Quality Review Report
2016-2017

I.S. 119 The Glendale
K-8 24Q119
74-01 78 Ave.
Queens
NY 11385

Principal: Jeanne Fagan

Dates of Review:
October 18, 2016 - October 19, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Daisy Concepción
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

<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></td>
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</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Quality Ratings continued

#### 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>Well Developed</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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</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>
<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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

Students benefit from curricula that are rigorous, emphasize higher order thinking, and are continuously refined using student work and data throughout the school year.

Impact

Refinements have ensured that all students across grades and subjects have access to the curricula, are cognitively engaged, and can demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty have created their own curriculum maps. A review of curricular documents demonstrate a selection of varied complex texts that require students to use close reading to answer rigorous questions requiring synthesis, analysis, and problem solving. In a Living Environment Regents class on matter and energy, students consider the role of energy in the food chain by reading excerpts from a textbook on Van Helmont’s discovery of photosynthesis in the 1600’s. They then had to contrast this experiment with modern scientific biochemistry research by reading the David Hershey’s scientific publication on chemical reactions in plants to answer, “How does matter move between biotic and abiotic parts of an ecosystem?” In grade four English Language Arts (ELA) students engage in a unit on short stories to explore the essential question of “How do experiences shape us?,” an idea central to them. They use a mentor text and five other short texts as counterpoints. In grade eight, students read Kurt Vonnegut’s Harrison Bergeron as the central mentor text and use a series of five other short stories and informational texts such as Kate Chopin’s short story, Desiree’s Baby, on slavery as the counterpoint story to examine the essential question of “What are labels and how can we transcend them?”

- A review of curriculum maps demonstrates the school’s identified area of need to strengthen algebraic thinking across grades by engaging students in tasks that require them to display conceptual understanding as well as procedural knowledge. In a first-grade lesson, students are required to provide two different strategies as a solution to a subtraction word problem by showing models and using the inverse operation to check their work. This is further developed in grade four when examining the distributive property and expanded form of multiplication. Across all grades, students are expected to present their work to partners and in large share-outs, be able to show their work, and explain and defend their thinking, as well as critique the reasoning of others.

- By the time of this review, both the ELA and math maps reflected changes based on the results of 2016 New York State exam. Findings from the State exam revealed that grade eight ELA students performed the lowest in analyzing central ideas across texts. Although the school had outperformed the City in this item, the map reflected vertical changes across the grades in identifying central ideas to address student need. Preliminary mid-point data from the unit showed that all students have improved with the biggest gains made in the class with students with individualized educational plans. Student work from this class was used to refine the maps for other classes on the grade.

- The grade three mathematics map was revised early in the year to reflect the school’s finding on the June 2016 State examination which showed that as a grade, students performed the lowest in the section that included explaining equivalent fractions. While students at the school had outperformed other grade three students citywide relative to this item, teachers at the school had already identified how to strengthen this unit to further improve student achievement and revisions were already evidenced in the grade three curriculum map.
Area of Focus

Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy

Rating: Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms teaching strategies including questioning and scaffolds consistently provide multiple entry points so that students’ work products and discussion reflect high levels of thinking and participation.

Impact

While entry points such as instructional grouping and Lexile leveled texts have ensured that all students including English Language Learners and students with Individualized Education Programs are appropriately challenged and demonstrate high-order thinking in both work products and discussion, these entry points are not always strategic precluding all students having ownership and engaging in higher levels of discussion and thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade four mathematics class students worked in groups on tiered tasks using estimation and the distributive property to solve a multi-step word problem. Students were tasked to show all their written calculations and steps when solving the problem and to be able to show this to their peers in order to discuss the reasonableness of their answer. Students worked independently and then shared their answers with their partners. For a few students who were struggling to complete their task the teacher suggested that they use a provided scaffold with directions. However, the students did not look at the paper. When asked why they were not using the support, the students pointed out that the paper just repeated the information in the task and did not help them with solving the problem. While the lesson provided some scaffolds such as vocabulary supports, this entry point was insufficient for those few students who needed additional assistance.

- In a grade seven social studies class students analyzed and compared Native American mythology with Greek and Roman myths and religion to consider the role that cultural stories play in creating identity. Most students shared summaries of the various texts in response to the question “How important are stories in providing us with a sense of identity?” Student discussion evidenced higher order thinking as one student shared, “These myths and the religious text we read give us the rules for how to behave and make a connection to others. They give us a story and what is man without a story?” In a grade six class on early civilizations studying agriculture, twelve students used accountable talk stems agreeing with each other about the importance of irrigation in Mesopotamia. While higher order thinking was evident in both discussion and products, students did not take ownership by leading the discussion and using notes and evidence from the texts to further challenge one another’s thinking and reasoning.

