Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 043
K-8 27Q043
160 Beach 29th St.
Queens
NY 11691

Principal: Simone Nicholas

Dates of Review:
May 15, 2017 - May 16, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio
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

P.S. 043 serves students in grade K through grade 8. 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school…</td>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<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>Developing</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>Developing</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>Area of Celebration</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>Additional Finding</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>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: Proficient |

Findings
School leaders communicate high expectations to staff connected to the school’s goals and core beliefs about instruction. Staff members consistently communicate high expectations and offer feedback to parents about their children’s progress in school.

Impact
Teachers are held accountable for utilizing information from ongoing supportive trainings to meet schoolwide expectations. Parents are aware of their children’s academic progress compared to State and National standards.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate expectations via ongoing bulletins called *End of Month Reflections*, the Staff Handbook, and through mid-year conversations with staff. The *End of Month Reflections* email contains reminders of instructional expectations connected to the school’s core beliefs on student engagement, rigorous instruction, and use of formative data. The Staff Handbook reinforces setting high expectations for students and provides tips to support teachers regarding classroom discipline, cross-curricular writing tasks, and information on the writing process. During mid-year conversations with staff members, discussions occur on how to meet yearly goals and teachers develop support plans to include types of professional learning that needs to occur. Teachers reported that these structures have helped with backwards planning and differentiated instruction for targeted groups of students.

- Monday professional learning sessions focus on ways to support teachers in areas such as using data to inform instruction, the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, and implementing guided reading. Additionally, the school's professional development plan lists the expected outcomes for each session and what to look for when following up in classrooms as part of the evaluation process. A review of observation reports reflects school leaders focusing on teachers’ use of formative assessment, rigorous instruction, and providing suggestions to support teachers’ next steps. Sample suggestions include using the Webb's *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) matrix to plan higher level questions, prompting students to question one another’s responses and ways to use data to form small groups.

Parents receive grade-level monthly newsletters, which include unit objectives for the upcoming units of study. One parent reported that these details help with supporting her child with homework so she can get a head-start reading about the content and have a “heads up” to what they are learning. Other parents shared that weekend math and science workshops provide resources for them to use at home and links previously taught concepts with new concepts and strategies that align with the current standards. Parents reported that they are made aware of their children’s progress through ongoing communications during parent engagement sessions, notes from teachers and phone calls. Online resources and sight words are provided by teachers to support parents with their children at home, who have shown an increase in their academic progress throughout the year.
Findings

Teacher strategies have yet to consistently provide multiple entry points into challenging tasks that are reflected in student work products or discussions.

Impact

Tasks are inconsistent in providing students with opportunities for high levels of student engagement and thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classes, students were provided with tools including manipulatives, graphic organizers, or tiered tasks to support their thinking. In a grade two class, students examined three-dimensional shapes to determine how they were different from two-dimensional, and they had to identify objects which match those attributes. The teacher provided vocabulary for students to include in their responses and items, including containers or food items, to use for the comparisons. Students responded to the teachers prompts and made comparisons, “A sphere and a circle are different because even though it looks like a circle, they are flat and a sphere is like a ball that you can catch.” Other responses comparing rectangles and prisms demonstrated that students were able to compare two and three-dimensional objects by stating responses such as, “3D objects take up space and the objects are heavier cause they have more sides.” However, the use of teacher strategies did not lead students to think at high levels in all classes. In a math class, although students were provided with a fact sheet to aid them with solving an extended word problem, several students were unable to go beyond the first portion of the task and demonstrated difficulty with understanding how to solve the complete problem entry points were not differentiated.

- Opportunities for student-to-student engagement in high-level discussion occurred in only some classes. In a college and career course, presenting students were questioned by their peers about the colleges they are learning about. However, the questions asked by peers only led students to provide responses which reflected recalling facts and basic inferences about the college research. During a science lesson, instruction was primarily led by the teacher even when opportunities for student discussion were present in the lesson.

