Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 044 Thomas C. Brown
Elementary 31R044
80 Maple Parkway
Staten Island
NY 10303

Principal: Joseph Miller

Dates of Review:
March 23, 2017 - March 24, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Marion Wilson
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. 044 Thomas C. Brown serves students in grade PK 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>To what extent does the school...</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>Developing</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>
<td>Developing</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>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>Area of Celebration</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>
</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>
</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>
</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>Area of Focus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.3 Leveraging Resources</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings
The principal allocates human, fiscal, and physical resources to support the school’s organizational decisions and achievement of goals. School leaders have an effective way to hire teachers to support student program groupings and interventions.

Impact
Aligned resources promote overall learning goals as evidenced by typed research projects, murals, and art projects displayed throughout the school. Strategic assignment of teachers helps to close the achievement gap while supporting access to learning opportunities that lead to college and career readiness for students including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders order supplies, hire consultants, apply for grants, and schedule monies that align to the goals and instructional focus of the school. Specifically, the principal has hired outside consultants to help train teachers. Per session funding is purposefully allocated to permit teachers to participate in work that will help their pedagogical skills. During the teacher team meeting, teachers shared that their ability to visit other schools and work with lead consultants is helping to deepen their understanding of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. As a result, teachers are seeing more students attempt to write and type quality essays based on the research they conduct using technology supports.

- After the school noticed a spike in disciplinary issues, the principal allocated funds to train and provide certification for more than half of the staff in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools (TCIS). Reduction of the number of incidents occurring in the hallway and in classrooms was a main goal. The training supports teachers’ awareness of the causes of student behaviors and enable them to pro-actively de-escalate potential student conflicts. As a result, students are making positive behavior choices in response to teacher interventions. In addition there has been a decrease in the number of incidents reported in the Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS).

- Needs analysis indicated further attention to support student program groupings and interventions was necessary. A dually certified staff professional was hired. There is a dedicated dual language program on each grade level that is helping both English Language Learners and native English speakers to learn a new language. Materials, including online subscriptions and hard copies, are purchased in both languages. Students in this track are able to communicate and navigate online systems in both English and Spanish. In addition, the principal hired additional guidance counselors and social workers to support the varying learning needs of students. The hiring committee helps to make recommendations for hiring and supports the coordination of teacher assignments to ensure that teachers work with students within their area of expertise. The principal is making decisions to hire staff that is also trained to work with students with disabilities. As a result, students in these programs are able to engage in learning opportunities that will lead to greater college and career readiness.
**Findings**

School staff continue to develop a plan to regularly evaluate and adjust the instructional core across all grades and subjects. School leaders and faculty are implementing a system to progress monitor the effectiveness of professional development and the quality of teacher teamwork.

**Impact**

Policies and practices regarding monitoring are inconsistent across the school. The work of teacher teams does not effectively provide the necessary support to result in teaching practices that promote student mastery of the Common Core.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders review items including curricula documents, observation notes, and student assessment data periodically at their cabinet meetings. Administrators sporadically discuss the implications for the pedagogy, curricula, and assessment practices in terms of the expectations based on specific student needs. The school is developing a process to regularly schedule a review of all instructional practices related to the instructional core to increase the consistency of teaching practices across the school.

- School leaders and faculty are developing a process to regularly evaluate and adjust the quality of teacher teamwork and professional development practices with particular attention to what teachers need to learn in order to support increased student mastery. Teachers are provided opportunities to participate in professional learning activities outside of the school to help improve their pedagogical practices. While some teachers are incorporating the strategies presented, reevaluation of the present system is taking place to increase coherence across the grades. Although the school asks teachers to reflect on lesson plans, school staff is implementing a system to gauge the effectiveness of their plans.

