Quality Review Report

2016-2017

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37-15 13th St.
Queens
NY 11101

Principal: Dionne Jaggon

Dates of Review:
April 4, 2017 - April 5, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Adam Breier
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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</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 Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

<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

<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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics, checklists and provide written feedback to students. Common assessments are used to determine student progress toward goals.

Impact

Students utilize teachers’ actionable feedback and use assessment tools in order to increase their achievement. A team devoted to the analysis of data from common assessments as well as grade team findings and actions informs school-wide curricular and instructional adjustments.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher-written actionable feedback. For example, feedback in a grade seven class advised students to cite additional sources when supporting their arguments, increase the use of transitional word, and to check for the correct use of capital letters, punctuation, and grammar. Examples of feedback in math classes include advice to add more details to narrative explanations, check work using alternative perspectives, and to show all steps taken to solve an equation. Additionally, written feedback to students in lower grades is accompanied by visual representations to assist in student understanding.

- Assessment data has been used to identify students in grades one and two who are in need of substantial reading assistance. A program titled Reading Rescue has been implemented to serve this target student group. Paraprofessionals have been trained as program tutors in guiding students through reading exercises that reinforce phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension strategies. Daily tutoring sessions are intensive, one-to-one sessions that last thirty minutes and are designed around each student's demonstrated needs. Benchmark data revealed that all eleven students enrolled in this program since September who were reading far below level are now reading either on-level or, in the case of eight students, beyond grade level.

- School faculty combine student data from a reading level inventory, online adaptive diagnostic system, phonemic awareness assessment, writing assessments, and the State English Language Arts (ELA) and math exams. From this data, all students are grouped as either above level, at level, or in need of assistance. This information is shared with all teachers who then use this information in the initial determinations of student groupings. Teachers subsequently add in-class assessment data, along with assessment data gathered from observations and in-class student conferencing, to modify groups in each class. Across all classes, teachers identify groups with common identifiers. The above-level group is called enrichment, the on-level group is called strategic, and the group of students in need of assistance is called intensive. Students reported that across classes, teachers periodically change their groups. Students also reported teachers will switch their groups for specific lessons and types of assignments. Data from the diagnostic program employed at the school reveals an increase in students reaching proficiency in ELA from 12.8 percent at the end of the 2015-2016 school year to a projected 14 percent at the end of the 2016-2017 school year. Similarly, data reveals an increase in students reaching math proficiency from 9.4 percent at the end of the 2015-2016 school year to a projected 13 percent at the end of the 2016-2017 school year.
Findings
School leaders and faculty are in the process of aligning curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards, content standards, and instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are inconsistently emphasized across curricula.

Impact
While curricula are consistently aligned with the Common Core, the instructional shifts are inconsistently embedded. In addition, curricular documents evidence an inconsistent focus on rigorous instruction for students of all levels, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the school, classes utilize lesson and unit plans that evidence alignment with either the Common Core Learning Standards or applicable content area specific standards. However, there is limited evidence of purposeful integration of the instructional shifts. For example, a grade four lesson plan does not reveal where any of the ELA instructional shifts are embedded. Additionally, this same lesson plan also fails to show alignment with the Common Core. Whereas different ELA lesson plans reveal that academic vocabulary is included, only a grade six lesson plan includes a task involving the use of text-based responses. A grade three math lesson includes a fluency exercise and requires that students apply mathematics to a real world application where they are required to divide different foods between groups of various numbers of people. However, lesson plans for both science and social studies do not reveal the integration of either applicable math or literacy instructional shifts.

- Review of curricular documents reveal that teachers across grades and content areas are planning instruction that emphasizes rigorous tasks for students of all levels. However, students with disabilities and ELLs are not accounted for in these plans. The assessment data-based student groupings of enrichment, strategic, and intensive, benefit from instruction that has been both differentiated for them and is supported by various scaffolds. For example, a grade six poetry lesson plan details the different scaffolds that would be available for each student group. The intensive group would have a flip chart detailing overused words while the strategic group would have a handout with examples of figurative language. Although curricular documents reveal planning around differentiation as per leveled groupings and differentiated tasks and scaffolds provided for them, there is inconsistent evidence of planning for students as per their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) modification-based needs, or for ELLs and inconsistently provided scaffolds/differentiation designed to meet their specific needs. A grade four math lesson plan includes differentiated assignments connected to each of the three school-wide student groups. Similarly, a grade seven science lesson plan also includes differentiated tasks for students of each group.

