Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 8 Shirlee Solomon

Elementary 31R008

112 Lindenwood Rd.
Staten Island
NY 10308

Principal: Lisa Esposito

Dates of Review:
May 9, 2017 - May 10, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Michele Ashley
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. 8 Shirlee Solomon serves students in grade K through grade 5. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</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 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>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>Area of Celebration</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>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>
</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>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>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>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 1.4 Positive Learning Environment | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

Homeroom classes ensure that teachers know each student well and attendance supports encourage the vast majority of students to be present and on time for learning. Leaders and faculty strategically align celebrations, learning experiences and supports for students, teachers and families.

Impact

Personalized attendance support, guidance and aligned resources for students, staff and families result in the adoption of positive academic and personal behaviors for students.

Supporting Evidence

- Personalized attendance structures are in place to monitor and track student attendance and promptly respond to absences. Homeroom teachers, parent coordinators and the attendance teacher make calls to the home after two consecutive absences. The attendance team meets weekly and conducts home visits for excessive absence. Incentives and monthly attendance celebrations encourage students to be present daily. Faculty and staff keep parents informed of the importance of daily attendance via proactive newsletters and attendance notices sent home after repeated absence. The template for the parent attendance letter for 2016 -2017 begins “A perusal of your child’s attendance record for this year gives us cause for serious concern.”

- Although the faculty has departmentalized instruction for grades four and five, teachers maintain homeroom classes on each grade to ensure that there is a consistency of one teacher to greet all students each morning, take and monitor attendance. School leaders and faculty also encourage students to be present daily by offering a variety of early-bird enrichment activities. All enrichment activities are open to all students and are free of charge to families. Leaders and faculty shared that students who participate in the early-morning activities are happy to be in school and are present and on time for morning instruction. Students in this school have maintained a 95 percent attendance rate since 2014 and a suspension rate of less than one percent for 2016.

- School leaders align professional development and family outreach to support students adopting positive behaviors. This year, school leaders provided crisis intervention and de-escalation training for all faculty and staff and committees informed families of the school-wide fitness and nutrition initiatives sponsored by the School Wellness Council and Nutritional Committee. Committee members distributed a variety of healthy living materials to families including tips and charts for planning healthy meals. Students are active members of the Nutritional Committee.

- Faculty and staff engage students in a variety of morning and afterschool activities and service programs that result in the adoption of positive academic and personal behaviors. Students have exhibited high levels of engagement in enrichment programs and a commitment to being present in school for instruction, meetings and rehearsals. Students have also developed self-regulation and collaboration skills as evident in observed cooperative activities, performances and the low number of school-wide suspensions. During a rehearsal of Peter Pan students rehearsed the scenes, choreography and songs cooperatively and with little prompting from the adults present.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers consistently provide multiple entry points for a diversity of learners using flexible grouping, visual supports and graphic organizers and provide opportunities for students to engage in discussions. However, teachers have yet to consistently provide high quality models, supports and extensions for students.

Impact
A lack of extensions and exemplars hinder some students’ opportunities to independently engage in challenging tasks, lead peer-to-peer discussions and take ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade-three classroom, the teacher assigned students to groups with tiered questions and tasks to conduct a close reading on recycling. Support materials included graphic organizers and a text with photos and illustrations. Each of the three groups had assigned task cards with prompts, questions, recommended strategies and rubrics to help students complete the task. In this class, Group A was required to work with their group to respond to questions using a RACE (read, answer, cite and explain) strategy and the teacher allowed students to choose from a list of possible questions. Students in this class recorded written answers to questions, shared their responses with their group and included citations in their notes. The high quality supports, structures and scaffolds present in this classroom are not yet present across most classrooms.

- Across most classrooms, teachers assign students to small groups based on student data and provide students with a group task. However, some teachers do not provide students with the high-level scaffolds, extensions and structures needed to allow all students to independently complete tasks at high levels. In a grade-five classroom, the teacher assigned students to mixed level groups to gather information and prepare to write an informational piece on how the rainforest is changing. Although the teacher provided students with an overview of the task, a rubric and a variety of texts from which to gather and share information, she did not provide students with the tools to effectively lead their group discussion or a model to discern what information to gather. Students spent the beginning of their work time determining how they should take notes and were unsure of what information to gather and share. The teacher moved from group to group, but did not provide students with questions or prompts to guide or push their thinking further.

