Quality Review Report

2016-2017

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K-8 10X020
3050 Webster Ave.
Bronx
NY 10467

Principal: Joan Riley

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

Lead Reviewer: Daisy Concepción
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


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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</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>
</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

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

### Findings

School leaders and faculty have designed a curriculum template that strategically ensures that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher-order thinking are emphasized in both curricula and tasks.

### Impact

Curricular decisions have resulted in coherence across grades and subjects that promote college and career readiness for all students. Tasks are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects with planned access to ensure that all students, including English Language Learners and students with Individualized Education Programs, demonstrate their thinking.

### Supporting Evidence

- School curriculum maps across grades and subjects are organized to strategically emphasize the integration of the instructional shifts and the Common Core standards, and are focused on argument writing. Across grades and subjects, unit maps include learning targets aligned to the Common Core standard for each content area. All maps reflect the use of close reading and annotation to engage students in reading across a variety of complex texts. Units require students to support their ideas, opinions, and arguments with text-based evidence in both writing and in conversation. Each unit includes the academic vocabulary that students will encounter and be required to use in their writing when responding to the essential question. Math units show a deliberate focus on procedural and conceptual knowledge as well as evidence of math practices such as understanding relationships between functions and identifying patterns to create a rule.

- Tasks build on each other across the grades. A grade three unit on energy begins by having students understand different energy such as solar, heat, light, sound, and electric. This unit is revisited in grade six with students expanding upon what they know about energy and adding new concepts such as mechanical and nuclear energy. The learning targets from the grade three unit and the grade six unit build on the same science concepts and standards. In grade six, this unit deepens by having students understand the law of conservation, the idea that energy can neither be created nor destroyed only transformed. Unit plans across grades and subjects include a series of assessment tasks that run across the Depth of Knowledge continuum for rigor such as a lab report focusing on observation and recall to a position paper making recommendation as to the type of energy that the United States should adopt. Similarly, in math, students in grade one learn how to represent and interpret data, and students build on representation of data across grade units through grade eight where students use equations to describe the association between two quantities in a bivariate data set.

- Units are aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching domains to ensure that teachers see the relationship between their practice and expert instruction. Units across grades and content provide teachers with opportunities for teacher modeling and demonstration, open-ended questions that require students to demonstrate more than one correct solution, and the use of evidence-based information to support opinions as defined by the domain on student engagement. In order to ensure that all students have access to rigor and engagement, all units have clearly defined differentiation that include annotated notes, PowerPoints, videos, organizers, accountable talk stems, think-pair-share, reinforcement worksheets, gallery walks, small group instruction, manipulatives, word banks, front loading of vocabulary, and instructional grouping.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 2.2 Assessment | Rating: | Developing |

Findings

Assessment practices include rubrics that are loosely aligned to the school’s curriculum and provide infrequent checks for understanding. The school is developing their use of common assessments including an online program to measure student progress towards goals.

Impact

Students receive limited feedback regarding achievement, and teachers do not consistently make effective adjustments to meet students’ learning needs. While the school has multiple common assessments, the results are inconsistently used to adjust instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- The school does not have a uniform approach to providing students with rubric-based feedback. Teachers use many rubrics across classrooms with some rubrics being aligned to the school curricula while many are not. Some rubrics are task-specific such as a rubric for a letter based on the novel, *A Long Walk to Water*. Some rubrics consist of unclear language across four levels. One such rubric defines a Level 4 as a “clear, thorough, accurate connection” and a Level 3 as “an accurate and complete connection” with no additional descriptors to guide student work. Some student feedback consists of post-it note comments and no rubric. Regardless of the rubric used, feedback to students across grades and content is vague and generally focuses on size of font used, capitalization or punctuation, thus students receive limited feedback, and teachers have limited information on student achievement.

- Running records and end-of-unit performance tasks are part of the assessment practices at the school. School leaders have also purchased an extensive online grading program that allows teachers to collect data based on standards and phonemic awareness. However, as school leaders have come to notice, the online program often does not align with other assessments, and school leaders are in the process of deciding how to address these gaps. As a result, there has been limited use of common assessments to make adjustments to curricula and instruction.

