Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S./M.S. 031 The William Lloyd Garrison

K-8 07X031

250 East 156th St.
Bronx
NY 10451

Principal: William Hewlett Jr

Dates of Review:
December 13, 2016 - December 14, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Jorge Estrella
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

**Instructional Core**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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</table>
## School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>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>
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## Systems for Improvement

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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
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<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>
</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>Developing</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>Developing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Findings

School leaders have structures in place to ensure that each student is known well by at least one adult who provides ongoing support to students. School leaders align professional development, family outreach, and learning experiences to promote effective academic and personal behaviors.

Impact

The schoolwide approach to support the learning needs of students results in positive interactions among stakeholders to support the academic and personal growth of students and adults.

Supporting Evidence

- School administrators and faculty members work closely with the school leadership team, Parent Association, and community-based organizations to promote a coherent message which fosters responsible and effective academic and personal behaviors. Professional development topics such as classroom management strategies, intervisitations, and town halls have increased staff capacity in creating a positive learning environment. For example, during classroom visits, most students were ready and eager to engage in their instructional tasks and teachers were able to conduct their lessons without disruptions. Parents reported that their children are showing better disposition towards their school work and encourage them to be in touch with their teachers. Family events include workshops for parents and community-based activities that enhance parenting skills and offer strategies to engage students in positive attitudes and behaviors that lead to their academic and personal improvement. For example, parents participated in workshops that included topics such as ClassDojo for behavior management and communications with teachers, tips for homework help, parent to child reading instructions, and using iReady at home.

- The school has implemented a Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) using a rewards system based on behavior and classwork to give students access to different school leadership activities. Points earned are recorded in ClassDojo so students and parents can track progress of students’ effective academic and personal behaviors. Parents indicated that now students are urging their parents to look at the ClassDojo app to see their earned points as well as other school-related messages.

- The school’s extended day program, coordinated by the community-based organization Aspira, ensures that 200 elementary and middle school students participate in a longer school day, with access to homework assistance, sports, arts, leadership clubs, and other enrichment activities five days a week and during holidays from 8:00am to 5:00pm. Members of the Aspira team work very closely with school leaders and staff to provide instruction and guidance that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults. Teachers reported that their collaboration with Aspira contributed to enhance their regular instructional programs. For example, one of the teachers works with Aspira to prepare students for the specialized high school exam and the Regents examination in algebra. In addition, teachers and the Aspira team engage students in trips and tours to colleges and universities.

- The school is part of the Single Sheppard initiative which provides additional counseling supports via guidance counselors and social workers. For example, Single Sheppard counselors work with at-risk students to help them deal with issues that prevent them meet their learning targets such as attendance, behavior, or other social-emotional conditions. They are also available to meet with students during lunchtime, so students have an opportunity to address their concerns. Students disclosed that if they have any problem or conflict in the school or at home, they can meet with their counselor to deal with the issue. Based on specific students’ needs, Single Sheppard counselors meet with students two to three times a week.
Area of Focus

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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Findings
The school has common assessments in place, though results are inconsistently used to adjust curricula and instruction. Teachers do not yet consistently check for understanding or provide opportunities for students to self-assess.

Impact
Inconsistent data analysis hinders designing instruction for targeted groups of students and academic intervention service supports. Across classrooms, teachers inconsistently make adjustments to address the specific instructional needs of all students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders shared that the school utilizes common assessments that are aligned to standards-based curricula, assess key student knowledge and understanding, and track progress toward goals across grades and subjects. Results are used to adjust curricular and instructional decisions. For example, the instructional team has developed assessment calendars and built systems and structures for administering English Language Arts (ELA) and math assessments. The results of the assessments are uploaded in a sophisticated data system to support teachers via Dropbox. However, the review of the data assessment system, revealed inconsistencies in keeping up with pacing calendars. While most of the lower grades teachers are inputting the data and using it to inform instruction, upper grade teachers are not yet taking full advantage of this tool.

- Across classrooms, most students were not given opportunities to self-assess their work with the use of a rubric or age-appropriate checklist. In a fourth grade ELA class and in a first grade math class, students self-assessed their work using a rubric. However, in other classes visited, opportunities for students to engage in self-assessment activities were missed. Students also mentioned that they have few opportunities to engage in peer assessment activities, and some of them did not recall being involved in peer assessments at all. Furthermore, students reported that rubrics are not always used across subjects. One student said, “For ELA we use rubrics for our assignments.” Another student said, “We use rubrics most of the time in ELA and math, but only sometimes in other subjects.” Some students were able to explain why they were using rubrics, while others had difficulties articulating the purpose of using rubrics.

