Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 107 Thomas A Dooley
Elementary 25Q107
167-02 45th Ave.
Queens
NY 11358

Principal: Lori Cummings

Dates of Review:
January 24, 2017 - January 25, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Daisy Concepcion
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. 107 Thomas A Dooley 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**

### 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>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>
</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 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>
<td>Proficient</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>Area of Celebration</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>Developing</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>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Supports and Supervision | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

Frequent cycles of observations are used by school leaders to articulate clear expectations, evaluate teacher practice, and provide feedback.

Impact

School leaders have developed an effective system to observe teachers resulting in valuable feedback that leads to improved teacher practice and informed decisions connected to succession plans.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are provided with continual feedback from four cycles of formal observation, informal observations, and classroom walkthroughs. All observations include analysis of student work and data. One letter to the teachers outlined expectations for the use of running records to develop purposeful learning groups and student goals. A review of teacher observations indicates that school leaders provide teachers with specific, guiding feedback resulting in teacher’s implementing schoolwide initiatives and improving their pedagogy.

- A rubric for lesson plans was developed by the school leadership that addresses assessment, student engagement, and instructional grouping to ensure implementation of the instructional focus. Feedback is specific and accurately captures teachers’ strengths and challenges. One observation that referenced student engagement stated, “Some of the stations included tasks that were more rote in nature, and did not require significant cognitive demand.” In another observation, the assistant principal wrote, “You thoughtfully planned and chose/developed the resources necessary for students to be actively engaged in their groups.” Both observations provided each teacher with additional resources to push their learning. Following the observations, opportunities were given the teachers to complete a reflection sheet on their growth and the observation experience itself.

- Professional development sessions are aligned with feedback in teacher observation reports and the support given the teachers. One analysis indicated that writing instruction was weak. An email from the principal to their off-site staff developer from a near-by university requested that the upcoming professional learning session focus on supporting teachers with strategies centered on the teaching of writing. Additionally, the school has several mentors and teachers who provide supports to colleagues on instructional issues. Teaching assignments are informed by their evaluations. Teachers receiving effective or highly effective are members of the school mentor team.
Area of Focus

Quality Indicator: 2.2 Assessment | Rating: Developing

Findings
School leaders and staff are developing their use of common assessments including the use of an online program to measure student progress. Across classrooms there is inconsistent use of ongoing checks for understanding.

Impact
School leaders use several common assessments, but as yet the results are not used to determine student progress towards goals. While school assessment practices include conferencing, the inconsistent use of checks for understanding hinder teachers’ ability to make effective mid-lesson adjustments to meet all students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of school data revealed that teachers use tracking sheets reflecting on demand, pre and post assessment scores and end of chapter math scores. However, there was little evidence of how this data, including an online assessment program, was being used to measure student progress toward goals. Across classrooms, running record data is used to form student instructional learning groups. The use of data from common assessments to make adjustments to the curriculum was not in evidence.

- At the end of the year, school leaders analyze state assessment scores to define schoolwide areas of weakness, guide professional development plans, identify shifts to be addressed, and development of revisions to the curricula. School leaders shared a data chart showing school progress, but were unable to explain how these charts reflected instructional adjustments based on findings from the state assessments. Conversations were limited to discussions about conferencing. As of yet, common assessments are not used effectively to determine student progress across subjects to drive instruction and meet identified achievement gaps.

- At a teacher team meeting, teachers explained they administer various common assessments but only use the data from the running record assessments. In conversation with teachers about data trends, teachers stated that analysis of the state assessment revealed that English Language Learners struggled the most. They did not identify the specific area of weakness but made modifications to their instruction by adding additional visual supports and by allowing students to draw their answers. When teachers were asked about patterns from common assessments they stated they needed to focus on author’s craft. However, they were unable to expand on this information with specificity or if their modifications were resulting in improved student performance.