- School leaders attempt to visit teacher team meetings periodically. However, this practice is not imbedded in the calendar to ensure that they monitor the quality of the work taking place. As a result, while teachers are expected to utilize a structured protocol to engage in inquiry work, many teams use the allocated time to plan lessons and complete other administrative related tasks. For example, the school invested in resources to adopt the use of the Teachers College Reading Writing Program (TCRWP) to help improve students’ reading and writing skills. Despite efforts to help teachers get trained, some staff members have not fully adopted the program. While action plans were created in relation to these areas, regularly scheduled check-ins to document the desired success criteria are being discussed and implemented.
## Findings
Curricula and academic tasks inconsistently emphasize rigorous habits across grades and subject areas, for a variety of learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Planning documents do not always reflect revisions based on student need or data.

## Impact
Across grades and subjects, academic tasks unevenly provide access and supports to cognitively engage all learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

## Supporting Evidence
- Curriculum planning organizers are utilized on some grade levels for the pacing of reading and writing units. The plan lists the big ideas, Common Core Standards, and the essential question for the unit. Students are asked to determine the main idea, understand central message, explain illustrations, and recognize differences in written and spoken English. Tasks vary in degree of difficulty depending on the teacher, subject, and grade level. Some plans did include tasks requiring critical thinking and higher-order skills; however, this was not consistently in evidence. Planning documents were skeletal in nature and did not include multiple entry points and scaffolds to ensure engagement opportunities for English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

- In a third grade math unit plan, cooperative learning and non-linguistic representation was indicated to support the needs of learners. In addition, the written document included plans for differentiation for tier two and three learners including the use of videos, the use of various support resources such as manipulatives, visual aids, charts, outlines, and picture cues for a diversity of learners. Other plans inconsistently listed scaffolds and supports to be utilized to allow students to raise questions, explore concepts in depth, make inferences, generate purposes, or understand points of view. Curricula documents are uneven across most grades and subjects.

- Tasks reflect uneven planning and revision based on the results of student work. Neither unit plans, pacing calendars, nor lesson plans consistently incorporate multiple means of representation or expression in learning activities. In one plan there were specific strategies for flexible grouping based on tiered assignment of texts with varying levels of complexity based on students’ reading levels. There were notes about assisting students with the use of context clues and sufficient think time to help them process information. However these modifications and refinements were limited, depending on the teacher, grade, and/or subject matter.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy

Rating: Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points for English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Across classrooms, student discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

There is uneven demonstration of critical thinking in student work products across grades and subjects. There are limited opportunities for student-to-student conversation and shared thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Instructional groups are sometimes planned to build on student strengths and maximize learning. In one math co-teaching class, students were required to tell how many parts were in a group in relation to the whole. Students were seated as a whole group on the rug for the duration of the lesson. Both teachers remained primarily in the front of the meeting area. Students were compliantly sitting on the rug and some were not responding to the low-level rapid-fire questions. The same handful of students answered the questions in one-word answers. While students were seated on the rug with whiteboards and markers, teachers were not using them. Individual students were called upon to draw a model of their answer. There were missed opportunities for students to utilize math manipulatives or fraction strips to support understanding of fractions as numbers.

- In an early childhood writing class, the learning target called for students to write reviews to persuade others. Students were seated on the rug while the teacher provided examples for them. Some students when asked to read were unable to do so. The majority of discussions took place between the teacher and select students. The teacher asked low-level questions, such as, “Who wrote the review?” Students, especially two students in particular, shouted out their responses. While the teacher attempted to help students make text to self and text to world connections, there were missed opportunities for students to engage in appropriately challenging tasks with the necessary supports to complete the assignment. When asked, most students were unclear about how to write their own reviews. The teacher asked students to turn and talk to their partner about what they were supposed to do and students remained quiet, as they were unsure of the task. This was observed in the other classes as well.

