Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S./M.S. 138 Sunrise
K-8 29Q138
251-11 Weller Ave.
Queens
NY 11422

Principal: James Mc Enaney

Dates of Review:
April 3, 2017 - April 4, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Carlos Perez
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Celebration** to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Focus** to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as **Additional Finding**. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

P.S./M.S. 138 Sunrise 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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>Proficient</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>Well Developed</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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</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>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>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>Proficient</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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

The vast majority of classrooms reflect teaching practices that are aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the school’s belief of how students learn best, which includes rigorous group and partner discussions.

Impact

All student work products reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- Every class that was visited offered students opportunities to display their thinking through group and partner discussions. During an eighth grade English Language Arts (ELA) lesson, students were engaged in rigorous group discussions. Students were asked to share their thoughts based on a speech by Steve Jobs. When asked to share their thoughts, student responses included, “He showed a lot of perseverance.” The teacher then asked the student to “say a little bit more about what you mean by perseverance.” The student went on to say that he was smart to never give up after being fired from Apple because it inspired him to start Pixar. More students then began to share their thoughts and a full classroom discussion emerged. A math lesson engaged students in various partner discussions, including how to solve for the height of a trapezoid given the bases and the area. During the discussions, students shared and offered each other feedback using accountable talk prompts.

- Student work products displayed high levels of engagement and rigor. During a science lesson, students were able to accurately draw a picture of a simple machine and name three facts about their machine, the type of work it helps a person to do, and real life examples of their machine. During an eighth grade science lab, students worked on identifying how mutations change proteins within the translation/transcription process. The lesson offered students opportunities to share their learning and determine the base sequence of a complementary DNA and mRNA strand.

- A sixth grade math lesson allowed students to engage in discussion protocols such as think-pair-share in order to calculate the least amount of rolls of fabric that students would need in order to make a rectangular stage curtain where each roll measures 2.5 feet by 15 feet. Students were heard working very diligently and sharing their thinking, which led to students making statements such as, “Or maybe I’m wrong, let me see” and “We got the same answer so I feel comfortable that we are right.” A sixth grade math lesson allowed students opportunities to engage in group exercises where they estimated the length of various items and then mentally partitioned the lengths of each item into inches. Students were once again actively involved in discussions and were overheard expressing, “I think you used centimeters and not inches” and “We are only off by an inch or less, so I think it’s a pretty good estimate.”
Area of Focus

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

Findings

Teachers use rubrics and create assessments that are aligned to the curricula. Teacher’s assessment practices, including student self and peer review, are beginning to reflect consistent checks for understanding.

Impact

Teachers provide actionable feedback to students that is clear and timely. Teachers are making adjustments to classroom lessons to meet the needs of all students across some classrooms but not the vast majority.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use a variety of tools in order to check for understanding throughout lessons. During a third grade math lesson, the teacher actively conferenced with students and addressed the post-it notes that students left on the corner of their desks. During the student interview, students shared how they feel comfortable being able to ask questions by writing them on post-it notes. Another math lesson gave students opportunities to use individual white boards to construct math problems and share their work with the teacher. During this lesson, the teacher was able to visit with individual students and assist them with any corrections they needed to make directly on the white board. However, other lessons simply used low level questioning strategies to check for understanding and did not include the same variety of assessment practices.

- Common rubrics across grades were evident and used as the basis for feedback to students that captured students' strengths and next steps. Feedback to a student’s informational writing assignment praised the student for a strong closing statement and reminded the student to be sure and reread his work in order to write about all animal adaptations. Feedback to a student’s system of equations math assignment celebrated the student for correctly writing the equation for plan A but also explained to the student that the graph should have intersected at X=300. In addition, teachers in these classes highlighted and circled the areas of the rubric that needed to be addressed by students. This practice though, was not consistently found across that vast majority of classrooms visited.

- Teachers shared that they are exposing students to much more peer and self-assessment this year. Teachers are allowing students the opportunities to exchange their papers and offer each other feedback. During the student meeting, students shared that in addition to receiving regular feedback through "glows and grows" from their teachers, they are also starting to get it from their peers. They shared how they enjoy this because it gives them another set of eyes to help them improve their work. Teachers also use mid-workshop interruptions to share with their classes what they are hearing. For example, during a math lesson, the teacher stopped the class for a moment and shared what he was noticing as he circulated the class and conferenced with groups. These included common errors that students were making and/or specific strengths students displayed in the group conversations, making adjustments to the lesson as needed. School leaders and teachers stated that this year more than other years, they are making sure that students are not only completing their work but also understanding the work they completed.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum

Rating: Proficient

Findings

Curriculum is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and integrates the instructional shifts, most notably through writing from sources. All students are exposed to curricula that is rigorous and incorporates higher-order thinking skills.