- In some classes, teaching was mostly teacher-to-student directed. In an English Language Arts (ELA) Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) class, students' responses were mostly directed to the teacher and reflected only some basic inferences about writing their opinions in a letter about their favorite books. Additionally, only some students were called upon and not all students engaged in the lesson. Similarly, in another ICT class, although there was some student facilitation about the importance of learning from each other from peer editing, the rest of the lesson was led by only one of the 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**

School staff ensures that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards, integrate instructional shifts and make purposeful decisions to emphasize rigorous habits through key focus questions.

**Impact**

Curricula and academic tasks consistently reflect higher-order thinking and promote college and career readiness across grades and subject areas for all students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers utilize the *Understanding by Design (UbD)* to plan curricula in literacy and math, which align with the Common Core Learning Standards and incorporate the formal programs of *ReadyGen* and *GOMath!*. This year, school leaders and teachers decided to pilot the *Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) curriculum* in one classroom per grade from kindergarten to grade four and all classes in grades five through eight, to supplement the literacy program. The staff has opted to use the new *Passport* curriculum in social studies which aligns to the New York City scope and sequence. The science curricula aligns with NYC scope and sequence and is supplemented using sample tasks from *EngageNY* and *Full Option Science System (FOSS)*. Additionally, the *Word Gen* program is used to expose students to more non-fiction texts with student-friendly topics such as the extension of the school day and whether schools should be a place for debate.

- There is a consistent focus across grades on specific instructional shifts, including text-based answers and writing from sources in ELA, and in math tasks a deep understanding, application, and focus. In an ICT ELA lesson plan, students are asked to produce an argumentative essay and use details from a text to support whether the government should impose a mandatory year of service. In a statistics lesson plan, the task asked students to use a frequency table and dot plot to compare data on how many siblings each classmate had.

- A review of units and tasks reflects focus questions and activities which align to DOK level 3. In a social studies lesson plan, focus questions for discussions include, “What is your interpretation of mandatory community service? Explain.” As part of a science task, students are asked to engage in an experimental station and keep in mind the following question, “Can the rock cycle ever end? Explain.” In a grade two math unit, planned tasks ask students to use tally charts and different types of graphs to solve real-world word problems.
Additional Finding

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create common assessments and rubrics that are aligned to the curricula to measure student progress.

Impact

Although assessments are consistently utilized, effective adjustments in curricula are beginning to reflect changes and actionable feedback is in the process of conveying clear next steps.

Supporting Evidence

- This year, teachers have implemented multiple assessments in ELA, which include Fountas and Pinnell reading levels and writing performance tasks, to gauge student progress towards mastery of skills. Starting in the second half of the school year, teachers began to use this data to inform content-specific pacing calendars and determine the instructional areas on which to focus. In grade three for ELA, teachers have redesigned their curricula to include an initial focus on character traits versus point of view, as; based on data, students were demonstrating difficulty with these foundational skills. Similarly, in grade seven, teachers decided to revise unit plans to include a new strategy called restate, answer, cite, explain, and recap (RACER) to assist students with elaboration in writing, as data showed this was an area of needed growth for all students. However, planning for adjustments in the curricula and pacing, based off of common assessments, has just begun across all subject areas.

- Across classrooms, student work is posted with rubrics based on the school’s curricula. Some student work provided contains glows for areas of strength and grows for areas of improvement. A review of feedback on work in student folders and pieces posted on bulletin boards reflects grows on some, with clear next steps to assist the student with strategies on how to improve their work. A teacher’s grow comment states, "Be careful how to begin to scale your graph. All graphs should begin with a zero and start from there," and continued to ask the student to revisit a section as the data graphed did not start at zero. However, other student work reflected feedback such as "proofread your work" or “correct your spelling” with no next steps to serve as a guide for improving.

