Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 017 Henry David Thoreau
Elementary 30Q017
28-37 29th St.
Queens
NY 11102

Principal: Rebecca Heyward

Dates of Review:
April 20, 2017 - April 21, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Carlos Perez
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

### 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>Area of Celebration</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>
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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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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### School Quality Ratings continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</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>
</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>
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### Systems for Improvement

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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>Area of Focus</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>
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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>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
Curriculum is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and incorporates many of the instructional shifts, most notably writing from sources across the curriculum. Academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all students.

Impact
There is curricular coherence across all grades and subject levels that offers alignment and access for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The first grade persuasive writing unit plans displayed alignment to the Common Core and addressed writing from sources through a variety of means. The unit addresses students writing about specific sources, stating opinions, supplying reasons for their opinions, and providing some sense of closure. The unit plan also details how students will be able to generate ideas, add details to their work, introduce a topic, and be able to spell all word wall words correctly. The fourth-grade English Language Arts (ELA) and social studies unit plans displayed evidence of cohesion and alignment, and encompassed writing throughout the social studies curriculum. The unit plans displayed specific planning for students to be able to refer to details and examples in testing when explaining what the text says and when drawing inferences from the text. Additionally, the unit plans show how students will acquire and use accurately graded appropriate general academic and domain specific words and phrases, including those that signal precise actions, emotions, or states of being.

- Planning documents reviewed all ensured entry points into the curriculum so that all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, are actively engaged in high rigor activities. All unit plans reviewed included a differentiation chart that clearly outlined the variety of ways that students will be supported through each unit. The unit plans offered auditory, visual, and kinesthetic supports, such as read alouds, Socratic seminars, graphic organizers, Google images, manipulatives, and cooperative group activities. The grade two writing/poetry unit plans included a differentiation chart that included multiple entry points for ELLs, students with disabilities, and high performing students as well. Entry points, such as iPads for research and translation, “act it out” activities for tactile learners, and anchor charts and illustrations for visual learners, were all part of the unit plans reviewed.

- All grades three through five, are participating in Socratic seminars that have been imbedded across all subject areas. A fifth-grade social studies lesson engaged students in a Socratic seminar that looked to address the question, “How do you think life in Canada may be similar or different to the United States? Why do you think that? How does your research affect your understanding of life in Canada? What questions about Canada do you still want to answer?” Planning included having students sit in an inner and outer circle and has students using accountable talk and critical thinking prompts. This allows opportunities for all learners to engage in high level thinking and discussion activity.
Area of Focus

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

Findings

School leaders are in the process of establishing a process that effectively supports the development of all teachers. Feedback to teachers inconsistently captures strengths and offers next steps connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact

Schoolwide instructional practices and teacher development and growth are starting to be elevated.

Supporting Evidence

- There is a formal observation process created by school administration. Each year there is an end of year meeting among the administrators where they decide the focus for the upcoming year based on data from the prior year's observation reports. This year there was a focus on norming math observations and paying closer attention to professional development (PD) cycles and assuring that information acquired through PD is implemented and used in the classrooms. Administration sets a formal schedule and sets goals to assure that the observation schedule is followed. For example, administration set a goal to have all formal observations completed by the end of February 2017, and that goal was met. Administration goes out of their way to offer feedback to all teachers regardless of whether they are formal or informal observations. During the teacher meeting, teachers shared that they feel that the observation process is “an extremely supportive process.” However, there was some that shared that since their formal observations were done so early in the year, they would love to have more visits from administration to continue their growth.

- A review of observation reports found that in some cases, school leaders offer areas of strength and next steps to teachers. For example, an observation report commended a teacher for his/her successful differentiation strategies used during the lesson along with the way he/she intellectually engaged students. The school leader offered the teacher next steps by reminding him/her about ways that activities can be aligned and selected for the lesson to help further support students and to continue to reflect on systems that will help support student independence. However, in other lessons, teacher’s strengths were not captured as clearly. For example, one observation report reviewed, displayed a full array of ways that the teacher could improve lessons such as longer independent writing time, highlighting student work throughout the class by posting it, or using is as part of the mini-lesson using the document camera. Teacher strengths in this lesson were not highlighted as clearly as in other lessons and does not give detailed commendations for teacher strengths, even though many of the areas were rated effective and highly effective.