Impact

The curricula that is coherent and promotes college and career readiness including evaluating claims, analyzing academic vocabulary, and using text-based evidence.

Supporting Evidence

- Lesson plans reviewed included differentiated tasks for students, learning objectives, guiding questions, CCLS alignment, mini lessons, a jumpstart activity, academic vocabulary, student grouping, and a closure activity. For example, in a math lesson, students were tasked with using equations to solve problems about the area of rectangles, parallelograms, trapezoids, and triangles. The lesson plan listed specific student groupings, had scaffolds for student support, and included the immersion of academic vocabulary. A science lesson plan incorporated all the same elements and included areas for teacher modeling the demonstration of a simple machine and a reading of an excerpt relating to a wedge.

- Rigorous habits and higher-order skills were evidenced across the curricula. In a sixth grade English Language Arts (ELA) lesson plan, students were tasked with interpreting specific themes and claims from a speech by Steve Jobs. Additionally, students are asked to support their claims using detailed, text-based evidence. Students are also tasked with designing a model to explain the meaning of an unknown term or vocabulary word that must include how the word can be used in a sentence, an antonym, a synonym, a definition in their own words, and a graphic representation or picture.

- Unit plans and curriculum maps reviewed show alignment to the CCLS and evidence of incorporating the instructional shifts. For example, the sixth grade math unit shows alignment to the CCLS through planning that applies previous understanding of multiplication and division in order to divide fractions by fractions, divide multi-digit numbers using the standard algorithm, and determine expressions at specific values of their variables. The grade four pacing guide for reading includes areas for independent reading, inferring from a primary source, differentiating explicit versus inferred information, and identifying facts and details. The pre-kindergarten pacing chart displays planning for organizing and recognizing groups, exploring with manipulatives, shape sets, and producing certain number objects up to ten.
**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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**Findings**

High expectations connected to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* are communicated to the entire school community, which helps to establish an active culture for learning.

**Impact**

School leaders provide training and have a system of accountability for all staff. Feedback and support are offered to students and families, preparing them for the next level of learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Professional development (PD) opportunities are used to support teachers in meeting all academic schoolwide expectations. Teachers shared that the selections available to them for PD are aligned with yearly goals, both schoolwide and individual. Teachers also shared that they feel school leadership does a good job in identifying teacher strengths and uses that to allow teachers to facilitate professional learning opportunities for their colleagues. This might include intervisitation, for teachers to learn from one another. One teacher revealed how they feel very supported when it comes to PD. They expressed how anytime they are interested in attending PD outside of the school, all they do is simply ask and are rarely told no. Another teacher mentioned how they attend many of the technology PD sessions outside of school and return to share their learning with their colleagues, which has allowed many teachers to incorporate new initiatives with items such as the smartboard and the iPad. With respect to the technology PD, one teacher noted, “Our kids really benefit from this, and it allows us to present our material to them in ways they enjoy.”

- Students are exposed to practices on a regular basis that are connected to college and career readiness. For example, teachers reference a syllabus daily. This practice, like in college, gives students all of the information pertaining to the lesson and exactly what they will need to do in order to be successful. During the student meeting, students shared that they always know what is expected for the day because their teachers always give them a syllabus. Additionally, teachers are engaging students in deep, rich classroom discussions starting in the early grades. According to school leaders, teachers are “releasing control” in their classrooms and allowing students to have more “real-world type of discussions with their classmates.” These types of Socratic style discussions are preparing students for college.

- School leaders use their “Week at a Glance” handout that they distribute to all staff to communicate schoolwide expectations. The principal sends out a monthly newsletter that breaks down all of the monthly events by week. For example, the October 2016 edition reminded teachers of the expectations associated with the daily syllabi and how they should include “Guiding Question, Task 1, Task 2, Vocabulary & Closing Exit Slip.” It also included a section on rigor that stated, “Mentally sweating experiences that are challenging not necessarily difficult” for all students, which detailed the ways teachers should be academically challenging the students in the classrooms. The February edition reminded teachers to continue their work on “3B Student Discussions” and asked the question, “How are you ensuring all voices are heard in your classroom?”
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

School leaders and teacher peers actively support the development of all teachers by providing effective feedback that accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps.

