Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Eleanor Roosevelt High School
High school 02M416
411 East 76th St.
Manhattan
NY 10021
Principal: Dimitri Saliani

Dates of Review:
April 25, 2017 - April 26, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Rosemary Stuart
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

Eleanor Roosevelt High School serves students in grade 9 through grade 12. 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

### Instructional Core

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

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<tr>
<th>Area</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>
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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
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<tbody>
<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>
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## Systems for Improvement

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<th>Area</th>
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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>
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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>
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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>
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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>
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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>
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### Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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**Findings**

There is a coherent belief that students learn best when they are actively involved in learning, which is reflected in the vast majority of curricula-aligned instructional practices. Teachers provide high-quality extensions and strategic entry points so that all students have access to the curricula.

**Impact**

Students are engaged in meaningful and challenging tasks and their work products illustrate higher-order thinking.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The schoolwide belief in the power of high levels of student engagement to promote learning and college and career readiness was evident in lessons that were largely student directed. Students collaborated with each other to explore the content in many classes. In one class, students were in self-selected literacy circles discussing texts such as Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye*, Steinbeck’s *Cannery Row*, or Morrison’s *Jazz*. Each literacy circle had a student discussion director who was responsible for determining the task for the warm up and then creating questions to engage students in high-level discussions. The students were familiar with Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) and were expected to create complex questions using DOK question stems to generate rigorous discussion. A student in one circle asked the group to discuss the mental state of the character, McMurphy, from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. During the discussion, one student claimed that McMurphy was trying to empower patients, not to oppress them, and added, “He’s turning the pyramid upside down.”

- Students with disabilities were provided with individualized entry points that enabled them to engage in challenging tasks with their fellow students. In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, students discussed the difference between solving a problem and studying it. A student said the distinction between them is “looking over a problem to figure it out versus seeing what you did right and wrong and how you can use what you learned in other problems.” Teachers in this class planned and implemented strategies to support students with differentiated learning needs by providing modified worksheets, access to calculators, and one-on-one support, as needed.

- In a social studies class, students were urged to practice extended analysis, such as providing historical context in a document-based essay, in order to earn additional points on the Advanced Placement (AP) exam. In another class, the teacher provided a list of additional supplementary resources that interested students could use to prepare for the upcoming lessons. The materials included links to audiobooks of the texts with the note that their homework could consist of questions or analysis that add “meaning to something that is clear to you.”
Area of Focus

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

Teachers create and use assessments and rubrics aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and AP syllabi to assess student work, but they do not always provide a clear picture of schoolwide learning. Most, but not all, assessment practices include ongoing checks for understanding and student peer reflections.

Impact

Most feedback to students is actionable, but not all teachers provide meaningful feedback so that students are aware of how to improve their work. There are missed opportunities for teachers to gather information about student achievement and make adjustments to their practices.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers in most, but not all, classes assessed student learning and participation during instruction. Some teachers assessed student performance during group discussions, noting both individual and group performance, and students often self-assessed their own performance. In one class, students included notes from their group work in work folders that the teacher used to determine grades for group participation. In another class, students answered questions using an online program to access documents and assignments. The teacher used this program to conduct checks for understanding. During a lesson, the teacher announced that there would be a “quick, check-in quiz” posted in two days.

- Although some teachers recorded observations of student performance using electronic tablets during a lesson, and used online grade reporting programs to record anecdotal evidence of participation, there were a few missed opportunities for teachers to monitor student progress and to make on-the-spot adjustments to instruction. In a foreign language lesson, students were actively engaged in discussing their weekend plans and then watched a non-English language safety video from an international airline. The students had been assigned to write three recommendations from the video, but the teacher did not monitor individual student or group progress, although they had been informed that their work would be assessed.