- Across classrooms, teachers check for understanding relied primarily on small group and one on one conferencing. While students receive individual feedback, this practice does not allow for teachers to make in the moment effective adjustments to instruction to meet all students’ learning needs. For example, in a grade three and four bridged math class, students were dividing 13 by 3 and modeling quotient remainders. Students in this class used small, wipe boards to create 3 large circles where the counters were to be placed and demonstrate equal grouping strategies. A review of the wipe boards indicated many students had misconceptions and some students were off task. Although students did not understand and had incorrect answers, mid-lesson adjustments were not in evidence.
## Additional Finding

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

The curricula selected by school leaders and faculty aligns with the Common Core Learning Standards and the focus on process writing. All curricula integrate the instructional shifts with academically rigorous tasks.

### Impact

School leaders’ purposeful decisions regarding the curricula have led to building coherence by engaging students across grades and subjects in learning tasks that emphasize higher-order thinking skills involving argumentative writing and problem solving.

### Supporting Evidence

- A grade four Common Core aligned task requires students to solve or create division word problems and explain their mathematical thinking while representing their interpretation of the remainder. Students solve multi-step problems, equations to represent problems, and an unknown variable using mental computations, estimation, and the properties of operations. Access to this unit is created through student conferencing and the inclusion of discussion prompts so that students will be able to explain the strategies they used to solve the problem.

- In a grade five social studies task, students research topics of their choice after studying a unit on how controversy affects the world. Multiple accounts of the same topic are to be read noting important similarities and differences in authors’ evidence and points of view. Texts are examined for bias before determining their own thesis on the subject. The performance task required students to write and present an unbiased essay on the topic using reasons and evidence from both texts to defend their position. Science plans include tasks that ask students to write a three-part essay describing the procedure used and data collected related to the hypothesis. Guidelines include the need to provide scientific reasoning, use of specific content vocabulary, explanation of the hypothesis, and analysis of findings in a clearly organized manner.

- In a kindergarten reading unit focusing on phonemic awareness and self-monitoring, students begin to be exposed to the author’s craft by looking for patterns in writing and to identify the use of repetition. Students figure out trick words by understanding letter formation and letter sound relationships. Unfamiliar words and use of decoding skills to make meaning are incorporated into the learning as well as recognizing and reading high frequency words. Students engage in close reading, annotation of both fiction and non-fiction text, and write their own pattern books. All exercises align with the chosen instructional shifts.
Findings
The school’s belief that students learn best through targeted, strategy-based conferencing was observed across all classrooms. Teaching strategies include instructional grouping, tiered activities, and strategy charts.

Impact
Entry points into the curriculum are consistently provided so that all learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks requiring higher-order thinking and grounded in the instructional shifts.

Supporting Evidence

- In a second grade math class, students solved a subtraction problem that required regrouping by drawing a picture. Students developed math models that represented 45 minus 36. The teacher provided concrete modeling and had students engage in a turn and talk to discuss their observations. Connections between the different models were explained by the students and demonstrated their understanding of grouping. Most students completed similar examples in their practice books and wrote sentences that displayed their strategies.

- In a first grade Integrated Co-Teaching class, students were learning about character traits, and supported by multiple entry points such as explicit direct instruction on both character traits and how to annotate the text. The teacher listened to student conversations before sending students to their tables to work on their “just right books.” She reminded them to use their writing strategies such as tapping out words when spelling. A comprehension strategy folder prompted students to think about parts of the text as well as retell the story to complete the task. Students also had personal strategy charts that reminded them to work on their conferenced based feedback such as reading with voice, or looking at all parts of the word to make meaning. Students eagerly worked together to complete the task while the teacher conferenced with other students.

- In a grade five social studies class, students participated in a fishbowl activity to examine motives for sailing in the Age of Exploration. Previously annotated texts and note-catchers were used to provide evidence as to whether explorers were motivated by glory, God, or wealth. Classroom anchor charts displayed essential questions that were pertinent to the classroom discussion and pictures of some of the vocabulary discussed in the unit. Students in the inner circle reviewed their annotated texts and cited positive support for the idea that glory and religion were the primary factors in exploration and colonization. Students were able to demonstrate their learning including surfacing the notion that some explorers were motivated by more than one factor.