Impact

Strategies are implemented by school leaders, including frequent cycles of observations and collaborative goal-setting that provide support and lead to the professional growth of all teachers.

Supporting Evidence

- There is a thorough and detailed observation process whereby the principal observes every teacher in the school at least once, and second observations are divided among the assistant principals. The principal and teachers shared that this year administrators are going into classrooms in pairs, which is done for norming purposes. School leaders work diligently to complete observations according to set deadlines throughout the year, and, as of February 2, 2017, administrators had completed 67.4 percent of all teacher observations. School leaders offer effective feedback to teachers through the observation process that accurately captures teacher strengths and offers actionable and timely next steps. One observation report detailed teacher strengths in classroom management and classroom atmosphere. Next steps in the area of designing coherent instruction were offered that included networking with a specific teacher who uses highly effective daily agendas.

- There is a formal process in place to develop, evaluate and, support teacher goals. The process of setting individual teacher goals begins at the end of the prior school year. Teachers shared how at the end of the school year they sit with an administrator, review their observation reports, and develop individual goals for the upcoming school year. Both administration and teachers shared that this process collaboratively allows them to be reflective and proactive in identifying areas of focus. Teachers noted how all the PD sessions that take place on Monday afternoons are essential and aligned to their goals. For example, the school's speech therapist shared how she attended PD dealing with speech and language and then shared this with her colleagues during a Monday session. Teacher goals are regularly referenced during the observation process and resources such as websites and intervisitation are strategically offered to each individual teacher to address areas of concern. Teachers shared that they feel supported throughout the entire observation process and they are “growing as educators every year that goes by.”

- Teachers shared that the feedback offered to them after an observation is helpful and specific to their needs as educators. Evidence of specific next steps was captured in an observation report where the school leader offered feedback aligned to questioning strategies, such as using higher level Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questions to engage students in group discussions and turn and talks. A different observation report suggested that the teacher visit a colleague who has a solid foundation in grouping students. During the teacher meeting, several teachers shared how they have learned much as a result of the observation process and feel “very comfortable” in approaching school leaders, even when they are not being observed, to ask for help or invite them into their classrooms to ask for feedback.
**Additional Finding**

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

The majority of teachers are involved in inquiry-based professional collaborations through the use of the ATLAS Learning from Student Work protocol. Teachers regularly take on leadership roles throughout the school.

**Impact**

The instructional capacity of teachers has been strengthened through inquiry work and collaboration, including analysis of student work. Distributed leadership structures allow teachers to have an active voice in schoolwide decisions.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers meet regularly using the ATLAS Learning from Student Work Protocol as a guide for their team meetings. Meetings are moderated by a teacher leader who reviews norms and procedures prior to beginning each session. During the teacher inquiry meeting, teachers reviewed three examples of student fiction writing from a bottom, middle and top group. Teachers were offered time to review the student work products and then shared their findings. Some of the findings included problems with conventions, absence or misuse of quotes, and the absence of sentence structure. Teacher leaders developed next steps for each group that included a literature circle and peer assessments for the top group, a narrative rubric with an edited check list for the middle group, and small group instruction and checklist support for the bottom group. The meeting ended with teachers offering their recommendations for the next meeting, which included using a fairytale writing piece and allowing students to create a planning page to organize their thoughts.

- Teachers have opportunities to take on leadership roles through a variety ways. There are formal grade leaders on every team that work with their colleagues and meet with school leaders on a weekly basis. Teacher leaders act as voice for the teachers and help administration disseminate school-wide expectations. In addition, teachers shared how they attend PD outside the building and return to the school with the expectation that they will turnkey what they have learned to their colleagues during a PD session. Teacher leaders are part of the process of creating the school’s PD menu, and, as a result, all PD is aligned to teacher needs based on their personal goals and needs in the classroom. During the teacher meeting, teachers shared how the distributive leadership structures have “built better morale and better communication between teachers.” All teachers feel as if they have “another layer of pride and responsibility,” and this gives teachers more ownership in the school.

- Teachers and administrators believe that there has been a big impact because of teacher teamwork throughout the school. School leaders believe that teachers are less intimidated about trying new things, as they feel that can rely on their colleagues for support. Teachers shared that because of the teamwork and intervisitation schedule, they get different perspectives on ways they can improve their pedagogical practice. Moreover, teachers believe that there is improved morale and communication among all staff. Teachers also feel that they now have endless resources available, as they can go to any of their colleagues at any moment and be given many different potential solutions or options to their questions.