- Although teachers consistently use rubrics and create assessments to evaluate student progress that are aligned to their curricula, the feedback from the teachers on these assessments is not always actionable and meaningful. For example, feedback to one student on an essay about the theme of revenge in *Hamlet* highlighted that the student had written about an interesting idea but noted that it did not directly support his thesis and suggested to the student that he, “revisit your thesis and see how you can make your Laertes’ example more relevant.” However, other feedback to students was not as clearly aimed at improving the work. On one writing assessment, the teacher noted on the rubric that the student received a level three on each of three criteria, a level four on one criterion, and awarded the student 26 out of 30 points. The rubric did not include any explanation of how the 26 points were calculated and the teacher did not provide any additional information that would direct the student in improving his writing.
Findings
School leaders and teachers use curricula aligned to the standards associated with a wide variety of courses, including AP and college level, in the school’s program of instruction. Rigorous tasks and college level skills are embedded in lesson plans across all departments and grade levels and address the learning needs of students with disabilities.

Impact
Coherence of planned instruction promotes college readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence
- Units of study and lesson plans are aligned to the Common Core or content standards, AP requirements, or to college course work. There is a coherent focus on the instructional shifts, such as supporting a claim with evidence from the text and stating an opinion. Lesson plans have learning aims, tasks, and assessments that align with the identified standards. For example, one lesson plan dealing with the area of polygons included the essential question, “How do the relationships between points, lines and shapes affect the way we see the world?” The tasks and the assessment were aligned to the Common Core standards and explicitly identified applicable standards of mathematical practice such as, “Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.”

- The coherence of the curricula across departments is reinforced through professional learning (PL) sessions and reviews by school leaders to ensure that students are prepared to pursue a wide variety of studies in college. A lesson plan for an economics class made connections between the content of the role of regulatory agencies and the literacy standards of citing text evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources. A college-level course on Victorian literature emphasized the analysis of texts to make inferences about the author’s purpose. School leaders review lesson plans and provide suggestions for improving the plans during their cycles of observation.

- Lessons included highly rigorous tasks that challenge students to deepen their thinking and focus on discussion and communication of their thoughts. For example, one lesson plan outlined the culminating activity of a unit on sound in film. Students were required to present their films to their fellow students, who would view the films as if they were a “panel of film industry executives, selling their product in an attempt to be hired.” In another lesson plan, students preparing for the AP Calculus exam would use the rubric from that exam to evaluate their knowledge of integrals and derivatives.

- Learning activities required all students to demonstrate their thinking in discussions and in extended writing exercises. Teachers ensured that students with disabilities were supported in demonstrating their thinking with detailed and specific curricular planning. In one lesson, during which students would be engaged in a unit of study involving literature circles, the teacher planned for a student to have an audio version of Willa Cather’s novel, *My Antonia*, so that the student could actively participate in the group book discussions.
### Findings

Parents are active partners with school leaders, teachers, guidance counselors, and staff in setting expectations for students to be college and career ready. The culture of high expectations for all students is systematically communicated and reinforced throughout the school.

### Impact

Guidance and advisement supports are provided to ensure that students meet the expectations to be prepared for college and career.

### Supporting Evidence

- Signs posted in the halls of Eleanor Roosevelt High School (ElRo) explain the Schoolwide Expectations for Engagement (SEE) and prompt students to ask, “What do we want to SEE at ElRo?” Students are empowered to be researchers and are excited about learning. A group of students publish a journal, “The ElRo Experiment,” to share their research and thinking about science. The twelfth issue included articles about four new elements that have been named, the colonization of Mars, and immunotherapy. In this issue, the editor-in-chief wrote, “As students, we strive to become a larger part of this scientific experience, delve into the science that excites us, and share that joy with you.” Another group of students heard about a competition for student-created racing cars. They quickly designed and engineered their model car using a three-dimensional printer and were named the top new team in the competition.

- School leaders and staff ensure that students have the support they need to meet expectations for college and career readiness. Students are supported in meeting the expectation of serving five hours of community service each quarter and given opportunities to apply for internships and other real-life volunteer experiences that extend the curricula. The internship office arranged a fair where students could speak about internship opportunities to representatives from museums, and other scientific, medical, and legal organizations.