- Assessment practices reflect an inconsistency with regard to the use of ongoing checks for understanding across classrooms. Checks for understanding were observed in a grade one Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class where the students used their tablets to identify compound words, with student responses available as a graph on the interactive white board and also on the students’ tablets. A student with the incorrect response received immediate feedback and identified himself as the student with an incorrect answer and explained why his answer was incorrect. In another ICT class, the teacher asked students to self-assess using criteria on the interactive white board and to justify their answers. This allowed students with similar responses to also self-correct their mistakes. In a grade eight math lesson the teacher called on students with incorrect responses and used a series of clarifying questions to have students share their misconceptions. He then invited students with correct responses to share their thinking, resulting in all students understanding the application of the concept. While teachers in these classes used checks for understanding to make effective adjustments, this was not the case in other classrooms. In a humanities class, groups of students sat before blank pages and struggled to draw samples of imagery in a Langston Hughes poem, and, while the teacher walked around encouraging students, she did not make any adjustments to support many off-task groups. In a science class students were unclear about directions for their lab experiment, and no adjustment was made to meet student needs. Additionally, in many classes teachers did not collect any data to check for understanding so that they could make curricular or instructional adjustments.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the belief that deep understanding happens when students are engaged in problem solving and in understanding relationships in the curriculum. Across classrooms teaching strategies including questioning and scaffolds consistently provide entry points into the curriculum.

Impact

Teaching practices at the school include providing all students with multiple entry points needed for them to engage in appropriately challenging material and to be able to demonstrate higher-order thinking such as drawing conclusions and identifying relationships in both their work products and discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- The school belief that students learn best when making inferences and when understanding relationships was seen across classrooms such as in a grade eight math class on using linear equations. In this class, the teacher asked students to use their notes from previous sessions along with the given information to determine changes in trend lines and to make note of the relationship between diameter and circumference. Through questioning, he led students to make observations about the proportional relationship reflected in the x and y axes changes. Similarly, in a grade seven class, students worked in stations and analyzed complex text to find examples of literary elements such as dramatic irony. Students discussed how different authors across genres used literary elements to highlight their central theme. In both classes and in others, students demonstrated higher order thinking by identifying relationships in the materials with which they were working and by making high level inferences supported by text-based evidence or observations.

- Teachers across classrooms provided students with multiple entry points into the curricula as observed in a grade two math class studying representation of numbers in standard, expanded and word form. Students had charts on the table displaying numbers in all of these forms as well as base ten blocks to support students in representing the expanded form. Students demonstrated their higher-order thinking in both conversation and by completing worksheets that showed students able to represent numbers in various formats. Also, in a first grade class of students with Individualized Education Programs, students worked on understanding multi-syllabic and compound words. Students worked individually, in pairs, or with a teacher on a digital program on a tablet. In other groups, students worked with a paraprofessional creating compound words by putting together linking blocks that had a word on each block, and, when put together, created a compound word. Students all demonstrated their understanding by putting together words, writing them, checking them, and explaining how they put the words together.

- In a grade three Integrated Co-Teaching class, students worked on generating measurement data to determine the areas of geometric figures. Students had charts on the table displaying the academic vocabulary “square units” and “arrays” for the unit. Accountable talk stems such as “The relationship between __ and ___ is ______,” were aligned to the school’s philosophy of how students learn best and were on students’ desks. The teacher used an interactive white board to show grids cut into equal parts and modeled how to find the area of a given figure. Scaffolds that support higher-order thinking were also seen in a grade eight humanities class studying the Harlem Renaissance. In this class students looked at paintings depicting Harlem during this period to add context to Claude McKay and Langston Hughes poems. In addition to the pictures, accountable talk stems at the desks offered language for making predictions and connections, which are aligned to the school philosophy of making connections to help students cite text-based evidence on how the speaker’s attitude changes from the beginning to the end of the poem.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</table>

**Findings**

School leaders and teacher teams consistently communicate high expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness to both families and students.

**Impact**

Parents receive ongoing feedback to understand student progress towards the school's expectations. Students receive detailed feedback, guidance, and training that prepare them for their next level.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In a meeting with students in a peer mediation group, both peer mentors and mentees spoke about the value of learning communication skills. They shared that respectful communication is one of the school's high expectations and is part of preparation for the workforce and higher education. Students stated that both in college and careers there would be a need for them to work collaboratively with others and to understand others’ perspectives. They followed this remark by saying that looking for perspective and point of view is something that they do when writing essays in English. Mentors shared that participating in peer mediation training helped them develop skills that prepared them for continued work in peer mediation at high school as well as for participating on debate teams. Some students stated that as their peers are accepted into private schools that include boarding, learning to communicate with others is essential. Mentees shared that in addition to learning to be more reflective about their choices as a result of mediation, they had also learned how to communicate more effectively and they are now using this new skill in classroom conversations. Mentees shared that as a result of improving their communication skills, they had seen improvement in their academics and felt prepared for their next academic level.

- In a meeting with parents, they shared that the curriculum is clear to them and they have access to it from curriculum nights to teacher communications sharing weekly or monthly pacing calendars, and some teachers even sharing the series of learning targets that students will be engaged in for the week. Additionally, they stated that there are various online grading programs that allow them to see grades and also that serve as a platform for emailing. Parents stated that in addition to a school newsletter that shares student achievement, school leaders also share high expectation for student achievement through structures such as the Honor Roll and achievement assemblies. Parents stated that while they receive ongoing feedback information on school expectations and student achievement, they wanted more consistency and real-time information allowing them to intervene when grades begin to change. School leaders are currently in the selection process of one on-line platform that will provide parents with immediate student information.

