Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 055 Benjamin Franklin
Elementary School 09X055
450 Saint Paul's Pl.
Bronx
NY 10456

Principal: Luis Torres

Dates of Review:
March 16, 2017 - March 17, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Kevin Bradley
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. 055 Benjamin Franklin 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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</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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</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>Area of Focus</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>
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</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings

The school’s approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional support is informed by a focus on educating the whole child, including both academic and social-emotional learning.

Impact

This results in a safe environment and inclusive culture that support progress toward the school's goals and positively impacts student behaviors. School leaders meaningfully involve student voice in decision-making to initiate, guide, and lead school improvement efforts and structures are in place to know each child well and personalize attendance supports.

Supporting Evidence

- Student government has representation from all grade levels and they have a meaningful voice in school improvement plans. Students from the student government reported that they suggested that they wanted more clubs, after school opportunities, and more sports. As a result of suggestions from the student government, the school began to offer students more after school and extracurricular opportunities. Included in the extracurricular opportunities is a dance STEP team that now competes with area middle school teams because they have won so many elementary-level competitions. Students on the dance STEP team reported that the dance team has motivated them to continue to work hard in school and dream big. Staff reported that student government went to the borough president’s office to lobby for more technology and more healthy food options in the cafeteria. In addition, community-wide anti-abuse walks were started by student government. All students have input to make suggestions through suggestion boxes that are placed in every classroom. Students make suggestions during the week and student government members collect the suggestion boxes once a week from each class to take to the student government meeting where the suggestions are read and reviewed with school leadership.

- With an emphasis on the school goal of improving student attendance via the Every Student, Everyday attendance initiative, the school’s attendance team meets weekly to track specific students’ attendance patterns. The attendance team has setup attendance mentors for all chronically and severely absent students to improve schoolwide attendance. Each adult in the school has four or five students assigned to them as mentees. The mentors check in with students during the morning and during the afternoon every day to reinforce the importance of daily attendance in school. As a result, 81 percent of students identified as chronically/severely have improved their attendance and chronic/severe absenteeism has decreased by 53 percent since the beginning of the school year. The school also shows an overall increase to a 92 percent attendance rate this school year as of March 2017, compared to a 91 percent attendance rate last school year.

- The Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) team implemented an initiative focusing on ROAR (respectful, organized, always safe, responsible) that specifies expectations in the common areas. ROAR appears across the school and in the stairwells. Tiger Tickets is an incentive-based system that reinforces those values and students can use their tickets at the ROAR store. A book of the month that aligns with the core values is selected and is read across classes and grade levels. In addition, 80 percent of the staff has been trained in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools (TCIS) and the results show a decrease of incidents in Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) data over the last three years.
Area of Focus

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

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based grade-level teams that promote achievement of school goals and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams consistently analyze data and student work for students they share.

Impact

Collaborations within grade-level teams are strengthening teachers’ instructional capacity. Teacher team work typically results in progress toward goals for groups of students, however mastery of goals for groups of students was not yet evident.

Supporting Evidence

- The observed inquiry team meeting involved second grade teachers looking at students writing an autobiography piece. The presenter provided the context of the assignment and framed the analysis. Team members had the opportunity to analyze the students’ writing and timelines. Non-presenting members discuss their noticings, wonderings, and suggestions. The presenting teacher had an opportunity to respond to colleagues. The group discussed next steps and then the presenter reflected individually on the suggested next steps. Next steps were determined to be the use of a hamburger writing graphic organizer, to setup pair interviews between students and parents, and the use of technology, such as Chromebooks, so the students could type up their assignment. However, there is not yet evidence that these practices will be extended across subjects or grades, thus missing an opportunity to increase instructional coherence.

- Teachers strengthen their instructional capacity through team collaborations. Teachers reported, “The work has impacted my growth as a teacher, because of inquiry work, we’re leaving with different strategies we can use.” Another teacher reported, “It does help. We get to the same level with shared thoughts. We focus on a specific skill and content area next steps, to keep our student moving.” However, there is not yet evidence of inquiry work leading to the development of schoolwide instructional practices or increased achievement for all student subgroups.