- There is an inconsistent implementation of the use of checks for understanding to make on the spot adjustments to the lesson. The practice of teachers annotating student responses to assess their progress was inconsistent across classrooms, resulting in missed opportunities to capture valuable student data to inform instructional decisions. For example, a first grade teacher developed her own checks for understanding tool where she captures students’ progress towards their learning targets and uses that data to make on the spot adjustments to the lesson. Other teachers also check for understanding while conferencing with students and capture the information, but adjustments to the lesson are not made. Still other teachers ask questions to students but do not use a tool to capture students’ responses or progress towards their goals or do not yet use checks for understanding at all.
Findings
School leaders and faculty collaborate to ensure that academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills. Refinement of planning that provides all students access to rigorous tasks to engage in higher-order thinking is inconsistent across the school.

Impact
All students do not yet have consistent access to rigorous academic tasks that emphasize higher-order skills or are not yet cognitively engaged across all subjects and grades.

Supporting Evidence
- School leaders shared that teachers are using assessment results to adjust academic tasks to provide students access to the curricula. The review of planning documents revealed that some teachers use assessment data to make instructional adjustments to support student learning. For example, teachers in the lower grades are using standardized assessments results and data from the end of unit assessments, Fountas and Pinnell levels, and GOMath! end of chapter data to make curricular adjustments. In addition, some teachers are using data from formative assessments to make adjustments to the curricula. However, in the upper grades teachers are yet to implement this practice.

- Although the school’s register includes 23 percent special education students and 13 percent English Language Learners (ELLs), some instructional plans did not address specific teaching strategies and lesson structures. Some planned activities were non-challenging or low-level tasks with very little evidence of scaffolding for students with disabilities, ELLs, or higher achievers. This level of planning does not ensure meeting the needs of all students, which hinders students’ ability to be cognitively engaged in instruction and limits their potential meet their instructional goals.

- The review of curricular documents revealed that some learning tasks were moderately challenging, inconsistently emphasizing higher-order thinking or including differentiated instruction strategies. Furthermore, lesson plans reveal that only few tasks were modified to meet the specific needs of students, with most lessons including the same tasks for all students. For example, the first grade math lesson plan included a menu of strategies for students to apply and practice higher-order thinking skills in academic tasks. Also, based on mid-chapter checkpoint data, the teacher placed students in three different groups. For each group, the teacher designed tasks with supports and extensions to meet the needs of all students. However, this practice varies across the school, some teachers included students' tiers but do not include extensions for higher achievers. Some teachers do not yet consistently design tasks to cognitively engage a diversity of learners.

- During the meeting with teachers, they disclosed that the Individualized Education Program (IEP) teacher offers one-on-one supports to special education teachers to help them design differentiated instructional activities to address the needs of their special education students. The review of instructional planning documents revealed uneven levels of designing differentiated instructional activities to meet the instructional targets of their special education students. For example, some lessons included tiered tasks to address students’ needs while others where not designed to address the specific needs of students.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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**Findings**

Teaching practices inconsistently provide instructional supports. Students are unevenly engaged in rigorous tasks and discussions.

**Impact**

Across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of higher-order thinking and participation.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teaching strategies to support ELLs varies across the school. For example the first grade English as a New Language (ENL) teacher used different language acquisition strategies to support her students such as visuals, graphic organizers, repetition and total physical response. However, in other classes with ELL students, teachers are yet to provide multiple entry points into their lessons. For example, in a third grade class while most of the students were engaged in their task, ELLs were given a laptop to and asked to complete a task that was unrelated to the learning target for that lesson.

- Across classrooms, teaching practices inconsistently reflect the use of instructional strategies such as student grouping and peer-to-peer discussion. For example, in a fourth grade social studies class, the teacher used data to form groups based on their specific needs. Each group had different tasks where students have several opportunities to discuss their findings while the teacher circulated about the groups providing supports and monitoring progress. However, in an eighth grade math class, students sat in groups but worked independently on the same task with limited opportunities for peer discussions.