- The guidance office organized a college fair, in partnership with a few other high schools, with representatives from over 100 colleges and universities. Juniors and seniors, and their families, meet one-on-one with the college guidance counselor to discuss their college application plans and the financial aid application process. Eighty percent of parents of juniors participated in these sessions. Parents indicated that they are well informed about the progress their children make toward college readiness through the use of an online tracking program. One parent stated, and others agreed, that the staff of the school fosters strong relationships with the students and the parents and another parent stated that the teachers and guidance counselors, “Feed off the energy of the students.” One teacher explained that the culture of the school is to be part of “a very large picture of their [the students] future — college, graduate school, career.”

- In 2016, 100 percent of ninth-grade students earned enough credits to be on track for graduation and 100 percent of graduates met the standards for college readiness set by City colleges and universities.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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Findings
School leaders support the development of strong pedagogical practices, with a focus on new teachers, through analysis of student outcomes and frequent cycles of observation and feedback that capture strengths and areas for growth.

Impact
Feedback to teachers includes support that enables them to meet the schoolwide expectations for professional growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence
- Frequent cycles of observations are strategically implemented and normed. Supervisors observe some teachers together and independently rate and then norm their understanding of the components of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* in order to provide “continuity of feedback, targeting, rigor and engagement.” School leaders established a weekly meeting for new teachers in order to provide a time for them to share strategies, discuss their practices, and to feel supported as they learn how to improve their instructional capacity.

- To support the implementation of instructional strategies that are expected of all teachers, school leaders provided PL on using high-level DOK questions to promote higher-order thinking and then reached consensus on their understanding of what students should be doing for the majority of the lessons. Professional learning is reinforced through the observation process, which includes post-observation feedback sessions informed by analysis of student outcomes and assessment data, and focused on elevating intellectual engagement for all students. Feedback to another teacher referenced analysis of the lesson plan and data from the lesson to support the observation that “the lesson was both engaging and, not to be underestimated, fun for the students.” A suggestion for improvement included a link to resources to help this teacher advance “high-level thinking and discourse by promoting meta-cognition.”

- Feedback to one teacher following an informal observation included the suggestion that the teacher intentionally formulate a series of questions that would allow the students to demonstrate their thinking. A subsequent formal observation commended the teacher for the creation of questions and tasks to ensure that students actively participated in the lesson. The observation report added, “Your openness to incorporate feedback to strengthen the lesson resulted in the lesson’s overall success.”
**Additional Finding**

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

Teachers engage in structured professional collaborations by grade and department. They analyze student work to identify trends and patterns of performance, specifically related to the schoolwide goal of increasing student engagement.

**Impact**

The instructional capacity of teachers is improved and students make progress toward college and career readiness.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In alignment with the schoolwide goal of increasing student-to-student discussion and engagement, the focus of their inquiry process often involves looking at student work. Weekly departmental PL sessions are centered on aligning content and academic tasks with the standards. The principal stated that the emphasis of this work is “placed on what students are doing and learning and how well those activities reflect the instructional shifts.”

- Teachers conducted a survey to reflect on their collaborative team focus and protocols for looking at student work. One response indicated that an area of interest was how to determine if low quality work indicated lack of comprehension or lack of effort on the part of the students. At a PL session in March, teacher teams were urged to examine their own practice of looking at student work to ensure that it reflects “higher cognitive level activities” and to focus on what teachers needed to do “to advance student thinking.”

- Teacher teams analyze student work and data to reflect on their pedagogical practices. They discuss strategies and curricular adjustments with a consistent focus on improving outcomes for individual students as well as groups of students with similar learning gaps. This emphasis was observed in a team meeting at which social studies teachers examined student work from an ICT class that the presenting teachers had assessed using a rubric to determine low, medium, or high performance. Teachers discussed ways to adapt the task to ensure that it measured how well the skills assessed by the rubric were applied.

- School leaders and teachers discuss methods they can use to move students along a continuum from directed to scaffolded to independent learning. One team discussed strategies they could use in their own classrooms to reflect this learning process for individual as well as groups of students. One teacher team discussed the learning gaps exhibited by one student in an ICT class. It was noted that as a result of being pushed to ask how and why questions, “He is showing more skill at explanatory language and prose.”