Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 040 Samuel Huntington
Elementary 28Q040
109-20 Union Hall St.
Queens
NY 11433

Principal: Alison Branker

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

Lead Reviewer: Carlos Perez
The Quality Review

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. 040 Samuel Huntington serves students in grade K through grade 5. 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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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></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>Area of Focus</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Quality Ratings continued

#### 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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</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</table>

#### 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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>1.3 Leveraging Resources</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Findings

School leadership and faculty use and allocate resources to support the school’s instructional goals. Staff time is structured in a way that allows teams to have substantial and regular meetings in order to focus on instructional work.

Impact

Resources are allocated to support students in creating meaningful work products and engage them in challenging academic tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- As a result of students with disabilities not making Annual Yearly Progress (AYP), the school’s Professional Learning Team made the decision to create a Saturday academy from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. During a conversation with students, one student stated “If I have trouble with something during the day and still can't understand, I can ask my teacher at Saturday academy for extra help.” Parents also shared how the Saturday program has impacted their children. One parent stated “the Saturday program has really helped my child stay on track. I thought it would be hard to get her there on Saturday, but she is very excited to go.” Currently twenty-five percent of all students with disabilities are attending the Saturday program and it continues to grow as the year progresses. This has allowed student’s to complete rigorous assignments. For example, students took part in a science lesson where they were able to articulate the human body’s ability to chew, swallow, and churn.

- A deliberate structure for grade-level teacher inquiry works on a two-week cycle and is driven by assessment results and other student data. Agendas for all teacher inquiry sessions are shared with administration prior to each meeting. At the beginning of the school year teachers and administrators reviewed data from Advance (the teacher evaluation and development system), which led them to discover that there was a need for increased questioning strategies. As a result, this became a major focus for all teachers this school year. Teachers are using effective questioning strategies, which are engaging students in challenging and rigorous discussions and work products. In addition to grade-level teams, there are specific teams for English Language Arts (ELA) and math during which time staff reviews student data, and analyzes best practices. As a result of teachers sharing best practices, there has been improved teacher instruction.

- In an effort to address a goal of proficiency in ELA and literacy, the instructional cabinet made the decision to purchase myON, an online literacy environment that exposes students on all reading levels to a learning platform that offers them access to enhanced digital reading content. As a result, students now have complete access to over 4,000 titles at various reading levels. According to administration, this decision was made in order to help increase the reading levels for all students and to get them to read more, not only in school but at home as well. During a parent meeting one parent shared “The school is really trying to help our kids with their reading, they have brought in the South Jamaica Reads program and myON, which has helped my child with her literacy and many other parents have told me the same thing.” Students shared that they have been taking advantage of the online reading materials that myON has to offer and some feel it has made a difference in their reading. Students shared that this year they feel as if they are reading more than they have in the past, and have choices in what they can read. One student stated, “I feel as if I have read 100 books this year.”
Area of Focus

Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy
Rating: Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the school’s curricula, reflect the school’s belief about how students learn best, and supplies multiple entry points so that all learners including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities are engaged.

Impact

Across classrooms, teacher pedagogy challenges and engages some students by being active participants in class discussions. Students are producing meaningful work products in some of the classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers’ use of group and partner discussions, which is aligned to the school’s belief of how students learn best, was evident throughout classrooms. In a grade three science lesson students were asked to turn to their partner and answer the question “What are some characteristics of living things?” One group had a member state “One characteristic of a living thing is that it has to be able to move,” and a second group member added, “I agree with you and would like to add that they also have to grow too.” In a second grade class, students were separated into groups where every group member had a specific role either as checker, facilitator, speaker, reflector, recorder, and/or leader that was their responsibility, and all members also worked together to answer the questions posed by the teacher. However, group work was not displayed across the vast majority of the classes visited.

- During a fourth grade social studies lesson, students were learning about the Middle Ages. Throughout the class, documents were translated into Spanish for all ELLs and personal word-wall pictures were provided to students with disabilities. As students worked, the teacher circulated and assessed students and the teacher recorded student data using a checklist in order to assess student progress and plan for future lessons. During the lesson, ELLs were grouped together and higher-level ELLs were able to assist lower level ELLs by translating key terms in the text. As a result, students were able to complete their assignments and submit quality work products. However, this was not seen across all classes visited.