- During a first grade math lesson the teacher used the data from the mid-chapter checkpoint to group her students and to design differentiated tasks for the lesson. Manipulatives, visuals, rubrics, and graphic organizers were also provided to students. The teacher circulated supporting students and ensuring that they were on task and supporting each other. Students were able to articulate the purpose of the task and explain the different strategies they use to solve their arithmetic problems. However, in an eighth grade math class, all students were solving the same y-intercept problems, and a few of them finished very quickly and were idle for several minutes without any extensions to further their learning. Also, most students had difficulties to make real-life connections to the problems they were solving.

- In classrooms visited, some students engaged in class discussions and students had access to discussion prompts. In a fourth grade science class, students were able to explore their thinking and use evidence or examples to support their reasoning as well as making connections to real-life applications. However, in other classes, lessons were teacher-dominated and there were limited opportunities for peer-to-peer discussions or there were limited supports available for students to articulate their learning to classmates.
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 consistently communicate high expectations for teaching and learning to the entire school community and align them with the elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and establish a culture for learning through ongoing feedback to students and families.

Impact

School structures for high expectations are resulting in a cohesive staff that fully understands school-wide expectations leading to shared accountability. In addition, the culture of learning offers on-going and detailed feedback as well as guidance supports to ensure students are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- Documents such as the faculty handbook, staff newsletter, and professional development calendar illustrate high expectations aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and are shared with all staff. In addition, there is training and a system of accountability in place. For example, weekly professional development sessions and teacher team collaborations engage staff in discussions around expectations and ongoing professional learning opportunities related to the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

- School leaders ensured one-on-one coaching sessions to improve teaching practice via consultants, school leaders and a school-based literacy coach. Teachers indicated that school leaders offer opportunities to participate in inter visitations where they have opportunities to benefit from observing similar classes so they can observe effective teaching practices related to differentiated instruction, classrooms routines, and classroom environment. Teachers mentioned that after the inter visitation teachers debrief with school administrators to discuss next steps for implementation.

- The eighth grade guidance counselor hosted several high school articulation sessions for families with students. Parents shared that the high school articulation sessions were informative and very helpful in preparing them for the high school application process. They also reported that the school consistently reached out to parents to support them in making wise high school choices. Furthermore, members of the instructional team organize site visits to colleges and universities, as well as out of state instructional field trips to expose students and their families to the broad range of potential opportunities for future endeavors.
Finding

All teachers meet in professional collaborations and are beginning to analyze assessment outcomes during team meetings. Faculty members are loosely utilizing an inquiry approach to analyze student assessment data and student work.

Impact

Inquiry-based teacher team work is beginning to build teacher capacity leading to academic progress for students and to progress towards school goals. The use of an inquiry approach is developing across teams.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly across grade levels to review student work. During these professional collaborations teachers are beginning to review student assessment results, student work, instructional plans, lesson plans, and share ideas to implement in their lesson plans. For example, a seventh grade teacher team was observed analyzing two pieces of social studies student work. During the process, teachers captured areas of strength and growth. In their interactions, teachers used low and high-inference statements. Then, teachers wrote noticings and wonderings on post-its and posted them on chart paper. Those notes referred only to student outcomes and very few connections were made to teacher practice. This work is beginning to incorporate reflection on teaching strategies to address the needs of students.

- Teacher teams analyze some assessment data and student work for students they share, but this work does not yet typically result in improved teacher practice or progress toward goals for groups of students. The review of the data system used in the school revealed inconsistencies in capturing and analyzing formative and summative assessment data. For example, some teachers use formative assessment data tools to record student progress and the analysis of this data is used to make instructional adjustments. However, this practice is not fully implemented across the school. Furthermore, some teachers have a complete set of data from summative assessments, while others are still in the process of recording information. As a result, the use of data sources to conduct meaningful inquiry-based sessions varies across grades and subjects.

- The school utilizes the Data Wise Improvement Protocol to bring coherence to teacher team meetings. School leaders reported that the use of the protocol allows them to focus on student work and data and its implications in their practice. The review of the teacher team agendas and documents revealed that some teachers are not yet consistently using teacher team time effectively to make instructional decisions to improve students learning.

- In order to strengthen teachers' ability to engage in data-inquiry collaborations, school leaders sought out consultant services to provide professional development sessions to teachers around data analysis. In addition, teachers reported that school leaders conduct one to one data conferences with some teachers to discuss student progress aligned with teaching practice. These conferences are helping teachers to establish a common understanding around using data to begin engaging in effective teacher team collaborations.