- As a result of teacher team inquiry work and tracking of student data, students have shown progress toward goals. Progress toward goals for groups of students is evidenced by iReady data comparison from fall 2016 diagnostic assessments to winter 2017. In third grade, a 60 percent of students were above the mid-year goal of proficiency in math. In fourth grade, 76 percent of students were above their mid-year goal towards proficiency in math. In fifth grade, 50 percent of students were above their mid-level goal of proficiency in math. However, teacher team inquiry practices are not yet systematic and do not always result in mastery of goals for groups of students.
Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Curricula and tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Curricula promote college and career readiness for all students. Faculty members adjust curricula so that a diversity of learners have access and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Review of curricular documents revealed alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and New York State content standards as well as integration of the instructional shifts across grades and content areas. The school uses Core Ready curriculum for reading and writing. In math, GO Math! is used. A third-grade math curriculum map shows evidence of purposeful adjustment of lessons from the original proposed order, including reordering lessons to match the timeframe of the state testing window to ensure that important content was covered prior to state exams. Curriculum documents include evidence of modification by teachers by including resources that were not included in the adopted curriculum. Core Ready and Lit Life resources are merged into curricular documents across grades.

- Curricular documents across grades evidence consistent alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards and the integration of the math instructional shifts involving connecting problems to real life. For example, in a fifth-grade lesson plan, students calculate how many pages they would have to read each day during the summer in order to read a 1,364-page book. Another set of questions includes calculating the amount of pet food that pets eat. In addition, a third-grade math document includes measuring time intervals and using time intervals as applied to real life situations. Curricular documents included assignments evidencing integration of the English Language Arts (ELA) instructional shifts. For example, a fourth-grade curriculum map details that students will read and interpret poetry using details and examples from the text when drawing inferences. A fifth-grade pacing calendar shows writers analyze mentor texts and respond in writing. A color-coded article is used as an analysis of an editorial graphic organizer as students explain how reasons or evidence supports the opinion.

- The curriculum map for a fourth-grade ELA unit on the power to persuade includes scaffolding for English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs) by providing comprehensible input models such as sentence models to organize their speaking and writing in English. A fifth-grade math lesson plan includes identified students by name based on recent assessment results to receive appropriate supports. Supports include differentiated word problems, comparing and contrasting for the high-end group, identifying fractions and simplest forms for the middle group, and one word problem with basic content for the group who will work with the teacher. A first-grade lesson plan on features of non-fiction text includes differentiated groups such as a below grade-level group that works with the teacher and visuals to show comprehension and then create their own text features. The on-grade group completes the task with their group and on-level nonfiction readings to create three text features. The enrichment group completes the task with on-level readings and creates four text features.
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 curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Across classrooms, students are engaged in discussions with peers.

Impact

Students produce meaningful work products and take part in discussions that reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- The school’s articulated beliefs about how students learn best are when instruction is at their level and they can apply their learning in collaborative pairs and groups. In a third-grade class, the class was being led by a student while reading *Tight Times*, a story chosen as a reinforcement to the months’ ROAR core value connected to the school’s PBIS initiative. Students were sitting in groups of four or five and given the opportunity to turn and talk with their peers about the evidence within the text that supports the theme of the story. Students reported out to the whole class, “One of the tight times that happened in the story was they couldn't have roast beef and they had lima beans instead.” The teacher asked students, “What happened to daddy? How did this contribute to tight times?” The students discussed the question within their table groups. The teacher circulated the room and listened in on student discussions, “I’ve heard a lot of discussions about how hard it is on the family if that person lost his job.” Students were then given an opportunity to share out, “He can’t buy food, water, or clothes for the family.”

- In a first-grade classroom, students were being asked what can they conclude after reading the informational text *Snow Rabbits* during an ELA lesson exhibiting a Common Core instructional shift. The teacher asked them, “What can we conclude about snow rabbits after what we just read?” Students then turned to talk with a partner. The teacher listened in on the conversations, checking for understanding, and asked specific students to repeat what they were saying to their partner, “I think the rabbit looks like snow. He’s using camouflage.” The teacher used this as an opportunity to reinforce the key vocabulary, “She used a big word. What was that word?” The students responded, “Camouflage.” "What does camouflage mean?" Another student, offers “Same color, the rabbit looks like the same color as the snow. Snow is white." The teacher asked, “If I don’t know what the word is, where can I look?” Another student responded, “In the glossary.” After reading some more of the book to the students, the teacher had students turn and talk, asking them “What was the main idea of what we just read?” Students responded after their turn and talk, “Fur protects animals and makes them soft. Fur is hair that keeps them warm.” Across classrooms, student discussions and thinking were supported by teachers’ probing questions.

