

# Quality Review Report

## 2016-2017

**I.S. 238 - Susan B. Anthony Academy**

**Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 29Q238**

**88-15 182nd St.  
Queens  
NY 11423**

**Principal: Peter Leddy**

**Dates of Review:  
January 12, 2017 - January 13, 2017**

**Lead Reviewer: Valerie Taylor**

# 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

I.S. 238 - Susan B. Anthony Academy serves students in grade 6 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

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area	Rating
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	Additional Finding	Proficient
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	Area of Focus	Proficient
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	Additional Finding	Proficient

## School Quality Ratings continued

<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Rating</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Area of Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Rating</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff through their cohort organization. School leaders effectively communicate expectations and connect to a path to college and career readiness.

### Impact

As a result of this cohort structure, there is a culture of mutual accountability for students meeting targets and expectations. Parents are successful partners in supporting student progress towards college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leader consistently communicate high expectations for instruction through memorandums, newsletters, and personally during professional development sessions. A review of memorandums shows that expectations include the use of high order questioning skills and designing tasks that engage students and promote student discussion. In a teacher meeting, teachers stated that while school leaders have always communicated high expectation for instruction and professionalism, the most effective method of communication has been the new cohort organizational structure where a group of teachers share responsibility for a group of students. This structure promotes greater teacher accountability by organizing teachers to work collaboratively to ensure that students meet learning targets. In response to these expectations, teachers track data more closely and evaluate the supports that they provide to students as a team. Teachers stated that as a result of this structure, they now feel more directly responsible to each other. This has resulted in a culture of mutual accountability where teachers volunteer to model successful practices for each other and help each other by co-planning activities to ensure student progress.
- School leaders effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness including grade specific expectations for the Common Core Learning Standards in both English Language Arts and math. Parents stated as a result of grade level Common Core math workshops, they have a better understanding of what students are doing. Parents shared that work samples discussed during the workshops helped them understand how to use the feedback to their students to support on other written assignments. Student achievement is shared with families through progress reports, parent teacher conferences, and an online grade book.
- Parents shared that the school has a college course for eighth grade student which allows both students and parents to learn about the expectations for college together. Parents co-plan trips with teachers and accompany students on college trips. One parent stated that she had not had the opportunity to attend college and was not aware of college expectation or how to prepare for college. She shared that being able to visit a college with her child has helped her understand how what her child is learning at school prepares her student for college. This parent added that now that she has had this experience with her child, she is better prepared to support her child's success as they both know what they are working towards. Other parents agreed that this course helps them make connections between middle school and college. Parents shared that this is one of the many ways in which the school partners with parents to ensure that students are supported towards meeting the school's high expectations.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curriculum allowing for learners to engage in conversations and produce meaningful work products.

### Impact

Consistent entry points allow students to engage in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking in both student work products and discussion; however, entry points are not strategic, thus there is not yet student ownership.

### Supporting Evidence

- Student discussions and work products demonstrated higher-order thinking across classrooms. In a sixth grade English Language Arts lesson, students used close reading strategies to analyze how words and phrases created a positive or negative connotation in the text. Once students identified the words that suggested an image, they discussed the impact of these words on the tone of the story. In a grade eight social studies lesson, students built on their peers' ideas when determining the central ideas of a news article about pardons granted by President Obama in order to compare it to other sources. One student essay demonstrated the main idea in writing as "President Obama gave pardon to people who showed that they can turn their lives around and become good citizens. Sometimes people who get a second chance think twice before getting into trouble again." In one math lesson students discussed whether graphing, substitution, or elimination was the best method to use when solving systems of equation. One group of students chose substitution while another group explained that it is easier to use substitution only when one variable is given. Structured prompts ensured that students demonstrated high level of thinking in discussion; however, ownership in discussion was not observed.
- Across classrooms teachers used station learning and group work as consistent entry points into learning tasks. In a seventh grade social studies class, the teacher used the do now activity to create instructional groups with differentiated task. Student engaged in a carousel activity to analyze text, pictures, and political cartoons related to the French and Indian War. Students used class notes from previous lessons along with the text and graphic organizer to answer the essential question, "What sequence of events led to the colonies declaring independence from Great Britain?" In another group, students used pictures and maps showing the control of land in North America before and after the war to support their assertions. The majority of students were able to respond appropriately to the questions and cite text evidence. While there were consistent entry point across classrooms, there was no evidence of strategic entry points. In a seventh grade class, students were given chart paper and markers to create a dramatic plot for the first four chapters of the text *Percy Jackson*. However, English Language Learners were not provided with the additional scaffolds needed for them to complete the task, as such, while there were scaffolds in this lesson, they were not strategic to the needs of the learners.
- During a history lesson, students worked in groups and used laptop computers to respond to the guiding question, "Who built the Great Pyramid at Giza?" Students used a PowerPoint presentation along with primary and secondary sources to gather text evidence to support their assertions. One group completed a graphic organizer citing evidence from the documents, while the students who needed additional support worked with the teacher in a small group on close reading of the text and were able to demonstrated higher-order thinking.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure curricula are aligned to the Common Core Standards and integrate the instructional shifts with a focus on academic vocabulary and writing from source. Planning documents reflect rigorous academic tasks that promote high-order thinking.