- In a grade eight English Language Arts class, students read and annotated the short story Desiree's Baby by Kate Chopin to determine how setting contributes to the development of the theme. The essential question for this lesson was, “How does the setting contribute to the development of theme?” Students were partnered for discussion and had two questions on setting. One group examined how the author utilized setting to illustrate the theme. Another group worked on understanding how the setting created the label that Armand ascribes to his wife, Desiree. Students in both groups engaged in a discussion that required them to provide evidence of how the setting of slavery and a Southern plantation leads Armand to reproach Desiree for giving him a black child. Students were observed going back to the text to support their answers for how Armand was treating Desiree. While all students mentioned the setting in their conversation, they echoed the same idea that Armand was being unfair and a racist. Conversations remained structured with no evidence of student ownership.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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**Findings**

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use and create assessments and rubrics aligned with the school’s curricula. School leaders and staff use common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress toward goals across grades and subjects.

**Impact**

A dynamic assessment approach triangulates school rubrics and assessments to create a clear portrait of student mastery and provides students with actionable and meaningful feedback that supports student achievement. Assessment data is used continuously and fluidly to track student progress and adjust curricula resulting in all students demonstrating increased mastery and continued progress.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, students were observed using various rubrics and checklists such as discussion rubrics, classwork rubrics, and task-based rubrics to guide their work. During the student meeting, students shared their understanding of their assessment data and their status relative to the continuum of mastery. They referenced their goals generated from meaningful rubric feedback and classroom assessment data, and outlined next steps for their work. Students not only spoke about their next steps but they were able to elaborate on how they were going to achieve their goals. One student said that her next step was to work on adding insight to her essay. When asked what this meant, the student replied, “Right now I am answering the question being asked and getting it correct, but what I need to do is make inferences from these answers and then make a statement that summarizes the inference and connect it to the text.” Students attribute this clear internalization of how to move towards mastery to the newly adopted student-led conferences that make them personally accountable for their assessment results and their learning. Students stated that they had to reflect and plan next steps since the expectation was that they would have to speak to this with their parents during open-school week conferences.

- Various common assessments such as running records, baseline, mid-point, and end-of-unit assessments are administered and data from them collected regularly. The addition of an online assessment program allows school leaders to take a deep dive into the data by sub-skill as well as strand and correlate that with the results of end-of-unit exams. This allows for a clear picture of student performance and progress. Through careful triangulation of data from common assessments, teachers were able identify weaknesses in measurement and geometry across the grades and adjust lessons and curriculum maps. This yielded increased student mastery in geometry across the grades at the end of the year as evidenced by gains of four percentage points for kindergarten, and similar gains in grades three and eight, with a growth of three percentage points for students with Individualized Education Programs.

- A review of notes from the department lead committee meetings reveals that teachers have triangulated data from the State exam with both the online assessment program and end-of-unit exams. Post-test units from spring 2016 showed that grade seven students struggled with applying algorithms to real world context. Teachers used released questions from State exams as patterns for their revisions to the arc of lessons for the unit on rational numbers, given that this skill is foundational for grade eight and for preparing students for the ninth grade Algebra Regents exam. A comparison of the end-of-unit exams and the pre-test assessment administered in September 2016 reveals a 10 percent increase in mastery by all students in grade seven. In grade eight gifted and talented classes, students have demonstrated 80 percent mastery as compared with the baseline results.
Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for rigorous instruction and professionalism to the entire staff and effectively communicate expectations connected to college and career readiness to families.

Impact

School leaders’ focus on cultivating rigor and college readiness has resulted in a culture of mutual accountability for all school community members including a successful partnership with parents that support student progress towards expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of weekly highlights and emails to the staff outline a focus on increasing rigor in the classrooms through incorporating analysis in tasks and in making data-based adjustments to lessons. At a teacher team interview teachers stated, in response to a question about expectations and trust, that in addition to high expectations coupled with supports and feedback there is also a high work ethic modeled by the principal. One teacher shared that the school’s commitment to continuously increasing rigor by refining the curriculum maps to reflect content and higher-order thinking and data findings is a core value that holds them together and accountable to each other. Another teacher stated, “If you cannot or will not keep up with the high expectation at this school then this is not a place for you to work in and we as a staff would not want you to work here.” Another teacher added, “This is a rigorous environment and we expect that. Not meeting expectation is just not something that you do to a colleague. We don’t accept that from each other.”

- Parents shared that school leaders use various methods such as phone calls and newsletters as vehicles for communicating high expectations. Parents stated that recently hired staff and a new open-parent forum, Coffee with the Principal, are the most effective methods of sharing school expectations. Parents said that the biggest impact on their awareness of school expectations has been the shift to student-led conferences (SLC). Parents agreed that SLC was not initially received well and it may have influenced the results on the parent survey. However, they now credit SLC with college readiness and with student development of personal accountability. During open school night, students present their work portfolio to parents and speak about their achievement, and develop plans for addressing areas for improvement. Parents agreed that this forum has allowed them to be able to follow and understand the class work. It assisted parents in making the best use of all the supplementary instruction offered outside of the school day to directly target student achievement. Parents feel SLC creates a vehicle that makes them partners with the school in supporting their children’s achievement.