- There are two distinct articulation periods at this kindergarten through eighth grade school. As some of the students opt to attend middle grades at another school or to go to specialized private programs, students in grade five participate in the middle school choice program and receive support in completing the applications and selecting schools. Since this group of students is not large, school leaders have individual meetings for the parents of grade five students who are preparing to transition to another school. Students in grade eight receive advisement and support in the high school application program. All students applying for a specialized program or school receive support with their applications including mock interviews to help them prepare. Grade eight students stated that they have participated in Career Day assemblies and a tour of Mercy College.
Findings
School leaders and peers support the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with feedback that accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact
Frequent cycles of observations provide teachers with effective feedback that articulates clear expectations aligned to the school mission and supports teacher practice and development towards those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Through a partnership with a teacher-mentoring program, the school has teachers who are teacher leaders and who provide coaching for their peers. A review of the various teacher feedback supporting teacher development shows that all teachers at the school receive feedback and support through a combination of peer observation and informal and formal observation, aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Observations reflect that teachers are provided with resources, supports, coaching and/or professional development in an identified area for improvement. A review of cycles of observation demonstrates that teachers have demonstrated improvement in their practice as evidenced by written feedback at the end of the observations.

- Cycles of observations include four formal observations throughout the year as well as several informal observations and peer observations. They reflect a shared responsibility for the improvement of practice and teacher development aligned to supporting student engagement. A school practice includes teachers engaging in written reflection on feedback from their peers and from school leaders, which often includes analysis of student work. Lead teacher’s logs, observations, and administrative emails show that teachers are supported through coaching, including through visitations to other classrooms before the teacher implements the new practice. This level of support ensures that teachers are able to improve their practices as evidenced in a review of observation reports.

- Teacher feedback is clear and captures strengths in areas such as designing coherent instruction, developing rapport with students, and growing professionally. Feedback also captures challenges in practice such as focus on checks for understanding with clear expectations. One observation that clearly memorializes this expectation stated, “Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning,” and informs the teacher to focus on checking for understanding. Another trend seen across observations is a clearly articulated expectation that teachers focus on rigor and critical analysis, reflecting the school belief about how students learn best. Observations ask teachers to move beyond “procedural” understanding and remind teachers to ask the students to “reflect on their learning” and to “force them to delve more deeply in content.” School leaders also focus on the quality of tasks across observations. For example, one observation summarized the school expectation that assignments be meaningful by stating, “Plan for assignments that will not fill-in time, but will allow students to practice and process their learning.”
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher Team and Leadership
Rating: Proficient

Findings
Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share. Distributive leadership structures are in place through a cadre of teachers with leadership capacity.

Impact
Distributive leadership is fostered through structures ensuring that teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school. Teacher teamwork has resulted in improved teacher practice and progress towards goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade level teacher team meeting, teachers separated student work into piles reflecting work at different levels of performance. Teachers analyzed student work and developed a list of what students were able to demonstrate, such as a better use of transitions and more complex sentences. Teachers also noticed the need to teach students how to write a topic sentence. Teachers later stated that this analysis has strengthened their practice as they have been able to improve student writing in this early grade by helping students gain a better understanding of phonemic development, spelling, stating an opinion, and using evidence. The school has various groups of teacher teams that use student work to assess student progress and to make adjustments to lesson plans and instructional grouping. Teachers in the middle grades stated that analyzing data had helped them move many students at performance Level 2 up to Level 3 in reading complex texts. A look at running record data demonstrates that teachers’ strategy lessons have supported students moving up in reading levels.

- School leaders participate in three different New York City programs that promote teacher leadership and support teacher development. One of those programs supports the development of teacher teams with a focus of improving middle school literacy. A grant supports early reading skills and another program provides for Peer Collaborative Teachers. These programs have afforded the school to have three lead teachers teach with a modified teaching schedule so they can work with individual teachers and grade teams to support curricular revisions, to develop units of study and lesson plans, to model, to mentor, and to provide peer feedback aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Through their role in providing one-on-one mentoring and intervisitation followed by reflection and debriefing, these lead teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

- There are also content area and grade level teacher leaders at the school who work with teachers to identify areas of need and to plan, design and facilitate professional development at the school to support data-driven instruction, shared practices, and the development of curriculum such as the development of learning targets aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, the instructional shifts and Danielson’s Framework for Teaching. These teachers work in collaboration with the lead teachers to ensure that the teacher teamwork across the school is coherent and positively impacts student learning.