- Initial planning conference’s take place in September and use prior year’s data to set teacher goals for the new school year. Teachers and administration also use data from ongoing meetings and conversations that take place throughout the school year as well. During those meetings, school leadership shared that adjustments are made and support is offered when they see that someone is struggling in a specific area. Intervisitations are used for this purpose. School leaders use teachers as a resource to help support other teachers who may be struggling in a specific area.
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

Teaching practices are aligned to the curricula, informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, and reflect the school’s belief of how students learn best through rich classroom discussions.

Impact

Teaching practices help bring student thinking to life and students are producing high levels of student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- There is an asserted belief in the school that students learn best when engaged in rich group and partner discussions that allow students to bring their thinking to life. Throughout many of the classrooms visited, teachers used the “workshop model” to give students those opportunities. During a reading workshop, students had opportunities to turn and talk to their partner and discuss questions posed by the teacher which included, “What were some moments that showed a character from the reading being empathetic?” During discussions, students were overheard saying “there was empathy when the sister said I know how you feel.” While listening to student conversations, it was clear they understood what empathy meant and how it was used in the text.

- A fifth-grade social studies lesson engaged all learners in a Socratic seminar centered on comparing Canada to the United States. During this lesson, the teacher was not directly involved and only acted as a facilitator when needed. This lesson was completely student run and displayed high levels of student discussion and student thinking. During the seminar, there was a student facilitator who asked questions and engaged other students in the conversation by stating things such as, “Can you please explain a little more” and “Please share what you just said with everyone else.” All students were overheard using accountable talk prompts such as, “I would like to add to what she said” and “I would like to ask a question.” In addition, during this lesson, students could cite evidence from the text to support their claims. This lesson displayed high levels of rigor and student thinking. However, not all the classrooms visited displayed this high level of student engagement and discussion. During a fifth-grade writing lesson, students did not have opportunities to engage in rich group discussions and only answered questions posed by the teacher.

- Teachers shared that in addition to rich group discussions, they believe that creating a culture for learning in their classrooms is something that must happen if students are to learn effectively. Teachers believe that they go out of their way to get to know their students and their learning styles, and adjust their teaching to them, not the students adjusting to their teaching. During a second-grade math lesson, the teacher had her class split into two separate groups based on student skills. One group worked with a teacher in the back of the room using manipulatives to identify specific times on their clocks. During this lesson, students received small group individualized attention that allowed them more opportunities to engage in group discussions with their classmates.
### Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:**

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<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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**Findings**

Teacher use rubrics and assessments that are closely aligned to the curriculum. Teacher assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding.

**Impact**

Actionable ongoing feedback to students is inconsistent, and as such, the amount of adjustments that teachers make to meet all the learning needs of their students is uneven.

**Supporting Evidence**

- There was some evidence of feedback to students that captured strengths and offered students next steps that are actionable, timely and specific. For example, feedback to a first-grade student’s invention assignment included praising the student for inventing a boat that can float and fly, and complimenting the student for starting their sentences with capital letters. The teacher then reminded the student to use punctuation at the end of their thoughts. Feedback on a student’s social studies assignment on community maps included praising the student for details they used in supporting why they felt police stations are important in a community. Next steps included telling the student to use their sources to help them spell words they are unfamiliar with. However, feedback such as this was not seen throughout all the classrooms visited with student work reviewed. In some cases, feedback included simply praising the student or no feedback at all.

- Many of the classes visited and student work reviewed, demonstrated the use of post-it notes for student peer-assessment. A math lesson displayed student work throughout the class that evidenced peer-assessment, where students shared “glows and grows” with their peers. Examples of student feedback included praising their classmate for the way they showed their work on a math assignment and next steps on how they needed to add more details to their explanations for their problems. Other ongoing checks for understanding used throughout classrooms visited, included teachers conferencing with students and the use of exit slips that in some classes were used to make immediate and effective adjustments to the lesson to meet the learning needs of all students.