- In a student meeting about rubric and learning goals, students spoke about the power of the student-led conference. One student said, “Those conferences really changed things for me at home. My parents are now more involved in everything I do. They now ask to see my work. They ask if I need extra help and they reminded me to go to tutoring in the morning before school.” Another student shared that her parents had many questions about the mathematics and she is now able to share her mathematic strategies and work with her parents. She said, “I feel that those conferences helped me get closer to my parents.” This idea was echoed by a father who shared that he now understood Common Core math as a result of sitting with his child during the student conference and that he can follow up at home. Many parents agreed that SLCs have helped them understand the Common Core and school expectations better than any workshop.
Findings

School leaders and peer-teachers support teacher development for all teachers. Teachers receive feedback that accurately captures their strengths, challenges and outlines their next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact

School leaders, coaches, and peer-collaborative teachers engage in strategic frequent cycles of observations related to teacher practice and the analysis of student work. As a result, teachers receive feedback that articulates clear expectations for their practice that both support teacher development and aligns with teacher professional goals.

Supporting Evidence

- During a teacher meeting, teachers spoke about both strategic and frequent cycles of observations by school leaders and peer-teachers and support for new teachers. This year, because of grade expansion, eleven teachers are either new to teaching, new to the school, or new to the grade. One first year teacher stated that her mentor is already working with her on addressing items identified during a visit from the principal. Another thirteen-year veteran teacher stated that she was new to the school and had already received an informal visit to her classroom by both the school leaders and coaches. Teachers stated that it was clear the intent of this first cycle of observations was linked to ensuring consistency of school practice across the teachers and grades.

- As part of the principal’s choice, school leaders featured their department lead committee meeting, which is the central teacher team from which all others stem. During this meeting, department leaders share curricular adjustments identified by their teacher teams and then identify the instructional practices that need support and additional adjustments. Further, this team identifies the professional development needed to support the practices. Following professional development, coaches and school leaders visit classrooms to observe implementation of the practices shared. These observations result in one-on-one conferences between teachers and school leaders to focus on student work samples to gauge the impact of practice. Any needed follow-up support from these conferences becomes the focus for the school coaches. Additionally, as an outcome of observations conducted with a focus on Danielson’s Framework for Teaching identified trends are shared during staff conferences as part of schoolwide expectations and instructional foci.

- Teacher feedback, which aligns with professional goals, has supported teacher growth as evidenced by review of teacher observations. An observation report for one teacher stated that questions and discussion during the lesson were between the teacher and a few students. As a result, the teacher received a rating of developing in discussion. A review of this teacher’s professional goal stated, “I will increase the use of student-led discussion as evidenced by both informal and formal observations.” Subsequent observations showed the teacher moving to effective in this area with the following feedback, “Questions are thoughtful and push student thinking.” This pattern of alignment between feedback from observations reports and teacher professional goals was consistent through the review of observations.
Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based structured professional work that systematically analyzes key elements of teacher practice, including data and student work.

Impact

This practice has strengthened teachers' instructional capacity, resulted in school-wide instructional coherence, and increased student achievement including mastery of goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- During a team meeting, teachers stated that vertical and horizontal teams support coherence by ensuring that best practices are shared to strengthen instructional capacity and increase rigor. One item cited is how school leaders adjusted the school schedule to allow for teachers in self-contained classes to push-in to Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classes. The goal is to ensure the consistency of planning and demand on student thinking across all classes, as self-contained teachers generally do not have opportunities to work with students and teachers outside of special education. Teachers of self-contained classrooms stated that this new schedule has supported their planning of instruction as well as strengthened instructional practice. Similarly, teachers in ICT have had their program adjusted to parallel with the gifted and talented (G&T) program so that ICT students can attend G&T classes and teachers can sit together in team meetings to strengthen schoolwide coherence.

- Teachers shared that inquiry work has strengthened their instructional capacity by focusing on vocabulary development and reading comprehension. School data shows that there has been an increase of over 25 percentage points in vocabulary development across grades three through eight, including an increase for English Language Learners and students with Individualized Educational Programs.

- During a grade eight team meeting, teachers sorted student text-based short responses by performance level before selecting a few for discussion. Teachers described the evidence in the student work that met the description in the performance level. As many of the students had scored at level three, they decided to look at descriptors at level four with the intention of isolating these elements to develop an arc of lessons for this unit. Teachers focused on insight, as this was the key descriptor for a level four essay. They agreed that insight was the synthesis of inference made from text-based details to reference ideas that are apparent at the surface level of the text. Teachers' systematic analysis at the previous teacher meeting revealed that a grade eight class for students with disabilities had 84 percent mastery in the mid-unit check in. This class had outperformed other classes on the grade in the subskill of “determining a theme and analyzing its development over the course of the text.” This teacher team had debriefed the teacher and analyzed the class student work. The team then isolated the instructional practice that yielded the high results and set up a visitation to watch the teaching of the writing skill. Additionally, team members adjusted all lessons on the grade, as well as the curriculum map to include this new skill.