a Socratic seminar rubric for self-assessment. The rubric instructs students to score their performance on four-excellent, three-good, and two-showing progress and one-needs improvement. One student rated themselves a four on “I came prepared with higher level questions related to the text.” A three on, “I asked at least one thoughtful probing question” and four on, “I encouraged other participants to enter the conversation.” Further impact was seen in a grade nine Global History class where students were engaged in a seminar on the Mongol empire utilizing the rubric and included additional notes such as “Shi unified China because if someone committed a crime they were punished, before that it was a warring state.” The students stated that they demonstrated a four, because they encouraged other students to participate in the conversation.

- Across grades, teachers use a “Document Based Questions Essay Rubric. The rubric rates student essays on a scale from one to five on the categories of, task, analysis, documents, outside information, facts/examples/details, organization and introduction and conclusion. One student received fifteen points out of twenty. The rubric also provides actionable feedback, “The essay needs outside information, and you must add specific details, good job.” An additional example demonstrated how the teacher provided next steps for the student stating, “Good analysis, needs more outside information. What other contributions did Egyptians or Sumerians make.” The student received a three for incorporating limited relevant outside information. The student received eighteen points out of twenty.
### 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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</table>

**Findings**

Teacher teams consistently evaluate assessment data and student work for students they share and are concentrating on. Distributed leadership structures are in place for teachers in different areas.

**Impact**

Teacher teams focus on improving teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students. Teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning within the school community.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams evaluate student data and work. A SIT (School Implementation Team) agenda documented monitoring student progress, the agenda presented the following items, “students who improved, students failing classes and students slipping”, discussion topics also included students with disabilities as an instructional focus. An example was demonstrated in the minutes that showed that one student’s strategies included small group instruction, providing a vocabulary bank, and providing models or exemplars of the given task. A grade ten student’s interventions included preferential treating, frequent check ins, provide opportunities to participate, sentence starters and re-teaching complex concepts. The team also presented an SDI (specially designed instruction) that included the needs of a student, stating that the student State English test score was 1.96 and a math score of 2.59. Specific instruction designs included, on task focusing prompts, audio books and teacher check ins and monitoring.

- Distributive leadership structures are in place. Each grade level has a department head that meets with the principal once per week. This was impactful, as teachers have stated that they have had key roles in hiring teachers, the administration and teachers who collectively hired a Japanese teacher articulated an example. Teachers also stated that they sit on hiring committees, create professional development agendas and write and modify the curricula.

- The principal supports distributive leadership initiatives by nominating a teacher to be a lead teacher to be trained by the superintendent, to represent all grades and subjects. Her role will be to lead teachers by working with them to improve instruction and meeting with the principal to discuss areas of growth and weakness. There is also a student with disabilities lead teacher overseeing Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings, a role formerly overseen by the assistant principal.