- During an interview, students reviewed their completed task to share how they would use their rubrics, grades, and feedback to improve the quality of their work or assessment. When reviewing their work, some students were able to use their teacher’s comments to share ways in which they would improve, such as adding more details to their writing or including more key words to get a better grade in the language section. Yet, using the assessment results, some students were unable to state clear next steps as there was not any feedback or a grade. For other students, comments included making sure their writing was typed versus hand-written, or in math making sure there is an explanation, however there was no strategy to support the student in the process.
Findings

School leaders provide feedback which reflects strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching and they have an effective system for using observation data to design and facilitate professional development as well as inform training decisions.

Impact

Feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practices and supports their development, resulting in the implementation of instructional practices connected to school goals, and promoting professional growth.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of informal and formal observation feedback, with detailed next steps to support each teacher, reflects an emphasis on the school’s instructional foci on assessment, student engagement, and rigorous instruction. In one report, the recommendations included next steps where the teacher was asked to enhance student engagement by including highly effective practices such as encouraging students to formulate their own questions to initiate topics, challenge each other’s thinking, and ensure all voices are heard. Another report reminds the teacher to use data to form groupings. One observation report reflects recommendations to add extension activities with real-world examples for problem solving in math.

- The professional learning plan is revised on a monthly basis based on identified needs from cycles of teacher observations and updates on student data. A review of observation data during an observation cycle reflected that teachers needed more support in designing coherent instruction, using questioning and discussion, and using assessment in instruction. As a result, the professional development plan was altered to include professional learning on guided reading, using data to plan instruction, and incorporating questioning techniques. Teachers also shared that to support the growing language needs of their population, further support has been provided on differentiated instruction, vocabulary development, and strategies to support English Language Learners (ELL).

- Intervisitations serve as another method of professional learning and are planned based on trends in observation data. Teacher leads are chosen based on Advance data and, based on need, teachers who need assistance are matched to the leads. One teacher stated that after visiting a math teacher, she incorporated similar resources to ensure her tasks were learner-centered and fostered student discussion. Several other teachers reported how professional support opportunities, including attending outside training on best practices in classroom instruction, have improved their pedagogy. As a result, teacher Advance data demonstrated increases of teachers using questioning and discussion techniques.
## Findings

The majority of teachers meet in professional collaborations using the Data Wise process to engage in discussion on instructional practices and participate in a structure of distributive leadership.

## Impact

Grade-level teams promote student achievement goals while strengthening both instructional and leadership capacity where teachers’ voice support decision making on curricula.

## Supporting Evidence

- Grade-level teacher teams use the Data Wise protocol during their common planning meetings to review student data and work and to collaborate on action plans to drive instruction. In a middle school team meeting, teachers shared ways in which they have used formative assessment strategies to determine whether students are able to answer text-based questions and using close reading strategies across content areas. Some teachers suggested revisiting checklists while others felt that the use of discussion helped students with understanding question prompts. In grade seven, teachers determined that students needed to work on understanding the central idea and author’s purpose as well as elaborating in their writing. This year, the team decided to use a new strategy called RACER and learned that modeling with exemplars helps students improve their writing.

- In a team meeting, the grade three teachers reviewed a math task on area and perimeter to determine whether students understood the task, identify the misconceptions, and how well students used strategies that were previously taught on how to unpack a word problem. The team determined that students struggled when the word problem involved using and comparing area models or determining an area with larger numbers. The teachers shared that students who were able to master the skill had a good understanding of the task and used their work as exemplars. The team decided to engage students in discussions about the task, incorporate manipulatives to help with obtaining the correct responses, and include these methods in the next lessons.

- Teacher teams are given opportunities to have a voice on instructional decisions and the pacing of units of study. Teachers reported that some changes made include integrating more vocabulary and amending pacing calendars to focus on key skills based on data. In grade three, teachers revised the pacing in ELA to emphasize character traits in the beginning of the year and teach point of view afterwards. The middle school team shared that they voiced the need to further align TCRWP and the pacing of other ReadyGen so that both curricula are aligned each month.