- During a grade one science lesson, students were working in pairs and used manipulatives in order to simulate the digestive system. Students worked together and used zip-lock bags, cereal, and water, to create the digestive process starting from the beginning of eating and ending up when food is sent to waste. Students were able to share with their partners and the teacher each step of the digestive system as they recreated it. One student stated, “When we mix the water and cereal and make it mushy that is what is happening in my belly.” In a third grade science lesson, students were introduced to vertebrate and invertebrate animals. Students were asked to turn to their partner and explain how bones help a bird. Students were able to share various responses to the question posed. However, this lesson did not offer student the opportunity to work with manipulatives, nor did it use teacher exemplars to help students make visual connections, practices that are part of the instructional foci of the school and are aligned to the schools belief of how students learn best.
**Findings**
Curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigor and are planned and refined so that all students including ELLs and students with disabilities are cognitively engaged.

**Impact**
All students are given an opportunity to take part in challenging lessons that cognitively engage them.

**Supporting Evidence**

- A review of unit plans revealed components for all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, those on level, and students working at a higher level. For example, in chapter two lesson four of the *GoMath!* unit, there are bullets that detail work that higher-level students can complete, such as, “Students should use the six digits to write two division examples with four digit dividends and two digit divisors.” This same lesson included the following differentiation tasks for ELLs and students with disabilities, “After determining students’ background knowledge, frontload the vocabulary and schema necessary for students to comprehend the context of the sample word problem.”

- Across many of the lesson plans reviewed there was evidence of planning that was related to student needs that included instructional shifts, such as coherence and building knowledge through content-rich non-fiction and informational texts, components of the Common Core Learning Standards, learning targets, and modeling. Lesson plans reviewed also included areas for essential questions and inferencing such as “What can we infer about the Barbarians or the Roman Empire, based on the map on page three?” and evidence of rigor in a grade three lesson plan required students to explain the difference between a vertebrate animal and an invertebrate animal.

- Lesson plans reflected adjustments based on student prior learning, specifically from exit slips from prior lessons. For example, a math lesson plan clearly stated that in the prior lesson students multiplied by one digit numbers. However, the teachers state in their follow-up lesson plan that the lesson must begin with a review of rounding in order to estimate products efficiently so that students get more practice with multiplying one digit numbers. This information was based on the prior day’s exit slip.
Findings

Teachers use rubrics that are aligned to the school’s curricula and provide relevant feedback around student performance. Assessment results are used to adjust curriculum.

Impact

Teachers’ use of rubrics provides students with next steps, and assessment practices impact effective curriculum adjustments to support all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use rubrics and are expected to give actionable and timely feedback that will help students move to the next level. Evidence of teacher feedback was visible in every classroom as well as on student work posted throughout the hallways and was aligned to classroom rubrics. One example of teacher feedback shared on a student’s math assignment read, “You did a good job in accurately getting your answer. How do you know your answer is reasonable? 1,000 is close to 1,021.” Another example of teacher feedback was, “You restated the question. You gave the meaning of the idiom. Be sure your story details are correct. Tell what Michael means when he says the idiom.”

- Throughout lessons teachers used a variety of methods in order to assess their students in the moment, including conferencing, questioning, and checklists. As a result, teachers use this assessment data to inform their practice and adjust the lesson for students. During one reading lesson, the teacher used the information gathered from his checklist to create a smaller reading group and dedicated ten minutes during the lesson to provide additional help to the identified students and used to adjust curriculum during teacher team meetings.

- Rubrics were used throughout classrooms and as a result, students have a clear understanding of what is needed in order to be attaining the highest score possible on any assignment. During the student meeting all students expressed how rubrics are used in all of their classes. Students shared that their teachers make them read and review the rubrics before every assignment. In addition to the rubrics, teacher offer feedback to students as well. “Feedback helps us know what we need to do to improve our work” was what one student shared. Additionally, students also were able to clearly articulate how the feedback they receive in conjunction with the use of the rubric helps them, as they now know how to get a higher grade on their next assignment. Teacher feedback captures student’s strengths and offers clear next steps towards student mastery.
Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 3.4 High Expectations

**Rating:** Well Developed

### Findings

School leadership and staff offer numerous workshops for parents in both English and Spanish pertaining to next level of education and the progress of their children. Teacher teams systematically communicate high expectations and offer clear and effective feedback to ensure that all students are prepared for the next level.