### Impact

Lesson plans and curricula build coherence and promote college and career readiness by requiring all students to demonstrate high-order thinking.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty develop curriculum maps, lesson plans, and pacing calendars aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and incorporate the instructional shifts. Attention to the instructional shift of writing from sources was evident in a grade seven social studies unit plan, requiring students to read *You don't want to Be an American Colonist!* as the central text and use supplemental informational texts, such as Burke Davis' book *Black Heroes of The American Revolution*, to examine race and competing views of power and morality leading to global conflict.
- English Language Arts, science, and social studies planning documents all evidence teachers' focus on the use of informational text and academic vocabulary. In math, teachers plan activities that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the instructional shift of conceptual understanding as well as procedural knowledge. In a seventh grade math lesson, the task criteria required students to solve a word problem involving rational numbers and convert rational number to decimal using long division algorithm. In an eighth grade science lesson on humans and the environment, students are required to learn and use academic vocabulary such as organisms, species, and characteristics to discuss the essential question, "How do environmental changes and adaptive characteristics of a species affect survival?"
- Planning documents reviewed reflected the schoolwide focus of analysis and text-based questions. A seventh grade reading plan reflects students using close reading strategies to read portions of *The Lightning Thief* and cite evidence to explain the term rising action. A sixth grade history plan shows that students will be asked to cite specific text evidence from two documents "Who Built the Pyramids?" and "New Discovery Shows Slaves Didn't Build Pyramids, Egypt Says" to support their claim about who built the pyramids at Giza. A seventh grade English Language Arts plan indicates that students will be required to read the article "A Nation of Second Chances" to analyze and highlight the connotations and references to the term "justice."
- Planning documents emphasized the use of ensure a variety of questions across Webb's *Depth of Knowledge* to promote higher-order thinking. Students are expected to answer a range of questions such as, "Why were the colonies portrayed as snakes?" "To what degree should a nation be involved in the affairs of other nations?" "Why can't energy be created or destroyed?" In addition, planning documents reflect tasks designed to engage higher-order thinking such as comparing and contrasting texts, solving multiple steps math problems, and in science gather and organize data and representing data through graphing to identify patterns.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and checklists aligned to the school's curricula. Teaching practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding to determine student comprehension of the learning objectives.

### Impact

Teacher assessment practices include the use of curriculum aligned rubrics to provide students with actionable feedback and using checks for understanding to make effective instructional adjustments.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across grades and subjects, teachers use curriculum aligned rubrics and checklists to provide students with actionable written feedback. A review of student folders reflected feedback which included students' next steps. Feedback on a sixth grade narrative writing assignment included comments asking the students to work on adding dialogue and evidence to support her claim. Similarly, in a seventh grade class, teacher's feedback on a math task involving order of operations to solve algebraic expressions, asked the student to expand the written response by adding more details about the procedure used to solve the problem. In the student interview, a sixth grade student reported that after he received feedback from his teacher and corrected his mistake, he got a better grade.
- Across classrooms visited, teachers used checks for understanding by asking targeted questions to monitor the student comprehension. In a math class the teacher asked students, "Why is that a good strategy?" One student stated, that he used that strategy because it was easier to substitute for the unknown variable. The teacher took notes and gave each group colored stickers. Later she asked the students who got blue stickers to join her in front of the room where she used the anchor chart to engage them in a small group instruction. In a sixth grade English Language Arts lesson, the teacher asked the students, "What can you infer from that evidence?" One group appropriately explained that the article stated that twenty-five percent of the population was middle upper class. The teacher stopped the class and redirected the students by getting them to focus on the new information and how it could impact their claim. Thus teachers are able to use data from their checks for understanding to make adjustments to meet student needs.
- In a student interview, the majority of students were able to articulate the purpose of the rubrics and what it means to progress to the next performance level. One student shared that the teacher showed them how to use the rubric as checklists to organize their writing. The student added that she uses it to make sure she includes everything before submitting her work. As a result of actionable feedback and clear use of curriculum aligned rubrics one student stated, "Rubrics help me improve my work by telling me what to do and showing me what I don't have." In an eighth grade algebra class, students were observed using a math rubric. One of the student explained that he used the rubric to determine if the expectations of the task are met.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Teachers are supported by feedback from frequent cycles of teacher observations. There is an effective system in place to use observational data from these cycles to support teacher development.

