Quality Review Report

2016-2017

I.S. 024 Myra S. Barnes
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 31R024
225 Cleveland Ave.
Staten Island
NY 10308

Principal: Lenny Santamaria

Dates of Review:
April 25, 2017 - April 26, 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

I.S. 024 Myra S. Barnes 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

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 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>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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<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>
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<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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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<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>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

The school’s approach to culture-building aligns to a respect and progressive discipline initiative and incorporates student voice via student representatives from each homeroom class. Structures are in place so that each student is known well by an adult including daily homeroom and three-year talent instructors.

Impact

Positive behavior incentives and least restrictive environments for students with disabilities result in a safe, respectful and inclusive culture in which faculty and administration meaningfully involve students in schoolwide improvement efforts. Grade-based administration, faculty and support teams ensure that all students are known well and receive guidance that impacts their academic and personal behavior.

Supporting Evidence

- The schools’ approach to culture building aligns to a respect for all belief. The school leaders and faculty purposefully teach students the social-emotional skills and tools they expect all community members to practice and use to help create a respectful and inclusive culture. For example, the grade-seven Personal Growth curriculum includes thirteen lessons distributed across four components that include empathy and communication, bullying prevention, emotion management and substance abuse prevention. Lessons within the first component focus on teaching students the skills and value of working in groups, disagreeing respectfully, negotiation and compromise, and giving and getting support.

- School leaders and faculty program classes to support inclusion and the least restrictive environment for all students. The school houses the only Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Transitional Autism program in Staten Island and there is an (ASD) class on each grade level to support student movement to less restrictive environments for specific content areas. Teachers, parents and students highlight the transition program as a cornerstone of the schools’ commitment to inclusion and respect for all.

- School leaders and faculty have created small learning communities within a larger school community creating mini-cabinets for each grade. Grade cabinets include an administrator, dean and guidance counselor for each grade. Cabinet members know each child well on their grade and design activities and supports to meet the needs of that grade. Students select a talent course and talent teachers remain with students for all three years. Leaders assign students to a homeroom class led by a grade-level teacher who greets each student daily, monitors student attendance and reports all absences to the attendance team for follow up. The attendance team includes administration, guidance, the attendance teacher and school secretary. Student homeroom representatives meet with school administration and facilitate homeroom feedback sessions to collect and deliver information to and from their peers. Improvements made this year based on student voice include grade level trips, additional arts periods, scheduled rehearsal time to prepare for school performances and changes to the lunch menu.

- School leaders and faculty report that incentives for positive behavior and monthly themes aligned to the Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens have had a positive impact on students’ academic and personal behaviors. A review of student data reveals that there has been an 18 percent decrease in suspensions when comparing the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years. Data also reveals a 94 percent attendance rate this year. Students across the school demonstrate high levels of engagement in both academic and enrichment activities including observed class discussions and tasks, participation in talent classes and completion of enrichment projects.
### Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations on grade, content and Collaborative Learning Teams (CLTs). Teacher teams analyze teacher and student work; however, the use of an inquiry approach is not yet consistent across teams.

### Impact

Although analysis of teaching practices and the components of effective and highly effective instruction have resulted in some improvements in instruction, collaboration has not yet resulted in progress toward goals for targeted students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet on grade, content and Collaborative Learning Teams (CLT) once per month. This year CLT meetings focus on unpacking the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to norm teacher understanding of the domains and clarify the expectations of effective and highly effective teaching practices. During a math CLT meeting, teachers separated into grade bands to look at lessons and corresponding student work and chart the effective components of each lesson and brainstorm ways to move the instruction. Team members recorded information on a t-chart labeled effective and highly effective. Charts captured ways to lift effective instruction to highly effective, for example, moving from teacher-led tasks to small-group tasks in which students monitor their own learning, and moving from teacher-created rubrics to student-developed rubrics that students can use to meet higher expectations of performance.

- A review of CLT minutes from various teams reveals that although teachers are collaborating to identify effective and highly effective practices and identify new teaching strategies across grades and content areas; teams have yet to conduct inquiry to track the impact these new strategies are having on student learning. During a whole-group share, teachers shared selected strategies from the highly effective column to implement in their individual classes. Teachers made plans to use popsicle name sticks to randomly call on students, lead students in an interpretation of the rubrics in their own words and add lines for students to explain their math responses. Minutes and agendas from this and previous CLT sessions do not reveal any evidence of inquiry to identify the impact of previously implemented strategies.