### Impact

High levels of expectations are embedded in every aspect of building, thus offering students a clear pathway towards college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leadership delivers clear expectations to the school community through monthly newsletters to all parents and staff. Additionally, all teachers send out a class newsletter to parents that delivers classroom news and events, upcoming assessments, and helpful tips to assist parents with their children's homework. During the parent meeting, parents shared that they are always welcomed to the school and feel as if they are part of the school family. Additionally, the principal delivers a school report during every monthly Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meeting that keeps the school community informed on every aspect of the school, including college and career week, and the application process for middle school.

- Every teacher in the school uses ClassDojo as a tool to communicate with parents. This app connects teachers and parents and allows for the sharing of photos, videos, and messages throughout the school day in real time. During the parent meeting, one parent shared, “ClassDojo is wonderful! It allows me to keep in touch with my child’s class throughout the day. It makes me feel as if I am there in the class and I never miss out on anything or any information.” Parents also shared how they are sent an alert from the teacher through ClassDojo on a daily basis. Additionally, teachers use the ClassDojo’s point system to reward students by giving out “digital high-fives” for positive behavior, participation, teamwork or any other positive trait. When a student receives a point, parents are notified instantly via their cell phones.

- In order to build an atmosphere of college and career readiness the school has adopted and follows the Eight Components of College and Career Readiness Counseling, which is part of the College Board’s National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA). Staff begins to have discussions with students about college as early as pre-kindergarten. School administration shared a worksheet where pre-school students had to draw a line that corresponds to the picture and caption. For example, the first item read, “My name is Ira and I am six years old. I am in first Grade.” The student had to draw a line from this picture to the picture of the elementary school. Furthermore, a review of an ELA unit plan for grades three through five discovered a lesson entitled “A World of Opportunity: The Importance of College.” This lesson covered component number one, aspirations, of NOSCA. Additionally, there is further evidence of teachers preparing students to be college and career ready in the form of a closure assignment at the end of the day on Fridays. Teachers share a link to a college or university or a career, and students are given time to explore and learn about the college or career.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<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 engage in collaborative inquiry-based meetings where they analyze student work, promote the achievement of school goals, and strengthen teacher practice.

Impact

Improved teacher practice along with progress towards goals for all students is a result of a collaborative team approach to teaching and learning.

Supporting Evidence

- During grade and team meetings, teachers analyze and discuss student work to determine areas of focus and make informed decisions when changes need to be made to the curriculum. Teacher teams are created by grades, subject areas, and both vertically and horizontally. Teams follow cycles of inquiry that start with teachers looking for trends in ELA and math and then developing initial instructional goals to work towards. Teacher team meeting agendas are shared with administration prior to every meeting and the teaching staff welcomes feedback from the administrators. Additionally, teachers on their own free time, host “lunch and learn” sessions where they do further inquiry and discuss trends and issues. During a teacher meeting, one teacher shared the following when answering a question about creating rubrics and assessments, “We do this during our team meetings, individual prep times, and most recently it has been a topic during our ‘lunch and learns.’”

- The principal of the school stated, “Our faculty learns best from feedback and discussion. We also believe they learn best by doing intervisitations to their colleagues’ classrooms.” Based on prior year teacher ratings, teachers develop an action plan and then an intervisitation schedule. Administrators shared a template, which showed the areas of strength for each teacher and then how teachers then self-select those classrooms that have strengths in areas where they need assistance. This is done in collaboration with administration. During the teacher meeting one teacher shared “One of the things that has come about from administration feedback is the creation of the intervisitation schedule. This has really helped many of us learn from our colleagues and allowed us to give our students the best instruction possible.”

- Teachers are provided with many opportunities for professional learning, which include weekly sessions on Mondays. The school’s principal shared the following with respect to professional development, “Our teachers start professional development over the summer, they identify areas they would like to work on, and attend workshops that will help address those areas.” At the beginning of the school year, teachers create a schedule during their professional learning sessions and they then turnkey the information they learned to colleagues. All teachers are asked to fill out a rating form for all of the professional development they attend. Administration collects and reviews all feedback forms and share the information with teachers during teacher team meetings. Teachers turnkey all information they gain during professional development sessions to their colleagues during their professional learning time.