- Across various classrooms teachers met in small groups to conference with students and provided them with next steps in writing and strategies for understanding various types of texts and math problems. Teachers kept binders that included conferencing notes. Many students had conferencing folders that listed students’ strengths, challenges, and next steps. In some classes, students had visual supports reminding them to use the feedback and strategies provided them from their conference on the current task.
## Additional Finding

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

School leaders communicate high expectations connected to professionalism and college and career readiness to the entire staff, students, and their families.

### Impact

The culture of high expectations that is present promotes staff and student accountability for these expectations. Parents are provided with ongoing feedback on student achievement aligned to career and college readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate high expectations at staff conferences, through the staff handbook, memorandums, and emails to staff. In one email, the principal included an excerpt from their staff handbook reminding teachers of the importance of collecting running records and using the data to differentiate the reading block. A review of the administrative calendar and school leader’s notes indicate that teachers are held accountable through set data collection points when the data is collected and reviewed to determine student progress. Meetings with individual teachers are held to monitor their use of data in determining small group instruction and planning differentiated learning activities.

- In one school memorandum, the staff was reminded of the school’s instructional focus addressing an increase in student engagement. The memorandum informed teachers that there would be onsite and offsite professional development opportunities focusing on the use of common assessments to determine whole and small group needs, adjusting the pace of a lesson, strategies for increasing student engagement, and determining appropriate materials for lessons. Teachers were told they would be provided with feedback regarding their practice through observations and walkthroughs aligned to assessment practices. In a meeting with teachers they explained they have participated in cycles of professional development at the school with a staff developer from a university. A series of emails from the principal to the staff developer demonstrates the clear outline for the learning and the expected outcomes from this professional development. School leaders have conducted walkthroughs and observations focusing on the use of data to monitor the impact of this work.

- Parents stated that student achievement information is provided through notices sent home via backpack, a Coffee with the Principal, and an online grade book. Some teachers use an online grading program that allows parents to look at their students’ grades. However, all teachers do not utilize this form of communication. Supplemental online resources aligned to the school curriculum allow parents to look at what their students are learning. Additionally, teachers send curriculum-aligned letters home that inform parents of upcoming topics of study. While parents feel they have information on student achievement and the Common Core, they expressed the feeling that they are not as yet in full partnership with their students’ learning. Greater understanding of rubrics and how the feedback students receive align with next steps were mentioned as areas they would like to better understand.
Findings

The majority of the teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations that analyze student work for those students whom they share.

Impact

Although teachers meet regularly to look at student work, their work is ineffectively connected to the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, and the instructional shifts. The work of teacher teams resulting in progress for groups of students including English Language Learners is not in evidence.

Supporting Evidence

- In a teacher meeting, teachers shared that they struggle to provide differentiation to English Language Learners (ELLs) who are having difficulty with tasks. Teachers rely heavily on the expertise and support from the English as a Second Language teachers in the school. While the teacher team shared a multi-page handout on supports for English Language Learners, these entry points rely primarily on adding more visuals and reviewing the text dependent vocabulary with students. Teachers shared a few booklets created by ELL students who had begun to write more sentences as a result of a focused effort to include a structured framework that helped students to lift details from the text and expand their writing. While these supports provide some assistance to students, they do not provide the scaffolds necessary for students to engage thoroughly in the task, nor to develop an understanding of the workings of English syntax and participate in discussions. Despite some use of entry points for ELL students the most recent data indicates they are not demonstrating increased proficiency.

- In a team meeting, teachers used a protocol to look at how students use character traits, perspective, and theme in their writing. The analysis revealed that students were unable to lift evidence from the text and make inferences. As a team they decided that one solution was to have students, especially, English Language Learners, expand their vocabulary. The team also addressed difficulties students had in math, specifically the concept of equivalent fractions and reducing fractions to their simplest form. Once again, they made the decision to strengthen the use of math vocabulary.

- Teachers look at multiple sources of data including results from pre and post assessments, end of year measure of student learning, and ongoing common assessments, including an online program. Although they use the data from running records and student conferencing to provide strategies for individual students, they were unable to explain how they used all the data to make modifications to their instructional practice or lesson planning. Information on student progress was limited. While teachers meet and analyze student work, it typically does not result in improved teacher practice or increased student progress and achievement.