### Impact

School leaders use data from frequent cycles of observations to develop targeted professional plans, inform teacher selection for leadership roles, and provide actionable and effective feedback to teachers.

### Supporting Evidence

- A review of teacher observations evidence that school leaders conduct four cycles of formal and informal observations and provide teachers with feedback and next steps through a glow and grow approach. In one observation, the school leader commended the teacher for providing students with strategies and resources leading to a successful lesson while identifying a need for the teacher to allow more time for students to share strategies and engage in discussion. In another observation, the school leader recognized the improvement in the classroom climate which was a recommendation from a previous observation, thus demonstrating the effectiveness of the school leader's feedback. The school leader provided additional support by stating that an intervisitation will be arranged for this teacher to visit another class to observe grouping and student interaction. The school leader then provided the teacher with a date and time debrief the intervisitation and select which strategies to implement. A review of the follow up observational meeting notes reflected that the teacher agreed to work on developing accountable talk using conversation as a strategy for increasing student discussion and managing the classroom as a result of the school leader feedback and recommendations.
- A professional learning calendar clearly outlined topics to be covered and included sharing *Advance* data and the norming of *Danielson Framework for Teaching*. During a teacher team meeting, the teachers shared that the December, checks for understanding, questioning, and discussion sessions were prioritized as a response to their request for professional development to support English Language Learners who were lagging behind in both reading and math. School leaders identified teachers with highly effective practices in those domains to facilitate schoolwide and small group professional learning and open their doors as lab sites for teachers who needed support.
- During a teacher team meeting, teachers stated that school leaders provides them with feedback that is clear and actionable. One teacher explained that during her one-on one feedback conference, the principal provided clear recommendations for improvement and resources such as a conversation protocol to improve classroom discussions because he observed students talking over each other and clapping while others were speaking. He arranged for her to visit her colleague's classroom to observe how she communicates her classroom expectations to students. Some teachers shared that school leaders also provide coaching to help them implement recommendations in their classroom. One teacher explained that the assistant principal visited her classroom and worked alongside her to facilitate student discussion. She stated that it was very helpful and now feels confident engaging student in high level discussions.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Supervision</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote school goals. There are distributive leadership in place to build teacher leadership.

### Impact

Professional collaborations strengthen teachers' instructional capacity and distributive leadership structures ensures that teacher voice is included in key decisions that affect student learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- School goals are promoted through the work of two types of teacher teams focused on strengthening the use of instructional shifts and the Common Core Learning Standards through the analysis of student work and sharing best instructional practices. Teachers in the cohort meetings analyze student work products and share strategies to support student progress. Teacher in the grade team meetings focus on designing lessons which incorporate scaffolds and rigorous tasks. In one cohort team meeting, teachers used the *Atlas* work protocol to analyze student math data and identify patterns and trends across classes. The team determined that students were having difficulty solving multiple steps problems using fractions. They discussed instructional strategies and planned next steps which included re-teaching, spiraling, and regrouping for instruction. Teachers all agreed that based on the gaps that they observed, they needed to go back to the sixth grade standards to address some of the deficits that existed across the classes. In addition, a six-week time frame was set to give students adequate time to master the concept. This practice has strengthened teachers' understanding of using data to make adjustments to meet student needs.
- Teachers shared that their collaboration has strengthened their instructional capacity by providing them with a larger repertoire of teaching strategies. One teacher stated that these professional collaborations supported her in incorporating visual supports in her delivery of math instruction. She talked about emulating an anchor chart that she observed in her colleague's classroom displaying each step of solving a math problem. Another teacher shared that after her colleague shared strategies he used to implement the accountable talk process, she has adapted the strategies and is able to facilitate conversations by stepping back and allowing the students to take ownership of the conversation.
- Distributive leadership is evident through teacher leaders who have wide latitude in instructional decisions. Team leaders represent teachers on instructional matters, disseminate information, provide coaching for teachers, facilitate workshops and also serve as mentors for new teachers. The school leader added that teachers recognized that there was a gap in the grading practices between homework and classwork resulting in a wide variety of grades on similar tasks. This practice resulted in a lack of clarity for parents. Teachers volunteered to work on a uniform grading policy that ensured that tasks whether in classwork or homework were graded the same. School leaders stated that teachers are involved in all aspects of the school including crafting the school's goals, determining professional development topics, and providing the professional development.