- Emphasis on rigorous tasks for students with disabilities and ELLs is not evident in a majority of curricular documents. A grade four writing lesson plan in which students are to write a poem about a topic important to them details the different scaffolds that would be available to students with disabilities and ELLs. However, there is no evidence as to the ways in which rigorous instruction would be emphasized for ELLs and students with disabilities, despite the enrollment of students with these needs.
## Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating: Proficient</th>
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</table>

### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. In addition, students are engaged in creating meaningful work products.

### Impact

The consistent use of differentiated scaffolds and student-to-student discussion protocols result in students demonstrating higher-order thinking in work products and in discussions reflecting high levels of thinking and participation.

### Supporting Evidence

- During a grade seven writing lesson, student groups circulated through stations at which they were to write poems that were either inwardly or outwardly analytic. Students on three different achievement levels were provided with scaffolded supports that would follow their groups at each station, including various graphic organizers, anchor charts, and lists of transitional words. Students in a grade six writing lesson were similarly provided with differentiated scaffolds. In addition, student groups were adjusted for this unit based on data from the prior unit’s closing assessment student data. Students were grouped by assessment data in a grade two social studies lesson where they were learning about the differences between urban and suburban communities. Depending on students’ groupings, they either organized neighborhoods using a grid, completed a community planning worksheet using prepared scenarios, or wrote a persuasive letter designed to celebrate either urban or rural communities as the better choice. When asked about what students could use as a resource during a kindergarten writing lesson, all students in one group in unison pointed to the word wall chart that included letter-writing instructions.

- In a grade six math lesson covering polygons, students in two leveled groups were tasked with leveled assignments while one group worked on an interactive, online platform that challenged students with problems that addressed their specific needs. Similarly, a grade eight math class worked on using division to divide whole objects into a variety of differently sized components. Student groups were designed, as were groups from the grade six math class, on the schoolwide student-groupings list, with subsequent group adjustments based on in-class assessment data. During a grade seven science lesson covering the properties of matter, the three different student groups worked on leveled assignments and were supported by various scaffolds, such as calculators, differentiated discussion prompts and questions from the grade eight NYS science exams.

- During a grade eight math lesson covering the properties of translation and their effect on the congruence and orientation of figures, students turned to their partners and discussed the different ways they could know a property had already been translated. Students then discussed the distinguishing features of a translated figures. During the whole class share-out, students were asked to share what they learned from their partner during their conversations. During a grade two social studies lesson, students talked with peers about which forms of transportation would work best in both rural and urban communities. In preparation for a poem writing exercise, students in a grade four class talked with elbow partners about different things that are close to their hearts.
**Additional Finding**

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

**Findings**

High expectations are consistently conveyed to staff through documents and professional learning aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. The school provides ongoing information to families regarding student progress towards college and career readiness.

**Impact**

The faculty handbook, lesson plan writing rubric, and weekly newsletters help staff understand the high expectations to which they are held. Communication with families, along with monthly student progress reports, provide opportunities for them to understand student progress towards meeting standards.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Review of the faculty handbook reveals the conveyance of high expectations that are aligned with the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Faculty handbook sections dealing with expectations around the design and delivery of instruction are directly aligned to the applicable components of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Other examples of instructional expectations conveyed in this document are the writing of learning objectives, implementing policies around grading and the design and delivery of instruction. Additionally, school leaders have provided a rubric to teachers that share the high expectations to which lesson planning is held. This rubric details how measurable objectives should be designed. The section that covers the component parts of a mini-lesson conveys the expectation that each lesson should have a minimum of three high-order questions as well as evidence that the lesson had been differentiated to meet diverse student needs. Each level on which a lesson plan’s component parts are rated as per this rubric range from ineffective to highly effective. In order to establish clear parameters, each category and rating include a descriptive statement. For example, as per this rubric, an effectively differentiated lesson includes tasks that are intended for students in the enrichment, strategic, and intensive groups.

- In addition to the faculty handbook, school leaders have shared expectations around instruction through a variety of memoranda and newsletters. For example, one series of memos share expectations around the amount of time that teachers are to have students spend engaged with the online providers of leveled mathematics and reading instruction every week. Another series of memos details how teachers are to prepare students for conducting student-led parent-student conferences after receiving their third marking period report cards. The heading for the weekly faculty newsletter includes the school-wide instructional focus on components from the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, the monthly math strategy, and the monthly writing focus. Teachers who exhibit best practices are listed with an invitation for teachers to visit them for professional growth. Sharing this list on weekly newsletters makes clear that teachers are accountable for all areas of professional responsibilities, including their individual professional growth and that of their colleagues.

