Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S./M.S 042 R. Vernam
K-8 27Q042
488 Beach 66th St.
Queens
NY 11692

Principal: Patricia Finn

Dates of Review:
April 6, 2017 - April 7, 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>
</tr>
</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>Area of Celebration</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 Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</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>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

Teaching practices are aligned to the schools curricula and reflect the belief that teachers adjust pedagogical practices to reflect the way different learners produce work and participate in discussions.

Impact

Students exhibit high levels of thinking and participation that allow them to produce meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Leaders and teachers believe that students learn best when teachers adjust their teaching practices to the various learning styles of all students and allow students to demonstrate their learning through a variety of ways. During a third-grade English Language Arts (ELA) lesson, students were actively involved in a lesson that centered on drawing conclusions about a person’s character. The students performed a variety of skits connected to the aim of the lesson, which was followed by opportunities for students to discuss the skit and the personal characteristics of the characters being portrayed. High levels of student engagement and opportunities for students to share their thinking was observed across many of the classes visited.

- A sixth-grade math lesson allowed students numerous opportunities to work collaboratively in skill-leveled groups. Working in groups, students engaged in discussions solving problems centered on unit rate, proportions, ratios, and related content. During this lesson, students supported each other and used accountable talk prompts to add to or question their peers’ suggestions. During a kindergarten science lesson centered on animal adaptation, students discussed what would happen if animals could not adapt to their environments. Students were heard responding, “They would die out” and “It would be hard for them to live when it’s too cold or too hot.”

- To support student’s auditory and visual learning styles, online programs such as iReady and myON give additional support and allow students to display and document their learning. In a second-grade math lesson, students used manipulatives such as plastic currency to display their understanding of counting and addition. In a seventh-grade ELA lesson, students sketched out their characters and then write about them. This practice is utilized to support those students who need to see their story and visualize the character before actually engaging in writing.
Findings
School leaders support teachers through cycles of teacher observations. However, written feedback offered to teachers is not consistently effective and at times lacks connection to the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact
Written feedback offered to teachers is beginning to support their development, elevate their instructional practices, and is promoting teacher’s professional growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of teacher observation reports reveals feedback that inconsistently provides specific next steps that will lead to improved teaching. In one report, feedback accurately captures the teacher’s strengths and provides clear next steps. In another, the school leader commended the teacher for the use of technology, anchor charts, and graphic organizers while also offering next steps with respect to strengthening the assessment for student writing. However, next steps in another report merely stated that in order to move from effective to highly effective, the teacher needed to incorporate Depth of Knowledge (DOK) higher-order thinking questions.

- A report reviewed captured the events of the lesson, including how the teacher engaged students and the types of questions and questioning strategies used throughout the lesson. However, next steps were general in nature limiting the support needed for accelerating the teacher’s pedagogical development. In another report, actionable next steps were provided in the recommendation to implement the school’s Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program and to visit a colleague in order to implement the program.

- School leadership has a system for conducting observations in which assistant principals conduct all of the informal observations while the principal conducts all of the formal observations. School leaders have norming sessions on a regular basis in order to ensure that a common lens is used when observing all teachers. Administrators go into observations looking to see if prior feedback and next steps have been implemented. Verbal feedback is offered to teachers almost immediately after each observation. Teachers and school leaders both shared that more teachers are opting for the formal observation process because they value the one-on-one time with school leaders. Although verbal feedback seems to be effective and valued, the level of written feedback revealed in observation reports along with next steps was uneven from one administrator to the next. Additionally, observation practices are not yet consistently promoting professional growth and reflection amongst all teachers.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

Curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and display high levels of rigor. The instructional shifts, most notably use of academic vocabulary, are incorporated across subjects.

Impact

Students have access to rigorous curricula that is aligned to the Common Core and engages all students including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers’ plans regularly incorporate academic vocabulary with a strong focus on student expression. In addition, many of the lesson plans addressed the implementation of the staircase of complexity. A science lesson plan targeting animal adaptation addressed the science standards by teaching students to identify animals and the structures that serve different functions in growth, survival and reproduction. Lesson plans included opportunities for students to read appropriate texts connected to the aim of the lesson and incorporated opportunities for close reading. Math plans included the academic vocabulary related to the lesson along with how to implement the teaching of content language.

- Across subjects and grades, plans for ELLs and students with disabilities emphasize rigorous thinking habits. Teachers believe in providing diverse learners all the support needed in order to achieve the same high levels of performance expected of all students. Math plans provided for small group instruction, modeling, one-on-one guided instruction and the use of manipulatives. An ELA lesson contained planning for all students’ needs and incorporated visual, auditory, and kinesthetic activities. Anchor charts, sound cards, and vowel team posters were indicated as additional scaffolds to be used to provide all students access to the learning activity.

- The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) is being used for writing. All unit and daily lesson plans are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (Common Core). Additionally, for math, the GO Math! program is employed. In one math unit the focus is on mathematical practices such as making sense of numbers, persevering in solving a problem, attention to precision, constructing viable arguments, and critiquing the reasoning of others. Alignment to the Common Core was also evident in unit three of the writing curriculum. The central focus is on writing for readers and having students become better writers and providing students opportunities to engage in rigorous thinking and learning.
**Findings**

Common assessments and grading policies firmly aligned to the school’s curricula are used in all subjects. Across classrooms, teachers’ assessment practices include ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment most notably through the use of student-led conferences.