- Most teachers observed provided students with the opportunity to engage in group discussions; however, students in most classrooms require teacher support to engage in effective peer-to-peer discussions. In one classroom, the teacher assigned students to working groups to gather and synthesize information on earthquakes. During this lesson, each group followed written steps to complete the group task. The teacher provided students with independent Think Time to consider whether land or underwater earthquakes create more destruction. At the end of the Think Time, students discussed their individual thoughts before reaching a group consensus and synthesizing their responses into one group Tweet. The level of structure, ownership and accountability for student-led discussion present in this lesson, was not yet present across the vast majority of classes visited.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that lessons and unit plans align to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate academic vocabulary and writing from sources across most content areas. Lessons consistently integrate rigorous habits using learning intentions and success criteria.

Impact

Alignment of the success criteria to Common Core Learning Standards and the integration of English Language Arts (ELA) instructional shifts build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the majority of unit and lesson plans reviewed, teachers align learning intentions and success criteria to identified Common Core Learning Standards. In an ELA lesson, the teacher cites a reading Focus Standard that states students will refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. The success criteria for this lesson align with the stated standard and include “I can answer questions about an informational text with details from the text and I can refer to text to cite evidence and examples.” The learning intention for this lesson states that students will refer to details in the informational text, *Earthquakes*.

- Across ELA, math and science lessons reviewed, teachers planned for the integration of academic vocabulary and opportunities for students to write from sources and support claims with evidence. In a reading lesson plan, the teacher plans for students to use the content vocabulary to create a glossary for an informational text. In a graphing lesson, the teacher plans for students to review content vocabulary, conduct an experiment, graph the results and use their graphing data to explain their process and conclusions.

- Across all grades and content areas, teachers consistently emphasize rigorous habits by aligning tasks to Success Criteria defined using clear *I Can Statements* that students can use to monitor their level of understanding. Across content areas, *I Can Statements* align to levels two, three and four of Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK). Examples state that students will identify and cite evidence, explain phenomena, interpret and synthesize information and prove their answers. For example, a math lesson states that students will interpret a point in the first quadrant of a coordinate plane, an ELA lesson states that students will synthesize individual answers and decide on one message for their group and a reading lesson states that students will refer to the text to cite evidence and provide examples.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use content- and task-specific rubrics and grading policies that align to the curricula. Teachers use data from running records, State and unit assessments to monitor student progress.

Impact

Teachers use assessment data to provide students with verbal and written actionable feedback and to make adjustments to curriculum pacing and resources.

Supporting Evidence

- Most teachers use and create content- and task-specific rubrics and grading policies that align to the curricula. Across content areas, teachers use rubrics to assess student performance on tasks and share the data from these rubrics with students to help improve their work. Rubrics use a zero- to-three or zero-to-four point grading scale with levels three or four representing the highest levels. Teachers use rubrics to assess student performance across content and task-specific criteria and teachers and students use the descriptors at each level to determine the level of achievement. For example, an Informative/ Explanatory Writing Rubric uses a scale of zero to four across five criteria which include, focus, organization, development, language and vocabulary and conventions. A Twitter Rubric assesses across a scale of zero to three measuring student performance based on originality, creativity, mechanics and knowledge of Twitter Media.

- Teachers use the criteria and performance levels from rubrics and assessments to provide students with actionable verbal and written feedback during conferences and on ELA and math tasks. Teachers share next steps with students during individual and group conferences and use prepared notes and checklists to highlight areas students have achieved, areas to improve and next steps for learning. On an informative writing checklist, a teacher noted that a student had fully introduced their topic but needed to improve their closing statement. On a math task, a teacher noted that a student needed to closely read each problem, show all calculations and explain the strategies used. A review of student work folders demonstrates that students use teacher feedback to adjust and improve their work.

- A review of data analysis materials reveals that teachers consistently analyze student data on State and unit assessments and performance-based assessments to identify trends by class and grade levels. Based on item skills analysis, teachers identify the lowest-performing Common Core Standards in ELA and math by grade. Teachers identify the lowest-performing standards as Focus Standards and embed them in lessons throughout each unit. Teachers make adjustments to unit pacing and incorporate additional resources to support these focus standards. A review of unit maps demonstrates that teachers adjust unit plans to add additional essential questions, key vocabulary, additional assessments and revised rubrics. A review of lesson plans also reveals that teachers use data from item skills analysis to assign students to instructional groups and plan small group or re-teach lessons.

- In an ELA lesson, the teacher includes adjustments for instructional small groups and assigns students to re-teach, on level and enrichment groups. The re-teach group would receive a mini-lesson and then create a recycling poster, the on-level group would conduct a close read of a recycling article and the advance group would complete a cause and effect graphic organizer.
# Additional Finding

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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## Findings

School leaders provide training and consistently communicate high expectations to faculty and staff via a staff handbook, faculty meetings, and *Professional Development and Professional Learning* (PDPL) sessions. School leaders and staff effectively communicate with families regarding student achievement.