- During a second-grade class, students were engaged in an activity aligned with a Common Core instructional shift involving reading nonfiction biographies. Groups of students each presented their biography timeline in front of the class. Students annotated the biography and used index cards as a group to organize their talking points to discuss the biographical timeline. After presenting, the students in the class filled out a glows and grows peer assessment sheet. Students were then asked to offer feedback verbally during a class-wide discussion, including glows and grow to the group who presented. Across classrooms, student discussions reflected high levels of thinking and participation.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use and create assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school’s curricula. Across classrooms, teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact
Teachers’ use of assessments and rubrics provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement and teachers consistently make effective adjustments to support all students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use a traffic light system as a check for understanding during instruction. Following a small presentation by students on fractions, the teacher asked students to assess themselves using the handheld card system with color-coded cards in red, yellow, and green. Students place their cards down on their desks with the color they assessed themselves at. The teacher then asked students to join certain groups within the class led by the teacher and paraprofessionals. Each group’s activities were differentiated by level of student self-assessment and the teacher worked with the students who identified themselves as red on the traffic light and having the most trouble with understanding the fractions concept. Students in the teacher’s group benefitted from direct instruction with the teacher and the use of manipulatives to build their understanding of fractions.

- The schoolwide grading policy is designed to bring consistency across the school. Visual representation of one star, two stars, three stars, and four stars is aligned to exceeding, meeting, approaching, and far below with corresponding levels identified numerically as one through four. The grading policy is also aligned to performance level terminology from New York State academic exams. A high, mid, low gradation for grouping ones, twos, threes, and fours is aligned to corresponding percentage ranges as well. Teachers also use rubrics across classes to inform assessment of student work products. A student reported, “We do use rubrics and peer assessments. We look at students work and look at the rubric to see if it’s a 1, 2, 3, or 4.”

- Across classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher-written actionable feedback directing students to the steps they should take to strengthen their work. One example of feedback reads, “Your penmanship is improving, and your story events are organized in a sequence that makes sense. Work on adding dialogue and more details to describe the character’s actions, thoughts, and feelings.” Another example reads, “You worked so hard independently. Keep on using the sounds you hear in the words, along with your word wall.” Another example, “Work on theme – needs more explanation. Good ideas, great summary, less run-on sentences.” And finally, “Glow – Organization of paragraph structure. Grow – Work on transitional phrases and intro.” A student reported, “The feedback helps me understand the work better, and it helps you do better on the next assignment.”
Additional Finding

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<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 consistently convey high expectations to staff through ongoing feedback and professional learning aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teacher teams establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations for all students.

Impact

Ongoing communication and support by school leaders around classroom visits support teachers’ understanding and awareness of expectations around teaching and learning. Teacher teams are ensuring that ongoing and detailed feedback and guidance supports prepare students for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the standard for professionalism, quality instruction, and high expectations. Feedback includes, “Although you asked students some higher-level questions, you will need to ask more open-ended questions. Next steps: Please visit the Teacher Center, to speak with [UFT teacher support] concerning questioning skills and using the DOK [Webb’s Depth of Knowledge] wheel.” Another example of high expectations aligned to Danielson was evident in observation feedback, “[Danielson components] 3b and 3d – within your lesson plan and Smart Slide design, you have allowed for questioning and the time for assessment. This is evident by the questions you posed and the exit ticket you prepared. However, it is important for you to allot time within your lesson for students to develop their ability to answer questions and share out those responses in an organized discussion format.” Observations with specific feedback create a system of accountability for teachers.

- Teachers also receive a staff handbook from school leaders that reviews areas of schoolwide focus such as responsibilities, grading policy, homework policy, lesson plans, progress reports, student record folders, PBIS, attendance monitoring, and parent contact. A professional development calendar makes clear that school leaders support teachers in their understanding of expectations in addressing topics such as correlation between components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, enhancing English as a New Language instruction in the classroom, defining instructional rounds, and strengthening pedagogy practices in questioning and discussion techniques. In addition, the principal conducts data chats with teachers to review student progress and inform goal setting.

- The school’s culture for learning consistently communicates high expectations that help prepare students for their next level of education. The school distributes progress reports to students and parents in addition to report cards at the end of each of the three marking periods during the year. Teacher teams have developed use of a complexity wheel in classrooms to build students’ higher-level skills from remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create to prepare students for their next level of education. Teacher also replicate a middle school environment in departmentalized classes. Guidance supports include preparing students and parents for the middle school application process by hosting workshops and information evenings. A student reported, “My teacher prepares me for third grade, she gives us practice for ELA tests and our teachers make sure we do our homework and gives us a lot challenges to bring up our grades.”