- Lower grade students use checklists to self-assess, prior to handing in any assignments. For example, the “kindergarten opinion about a book or topic” checklist included a variety of areas where students could check off a box entitled “not yet, starting to, and yes.” Examples of some of the areas that students checked off on the structured check list included, “I wrote my opinion in the beginning, I write my idea, and then said more. I used words such as because, I had a last part or page, and I told my opinion in one place and in another place, I said, why?” Every section of the checklist is preceded with a picture to offer visual support for students. The development section of the checklist offered two areas, “I put everything I thought about the topic or book on the page,” and “I had details in pictures and words.” A first-grade English as a New Language (ENL) and ELA lesson gave students opportunities to self-reflect using a “My Glows and Grows” sheet which allows students to answer, “What they are most proud of, what they became better at, and what they want to improve on.”
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

High expectations are consistently communicated to the entire school community, most notably through the school newsletter. Included are high expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

Leadership provide training and have a system of accountability for the expectations communicated to all staff. Families are well informed and understand the progress of their children.

Supporting Evidence

- The school shares academic expectations with families through a variety of ways. A bimonthly newsletter is sent home to families that shares with them all upcoming events they can attend. There are workshops on state assessments that parents have attended that informs them of all pertinent information pertaining to their child’s exam. Parents shared that they feel very informed as to all the programs that are offered for them. For example, parents shared how the school notified them of college day and how their child should come to school dressed in what they would like to be when they grow up. Parents also shared how they were invited to come in and participate in career day and talk to the students about their career path and answer questions from students. Parents and students both shared how they were informed all year about all the school trips to visit college campus. Parents were all very pleased about the communication from the school.

- High expectations are regularly shared with all staff through the dissemination of the newsletter, entitled, “Tiger Times.” For example, the December/January edition of the Tiger Times newsletter shared with staff a recent visit that the principal had with class 3-335. The newsletter praised the teacher team for the pedagogical practices that they have implemented which have created a “Culture of independence, perseverance, accountable talk, and resiliency.” The principal highlighted the use of manipulatives, how the teachers checked for understanding, and the high level of engagement found throughout the class. In addition to this, the principal also shared online resources that teachers can use in their classes. Furthermore, the principal shared various samples of exemplars that were seen throughout classroom visits and some of the teachable moments that were addressed by some of the teachers.

- In addition to traditional means, the school use social media to communicate to families all the ongoing events that take place in the school. The school recently launched its Facebook page and parents could speak about it and very much enjoy visiting the page and reading about what is going on in the school. Parents also shared that they regularly attend Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings as well as School Leadership Team (SLT) meetings. Parents are also invited throughout the year to a wide array of events that celebrate their children’s accomplishments. One parent shared, “Giving our kids awards is a great way to get us to come in, I know I never miss anything that my son gets.”
## 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 collaborative inquiry-based team meetings where they consistently analyze assessment data and student work.

### Impact

Teachers are afforded numerous distributive leadership opportunities that help to build their leadership capacity and focus specifically to improved student learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- **School leaders believe** because of the distributive leadership opportunities throughout the school, "Teachers are taking ownership for just about everything." School leaders report that teachers are going out of their way to share best practices with each other, even during their own personal lunch periods. Teachers have been seen going into each other’s classes to do both scheduled formal intervisitations and informal ones. Teachers are attending meetings outside of their workday, such as PTA meetings without being asked. Teachers are celebrating each other’s work and very much care about the success of the building.

- Teachers are involved in regular inquiry-based team meetings that review a multitude of data sources and allow teachers to engage in rich discussions about pedagogical practices. During the teacher team inquiry meeting, first grade teachers looked at student work from the “Scenes to Series narrative writing unit.” Teachers used this meeting to examine student work and then create small group tools that can be implemented to help students progress through the unit. This meeting followed a formal inquiry-based meeting model that started out by having the protocols reviewed by the team facilitator. Teachers were given fifteen minutes to review student work samples, and then began to share their noticing’s and wonderings at a time. The team meeting closed by teachers sharing ideas for the next agenda and proposing additional meeting time throughout the week to further discuss their findings.

- Teachers are regularly learning from each other. Teachers regularly attend PD sessions and turnkey the information to their colleagues. During the teacher interview, teachers shared many of the numerous PD sessions that they have attended and then facilitated to their colleagues. Among those sessions were growth mindset, science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM), Socratic seminar, project-based teaching, strengthening small group instruction, Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) models, GO Math!, and using technology. Learning from their peers has been very impactful and teachers shared how it has helped them take ownership of their learning and their school. Teachers shared how leadership always allows them opportunities to share their learning and consistently approach teachers and ask them to share their skills with the staff. One teacher shared the following, “Leadership gives us recognition which gives us that leadership feeling.”