## Impact

Leaders and staff hold each other accountable for agreed upon expectations for teaching and learning and have developed a successful partnership with families.

## Supporting Evidence

- School leaders provide all faculty and staff with a copy of the Teacher/Staff Professional Handbook at the first faculty meeting of each year to set clear expectations for teaching and learning. All school staff must sign and submit a statement that they have “read the professional handbook in detail” and the school leader keeps all statements on file in the general office. The handbook outlines the school and district vision and mission statements, reviews expectations for daily routines and highlights the schoolwide grading policy. An attachment to the Instructional Practices section in the 2016-2017 handbook provides faculty with a *Generic Rubric for Benchmarking Performance Levels in All Subjects and Report Card Rating*. School leaders, grade leads and mentors hold each other accountable for teaching and learning expectations via professional learning, observation and inter-visitation feedback, Logs of Assistance and inter-visitation logs.

- Team leaders from each grade form the PDPL committee and create differentiated professional learning experiences that align to the school’s instructional focus and are informed by a *Teacher PD Survey*. The PDPL committee distributes this survey to all teachers to develop topics that combine teacher interests with school instructional goals. This year the committee used feedback from the teacher survey to create workshop and *Book-talk* opportunities for teachers. A Paraprofessional Lead also distributes a survey to paraprofessionals and creates a separate Paraprofessional Professional Development Plan. Learning sessions on the paraprofessional plan include, the role of a paraprofessional, Teachers College Reading and Writing Program (TCRWP) training and Therapeutic Crisis Intervention.

- Faculty effectively communicates with families. Leadership distributes separate parent handbooks to pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and grades one through five parents addressing families with specific messages for the developmental level of their children, as well as, a general *Parent’s Guide to Public School 8*. Parents shared that they receive consistent communication regarding their child’s academic progress and teachers send to the home in-class assessments for parents to review and sign. Parents shared that they check in with teachers at arrival and dismissal and if there is a developing issue the teacher contacts them promptly. A 2016-2017 Parent Notification template informs a parent that their child is “not doing well” and checks off the areas of concern which might include one or more of the following categories, conduct, work habits, preparation and health. Parents acknowledge receipt by signing and scheduling an in-person school visit.

- Parents have attended workshops on Common Core learning expectations, Individual Education Plans and a myriad of student performances and celebrations. Parents share their voice with the school community via parent surveys, Parent-Teacher meetings and the School Leadership Team. Parents lead a variety of initiatives to support the school and community including, but not limited to, book fairs, art fundraisers, clothing drives and a school food pantry.
### 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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</table>

**Findings**

Teacher teams analyze assessment data and select Focus Standards for students on the grade. Distributed leadership structures are in place to build teacher capacity as lead teachers, mentors and members of the PDPL team.

**Impact**

Collaboration and the sharing of tools and resources result in the sharing of new teaching practices and progress toward goals for students. Teachers have a voice in decisions that affect teaching and learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams analyze data from State ELA and math assessments and benchmark exams to identify the lowest performing standards on each grade. Grade teams also conduct item skills analysis of unit assessments, writing assessments and Quick Checks in math. A review of teacher item skills analysis sheets demonstrates that teachers use assessment data to assign students to strategy groups and designate groups of students for re-teach, additional practice and enrichment activities. On a grade-three analysis sheet, the teacher identified six students for a re-teach lesson, nine students for additional practice using an online math platform and eight students to begin solving multi-step word problems.

- Leaders and teachers shared that the work they are doing on grade teams has an impact on progress toward goals for students. Teachers shared class-level ELA and math data that demonstrated students in their classes are making progress from beginning-of-year to middle-of-year assessments. Teachers also shared that students are better at working in collaborative groups and using technology to access new online support programs. A review of State ELA and math assessment data reveals that students’ grade-level performance increased from 51 to 67 percent in ELA and from 57 to 65 percent in math comparing 2015 and 2016 data.

- Leadership has created a variety of structures to develop teachers’ leadership capacity and provide opportunities for teachers to share their voice in decisions that affect student learning. Teachers play an active role in teacher support and the development of professional learning and new school-wide practices as grade/impact leads, new teacher mentors and members of the PDPL committee and the Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) committee. In these roles, teachers have the opportunity to plan and implement professional development, facilitate inter-visitations, provide feedback to colleagues and develop new school-wide practices. A review of PDPL minutes demonstrates that committee members review chapters of the school-wide text, *Rigor is Not a Four Letter Word* before planning professional development agendas and book talks for their colleagues. Teachers receive copies of chapters to read in advance and select practices to implement in classrooms. Some of the practices adopted this year include small-group learning stations, tiered questions, and close-reading strategies.