- In a dual language math class, students were working on various activities including a reading activity on the computer, while others sat quietly listening to the teacher who remained in the front of the room. The teacher asked questions without appropriate wait time for students to answer and frequently answered her own questions. The teacher spoke in both English and Spanish during the lesson. One group of students completed the activity and waited quietly for others to finish and for the teacher’s next set of directions. In contrast, in an ELA class, students were asking each other questions as they were engaged in discussion about their writing task. Students made inferences, analyzed their choice of evidence, and made their thinking visible with their partner. This practice was inconsistent across classes visited.
Additional Finding

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

The use of rubrics and common assessments are loosely aligned with the school’s curricula across grades and subject areas. Checks for understanding are inconsistently used across classes.

Impact

Verbal and written feedback to students is limited in providing accurate information on student achievement for both students and teachers. Not all students’ learning needs are being met due to uneven use of mid-lesson teaching adjustments.

Supporting Evidence

- Some teachers utilize checklists and rubrics aligned to the curricula; however, they were limited to math and reading. The school’s grading policy encompasses a variety of results from formative, summative, benchmark, running records, performance tasks, and curricula-aligned quizzes and tests. Often the data from these assessments is not utilized to provide teachers with information on student performance as it relates to the standards. The results from running records are the primary source of communicating student performance and achievement.

- Feedback to students is sometimes aligned with the rubrics associated with the task. One student wrote an essay and the feedback included next steps on how to receive a higher score on the next writing task. However, another student received a score of 75 on a math test and it stated try harder next time. Some students do conference with teachers about their work in reading and writing but rarely had opportunities to do so in math. Students were unsure of their performance in subject areas other than reading levels although this varied depending on the grade and the teacher.

- According to school leaders, teachers are expected to use rigorous questioning as part of ongoing checks for understanding throughout lessons to track student participation and to adjust instructional groups. Some teachers made observations of student participation but others did not keep a record of completed tasks. Some students in the fifth grade had opportunities to both self and peer-assess their work and provide feedback on various activities across different subject areas. In some instances teachers circulated throughout the room to check on student work and offer assistance as students were completing tasks. Not all teachers are aware of learning needs in order to make adjustments to instruction.
## Additional Finding

<table>
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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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</table>

### Findings

Some teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations utilizing a structured protocol for looking at student work. Teacher teams analyze limited assessment data for groups of students they teach.

### Impact

The work of teacher teams does not directly promote improved student learning and strengthened teachers’ instructional practices. Progress toward goals for groups of students is not consistently in evidence.

### Supporting Evidence

- Some teachers collaborate in professional teams where they develop and implement schoolwide instructional practices and embed the instructional shifts in their plans. Teacher teams do not always use a protocol to look at student work to help strengthen teacher capacity, adapt curricula, and ensure effective integration of the Common Core Learning Standards across grades and content areas. Aside from slight increases in some students’ reading levels, the work of teacher teams has not led to improvement for groups of students in other subject areas. Teachers do not keep track of student data from other assessment sources to help them make informed decisions about teaching and learning. Collaborations are mostly for planning with little evidence they have positively made an impact on teachers’ instructional practices.

- The work of teacher teams generally does not provide a databased rationale and analysis of student work that informs their decisions to adjust their practices and create meaningful goals for their students. During the teacher question and answer meeting, select teachers were able to articulate that students struggled with finding the main idea and using domain specific vocabulary. Professional collaborations are beginning to include team-initiated intervisitations across grades and departments, lesson study, and opportunities for teachers to share what’s working and not working in their respective classrooms. Some teachers across grades and departments are beginning to implement the use of a protocol to look at student data and work products, share insights, and develop strategies to be implemented.

- Teachers are provided opportunities to meet on a regular basis to ensure that they share insights relative to the coherence of teacher pedagogy. However, only some teacher teams are monitoring a variety of student data and classroom practices. Most teams rely primarily upon reading level data. Yet, at the team meeting observed, teachers were reviewing and norming their noticings and wonderings relative to the sample writing prompts. Teachers offered suggestions on how to tweak the checklist to ensure students were adhering to the criteria to produce high quality work. The work of this team is emerging and they are beginning to enter into meaningful inquiry work leading to improving their practice to ensure increased student achievement.