**Impact**

Teachers provide students with actionable feedback. Effective adjustments are made to meet the learning needs of all students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics that are part of and aligned to TCRWP and *GO Math!* programs. Rubrics are used as the foundation for feedback that teachers provide to students. Feedback is actionable and specific and captures student’s strengths and areas of growth through the glows and grows process. For example, feedback regarding a writing assignment commended the student’s ability to construct a well-written sentence and then instructed the student that more details with specific examples were needed for future writing assignments. Another assignment displayed a glow that commended the student for using text-based evidence to support their analysis and a grow that reminded the student to elaborate on their responses and continue to work on their neatness.

- The school has implemented student-led conferences during which students have multiple opportunities throughout the school year to share with their parents and teachers their progress and the areas which need improvement. All students prepare for their student-led conferences by filling out a graphic organizer that allows them to reflect on their progress and organize their presentations. Students begin their conferences by introducing themselves and then presenting various work samples. They discuss their successes and struggles and how they have grown as students throughout the school year. Additionally, students share the feedback they received from teachers on various assignments and how it has helped them make progress. During this process, the students have an opportunity to share with their parents the support needed at home in order to continue to make positive progress.

- During a writing workshop, the teacher monitored the conversation occurring in each group of students. In addition, teachers used exit slips to assess the learning that took place and used the results to plan and adjust lessons for the next day. This data was used to address student misconceptions prior to the start of the next lesson and for grouping students based on their responses. Methods of ongoing checks for understanding included the use of individual student white boards to display their answers. Students completed sentences or mathematical equations and held the board up for the teacher to review. The use of a thumbs-up and thumbs-down system let the teacher know if students understood the material.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

There is inconsistent communication of professional expectations to staff. A unified central system to communicate with families about college and career readiness is in the process of being developed.

Impact

The school is developing systems to provide training for staff and feedback to parents regarding student progress to provide a path toward high student achievement and college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leadership shares their high expectations through observation reports and correspondence to staff including the principal’s newsletter, which is also sent to parents. For example, the September/October edition of the newsletter contained research-based information pertaining to literacy and math. Additionally, it reminded parents to check their children’s folder in order to review daily notices and homework sent home by the teacher. However, a system to provide ongoing feedback to parents and staff regarding students’ achievement is emerging and has not been fully developed. During the teacher meeting, some teachers shared how communication is starting to improve. One teacher shared, “In the past, we were not always aware of timelines and things like that. That has improved this year and we hope it continues to.”

- School leaders and staff members are in the processing of establishing a central system for communicating student progress, grade level requirements, Common Core, and college and career readiness to families. Through this platform, teachers will be able to document parent communication as well as provide recommendations to parents and students. In conjunction with this developing system, student-led conferences have been implemented this year and are helping to improve how the school communicates academic progress to parents. Through student-led conferences, parents are beginning to hear and understand the academic and behavioral expectations to which all students must adhere.

- Communication is something that leaders have been working on this year with their staff. School leaders use every opportunity they can to communicate with their staff. For example, the instructional cabinet includes grade level leaders and those leaders share information and expectations with their peers after every instructional cabinet meeting. Additionally, morning messages are a key manner in which school leaders communicate with the staff. The school has started a blog this year, where both school leaders and teachers can communicate with each other in order to offer support, ask questions and share ideas. In addition, teachers shared that they have been receiving the appropriate training and professional development to support them in meeting instruction expectations. For example, there has been ongoing training for iReady that has allowed teachers to learn the program and how to effectively use it and implement it. Furthermore, ongoing learning and training opportunities for the implementation of TCRWP has also given teachers the training they need in order to implement the program into their classes.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional inquiry sessions that analyze student data and teacher practice. Teachers serve in various leadership roles across the school community.

Impact
Teachers have a voice in key decisions that impact student learning and their leadership capacity. Teacher’s instructional capacity is strengthened through teacher team collaboration.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers have opportunities to take on leadership roles through a variety of ways. All teachers that attend professional development sessions off campus are expected to turnkey their learning to their colleagues. Teachers shared that learning from their colleagues is extremely effective and helps to build collaboration and teamwork. Additionally, the school has grade team leaders, instructional cabinet members, model teachers and a teacher who has taken on the role of data specialist. The school is in the process of implementing an online grade book system and one teacher has become the lead teacher regarding any issues or questions that teachers may have pertaining to this system. Teachers take on active leadership roles as facilitators during team meetings.

- Teacher’s schedules are created with the purposeful intention of giving them common planning time each day. Although teachers are required to meet weekly as a team to engage in team meetings using the Data Wise inquiry protocol, school leaders and teachers all shared that most teachers are actually meeting daily. Teacher input resulted in having the schedule created in a way that allows them to meet daily. Teachers believe that having this specified time has positively impacted their instructional capacity. Teachers voiced that this increased opportunity to meet allows them to identify and understand commonalities and trends with their students. One teacher shared how it has helped her to take the time to reflect on her own instructional practices.

- The principal works closely with teachers who are enrolled in leadership courses and allows them to fulfill their internship hours under her guidance. During the teacher interview, teachers explained how any idea they bring to the principal is almost always supported and they are urged to "run with it." This year teacher leaders have facilitated the creation of the school’s website and blog. This was created with teacher input and the website will have space for every teacher in the school to create their own class pages.