- Teacher teams also collect and analyze student work products, quarterly English Language Arts (ELA) assessments and end-of-unit tests. Item skills analysis sheets for grade seven shows that teachers focused on student achievement in story elements, inferencing and summarizing; however, teacher analysis does not reveal progress toward goals for students. A lack of comparison data limits teachers’ ability to monitor the impact of teaching practices and hinders teachers’ capacity to make data-informed improvements to instruction.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curricula</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders and faculty ensure that lessons and unit plans align to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate opportunities for students to apply strategies to real-world scenarios. Lesson plans across grades and content areas incorporate instructional shifts such as requiring students to write from sources and provide text-based answers.

**Impact**

Teachers make purposeful decisions to incorporate rigorous habits in lessons and units that build coherence across grades and content areas and promote college and career readiness for all students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders and faculty make purposeful decisions to ensure that curricula align to Common Core Learning Standards. Leadership and faculty revised the school’s selected curricula for ELA and math to increase the level of rigor and expose students to higher levels of text complexity. Faculty also aligned the teacher-created science curriculum to the New York State Scope and Sequence, and has begun to align units to the Next Generation Science Standards. A review of lesson plans reveals that the majority of lessons is aligned to content standards and identifies the specific standards addressed in each lesson across subjects and grades.

- A review of lesson plans also reveals that teachers intentionally link essential questions to real-world situations to support students in the application of their learning. In a math lesson, the essential question asks students, “How can you use rates and proportionality to solve real-world problems?” and provides a *Do Now* problem that applies proportion to the unit cost of apple juice. A science lesson includes the central question, “What is the effect of the invasive plant species on our local Staten Island ecosystem?” and asks students to analyze the impact of the Japanese Honeysuckle on native species in Staten Island.

- Unit and lesson plans provide multiple opportunities for students to write from a variety of sources and use text to support their claims. In a living environment lesson, the teacher plans to engage students in an Animal Behavior Field Study (ABFS). In this lesson, students are required to use a variety of non-fiction text and animal observation data to design and conduct an independent investigation. At the end of this investigation, the students are required to present their findings to the class and use text and data to prove their claims. A review of lesson plans demonstrates that teachers across content areas plan similar, thought-provoking opportunities.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teachers use questioning, small-group support and graphic organizers to engage students in challenging tasks. Most teachers provide opportunities for students to share their thinking and engage in discussions.

Impact

Teacher-provided prompts and questions engage students in challenging tasks and result in student work products and discussions that demonstrate high levels of thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers use student data to divide students into small groups for instruction and provide them with verbal and written questions to support their learning and push their thinking. During a science lesson, the teachers assigned students to working groups and provided guiding questions to support their annotation of a variety of leveled texts on a variety of invasive species. Guiding questions asked students to consider how the organism found its host, what characteristics help it survive and what the effects are to its ecosystem. Students used these questions and teacher support to help them determine the key evidence to highlight in the text and relevant information to include on their graphic organizer.

- Teachers create content-specific graphic organizers and provide varying levels of teacher support during instruction. Graphic organizers for English Language Learners (ELLs) and student with disabilities include visual supports. For example, a science organizer uses a Frayer, four quadrant model, in which students can include an illustration and labels to explain a scientific term. An ELA plot organizer includes graphics that help identify the flow and tension in a story plot using arrows and hills to identify the “Exposition” “Rising Action” and “Resolution” in a story.

- Most teachers provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their thinking in work products and small-group discussions. Students demonstrate their learning through exit tasks and responses to verbal and written prompts while completing group tasks. Teachers rotate to working groups to monitor engagement, prompt student discussion and push students’ thinking further in their tasks. In a social studies class, the teacher assigned students to pairs to annotate text on the Sedition Act of 1918. Students in this class worked together to annotate text, analyze a political cartoon and identify which side the cartoon represented, that is, student pairs discussed whether the cartoon supported the protection of free speech or limited freedom for dissenters. During this lesson, student pairs were highly engaged in discussion. Across most classrooms visited, student work products and discussions reflected high levels of participation and student thinking.
### Findings

Teachers use and create performance task and content-based rubrics and assessments that align with the school’s curricula. Teachers consistently use data from exit tickets and stoplight tools to check for understanding and students across grades and content areas use stoplights to assess their own learning.