- Families receive monthly newsletters informing them about upcoming events, meeting dates, the current ethical character trait focus, book and movie of the month selections, and upcoming sessions of the academic parent teacher team (APTT). Examples of APTT sessions have focused on reading fluency and helping students increase their reading at home. The principal modeled shared reading strategies for parents at an APTT session. Families are exposed to strategies for helping their children with math, reading, writing, and social-emotional education at monthly breakfast meetings with the principal. Additionally, through the school website and online platforms for sharing student grades, parents can access up-to-date information as to their children’s progress and current assignments.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

Prompt written feedback captures teachers’ strengths, challenges and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. An effective system drives the use of teacher observation data in the design and facilitation of professional development (PD) as well as informed decisions as to teachers’ assignments.

Impact

Formal and informal classroom visits result in written feedback that makes clear the expectations for teacher practice and the supports available to help teachers meet them. Additionally, teacher observation data results in the PD focus for the entire school faculty as well as individual teachers.

Supporting Evidence

- Observation reports accurately capture teachers’ strengths, weaknesses and include actionable feedback. Some examples of this feedback include advice on adding accountability measures to ensure student work completion, and building student independence through group work that includes roles for students, accompanied by links to two teaching channel videos. Another example details advice on increasing students' authentic discussions by providing a model student response to one of the questions they would need to answer and have them talk about ways to improve the answer. Additionally, a link to an instructional video on this process is provided in the feedback. Still other examples include advice to a teacher on using a conferencing recording tool to keep track of students' progress on the task, and guidance on using an online tool for the purpose of having students understand why they need to learn how to perform inverse operations, accompanied by a link to that tool.

- In addition to the reports that result from official classroom observations, there is valuable feedback offered to teachers through email and on a walkthrough observation form. Examples of feedback offered to teachers through these platforms include advising teachers on assessing students after each segment of a lesson, encouraging teachers to plan for students to work cooperatively in partnerships, steering teachers toward making effective use of word walls as instructional supports for students, and suggesting various writing instruction strategies. Additionally, official observation results are posted on an online goal-setting tool where teachers engage in goal setting with the observation writer around the feedback offered, along with reporting the results of next-step implementation.

- The determination was made that the whole-school PD foci for this year would be the Danielson Framework for Teaching domains covering planning for and the asking of higher-order questions and engaging students in learning. Furthermore, observation data that revealed a trend in low ratings in planning, preparation and design of coherent instruction resulted in the design of a lesson plan graphic organizer as well as an accompanying rubric designed to strengthen teacher understanding of the reasons behind each component part of lesson design. This tool was shared at a PD session and is utilized during the observation process as well as during individual PD sessions.
Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote achievement of school goals and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Teachers’ collaborations have strengthened their instructional capacity. Additionally, teacher voice has driven design of the instructional focus as well as the planning and facilitation of teacher intervisitations.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers have strengthened their instructional capacity through team-based collaborations. One teacher reported that as a result of conversations during teacher team meetings about delivering mini-lessons that contain clear components for teacher modeling, she observed a colleague and has since seen greater success in classroom lessons and an increase in observation ratings. Another example involved a pair of teachers visiting each other to observe their use of anchor charts during instruction and meeting afterwards to debrief. Both teachers reported that since their visits and discussions, they have both increased their use of anchor charts during classes and have seen students progress as a direct result. A third teacher reported that after discussing issues around lesson pacing, a colleague instructed her on the use of a timer projected onto the interactive white-board. Use of this timer was observed in this teacher's classroom.

- The ELA teacher team consisting of teachers from grades six, seven, and eight met to analyze a grade eight poetry writing assignment. Teachers found that students had a variety of successes and struggles. For instance, students in one teacher’s strategic group all addressed a theme in their poems, had a clear understanding of the use of line breaks, and rhyme patterns. However, these students evidenced inconsistent success in the use of figurative language. Another teacher found that students in the strategic group in her class attempted line breaks but that they were not consistently in the correct spots. Teachers then determined that at their next meeting they would come prepared to present strategies to the team that would help students address the observed deficiencies. Agendas from other teacher teams evidence their conversations and work around topics such as reviewing vocabulary strategies, lesson planning, aligning curricula with standards, and review of students’ portfolio pieces.

- School leaders meet with teacher leaders to discuss progress on the year’s instructional focus. Teacher leaders also lead their respective teacher teams through facilitation of meetings and the setting of team objectives. Additionally, teacher leaders organize and facilitate intervisitations by opening their classrooms as lab spaces for colleagues to observe best practices. Teacher leadership logs evidence their work to provide individualized PD for their colleagues on topics such as data analysis, backwards planning, and creating and using effective anchor charts. In addition, teacher leaders have met with teachers to review not only the findings of school leaders’ instructional walkthroughs, but also the findings of the intervisitations. These intervisitations occur between teacher leaders and the teachers on their team, as well as between teachers identified as effective in specific strategies and the teachers who would benefit from observing them.