### Impact

Teachers use data from assessments and student work to provide students with actionable feedback regarding their achievement and make effective adjustments to instruction to meet students’ learning needs.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers use and create rubrics and assessments aligned to the specific content areas. Teachers use data from rubrics and assessments to provide students with verbal feedback during individual and group conferences and include written feedback on student work. A *Math Problem Solving: Fix My Mistakes!* rubric is used to assess student performance in four categories including mathematical concepts, strategy/procedures, explanation and mathematical errors. Students received scores from one to four in each category as well as written comments aligned to the rubric. One teacher’s comment highlighted a student’s strength in following procedures, but recommended that the student include an explanation of his work.

- Teachers provide comment on drafts of student writing that highlights student strengths and provides next steps for revision. Teacher comments on a writing rubric include a Wow and a Next Step. The Wow complimented the student’s introduction and setting description and the Next Step recommended that the student discuss the difficulty his character had in making a decision and expand on that in the writing. A review of student writing across content areas reveals that students use feedback from teachers to make revisions to their writing.

- Teachers across grades and content areas use exit tickets, stop light tools and student reflections to check for student understanding. Teachers distribute and collect 3, 2, 1 exit slips that asked students to share three things they learned, two things they found interesting and one question they still have. Teachers use a variety of grade-level appropriate stop light tools that ask students to self-assess their level of understanding during instruction with red signaling for immediate help, yellow indicating a need for more practice and green signaling understanding. Teachers also provide venues for students to reflect on their learning and share them with the class via parking lot charts where students can place notes indicating their learning, misconceptions and lingering questions.

- Teachers across grades respond to yellow and red stoplights displayed by students during independent work, moving to those students to respond as needed. In addition, teachers move from group to group to observe learning trends across groups. In one math classroom, the teacher moved from group to group checking for student understanding and misconceptions. In this class, the teacher selected one student to come up to the board and explain his process. Using this student’s example, the teacher was able to review key vocabulary and the concept of inverse operation in response to observed confusion demonstrated by students across groups.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
School leaders provide training and consistently communicate high expectations to faculty and staff via an articulated instructional focus, a staff handbook, and professional development. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture of high expectations for students via rubrics and clear *Criteria for Success*.

Impact
Monthly professional development and consistent observations of instruction support teachers and hold them accountable to expectations. Ongoing guidance and supports prepare students for their next level of learning.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to faculty and staff via administrative documents. All faculty and staff receive a revised Myrna S. Barnes School/Faculty/Staff Handbook at the beginning of each year. The 2016-2017 handbook includes guidelines for professional behavior, creating a positive learning environment and parent engagement. The parent engagement guidelines include expectations for parent conferences including key topics for discussion, resources to share and sample questions and phrases to engage parents in effective conversations.

- School leaders begin the year with an introduction to the school's instructional focus and an overview of school-level observation data. Leaders use faculty meetings to highlight best practices and areas of need identified during monthly observations and walkthroughs. Leaders provide monthly professional development aligned to areas of need identified and create additional sessions based on beginning of the year teacher surveys in which teachers identify “topics of interest for upcoming professional development.” High interest areas for this year include inquiry-based lesson planning, creating investigations for students and the use of interactive notebooks. A review of the professional development calendar demonstrates alignment to the articulated instructional focus on questioning and collaborative teaching practices including training in online platforms to support the sharing of team resources and information.

- Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students via rubrics and feedback, learning intentions and transparent criteria for success. Across content areas, teachers use rubrics to articulate expectations for grade-level performance and share criteria for success for lessons, activities and projects. In one lesson, the ELA teacher displayed the learning intention and criteria for success on the Smart Board. The learning intention stated, “We will analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.” The success criteria included: “I can identify supporting evidence to show the author’s point of view and I can cite details or examples in a text where the author develops the point of view with various characters and narrators.” High expectations prepare students for their next level of learning as demonstrated by passing rates on State Regents examinations. For example, students achieved 81 percent passing on the 2017 Earth Science Regents and 99 percent passing on the 2017 Algebra Regents.