Quality Review Report
2016-2017

P.S. 085 Great Expectations
Elementary 10X085
2400 Marion Ave.
Bronx
NY 10458

Principal: Theodore Husted

Dates of Review:
May 31, 2017 - June 1, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Buffie Whitfield
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. 085 Great Expectations 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>
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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 Findings</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 Findings</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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</tbody>
</table>
## School Culture

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>Additional Findings</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 Findings</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Systems for Improvement

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Findings</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 Findings</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 Findings</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 Celebration</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 Findings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

The majority of teachers participate in collaborations to look at data, resulting in a shared accountability for student success. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have built leadership capacity.

Impact

A positive culture of professional learning communities has taken root, with a system that allows teachers to have a voice in key decisions. There is enhanced communication about data trends that elevates the instructional capacity of teachers.

Supporting Evidence

- The Instructional Cabinet Team, comprised of teachers and administrators, use *Data Wise - A Step-by-Step Guide to Using Assessment Results to Improve Teaching and Learning* to strengthen their protocols in building professional learning communities. The majority of teachers collaborate in professional teams. Teachers are divided into grade bands and use this collaboration time to engage in analysis of data through inquiry practice, continually promoting improved achievement for all learners. For example, during teacher team meetings, teachers analyze longitudinal and class performance data. A review of collaborative team agendas and minutes revealed that teachers engage in discussions about gap analysis from summative assessments to determine trends and patterns of student outcomes. As a result, teachers are reflective and share a common lens to support instructional capacity.

- Distributive leadership is at the forefront of teacher-led collaborative meetings. The main focus of these meetings allows teachers latitude to guide discussions on student learning as well as how best to address any gaps that may surface. Teachers feel they have a real voice and decision-making power involving daily delivery of instructional content. For example, school leaders, within each grade level have established a rotation system of facilitators with the goal of building capacity among staff.

- The principal has identified teachers as department heads and meets with them regularly for their input in planning professional development, setting agendas and topics for team meetings, and making decisions about technology purchasing. Agendas reviewed identified participants of meetings, the areas of focus for each meeting, and next steps. As a result, teacher leaders meet with their respective teams to turnkey information and work with their peers. In addition, they relay the challenges teachers are facing to the principal to develop supports for their colleagues.
Area of Focus

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

Although teachers use rubrics aligned to the curricula to determine students’ needs, checks for understanding, and self-assessment are inconsistent across classes.

Impact

Assessment practices have yet to consistently lead to actionable feedback to meet students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- In some subject areas, particularly English Language Arts (ELA) and math, teachers use rubrics and other assessments to gauge student understanding of tasks. A review of some student work and assessments reflects grades with check marks or levels. Feedback reflecting strengths, areas of growth, and actionable next steps is reflected in only some work products. Comments on math work include, “I really like how you used an area model to show your work. For next time, let’s work on explaining our thinking using words. How did you get to your answer?” This comment was on an ELA task, “You did a nice job adding the elements of fantasy to your story. Can you add more details about why he turned into a potato?” Yet other work products and assessments only indicated the grade with no feedback, included comments with unclear next steps, or were uncorrected. During an interview, students shared examples of the types of feedback they receive from teachers. One student indicated that the teacher helped her understand how to add more to her story. Another student stated that he needs to show his work in math. Other students were unable to share strategies provided by teachers to improve the quality of their responses. Additionally, students had ungraded work including some work with incorrect responses. Since the answers or steps to solving problems were not provided, students did not know the correct answers, or how to solve the problems they got wrong.

- In some classrooms, teachers circulated to monitor students’ discussion and written responses, providing feedback, and/or pushing students’ thinking to provide more detail. For example, in a grade two class, during the group work activity, the teacher visited each group to check individual progress by asking questions to check understanding, yet in a math class, the teacher called on students whose hands were raised, but did not check in with other students. Some teachers use several strategies to check for understanding. However, such formative assessment data received is not consistently used to modify or make effective adjustments during instruction to meet the learning needs of students. Additionally, students shared during the interview that peer feedback is an inconsistent practice.

- Frequently, many of the rubrics used for assessment showed criteria circled or highlighted with no written feedback from the teacher. Moreover, in places where the teacher did provide rubric-aligned feedback, the feedback was about spelling, grammar, or conventions and not about analysis, explanation, or connections to textual evidence. In a student meeting, students were unable to state a next step for improving the quality of their work other than to cite improving grammar and punctuation or adding more details. Students struggled to explain how they would progress to the next level.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into task content, and opportunities for higher-level student thinking in student work products is limited.

Impact

Teaching practices do not consistently provide opportunities for many students, particularly high performing students, to engage in higher-order thinking, and across classrooms there is uneven participation in learning as evidenced through work products.

Supporting Evidence

- In some classrooms visited, students participated in turn and talks for a few minutes or students were called on and were able to explore their thinking. Likewise, in a few classes, the teachers presented students with challenging tasks that forced them to think deeply about the topic involved. This was the case in a grade four class where students compared how different characters in a story reacted to a social issue. Students identified characters’ actions in response to the issue. However, similar engagement in critical thinking tasks was not noted in other classrooms.

- In some classes, the level of rigor and questions for all students was evident, while in others it was uneven. In an ELA class, the teacher asked students to agree or disagree, but did not ask students why they agreed or disagreed, missing an opportunity for students to share their thinking and support their opinions with evidence. In another class, the teacher asked improperly phrased questions such as, “The little girl is, what?” and “He is going to do, what?” Responses to these questions generated only teacher-student-teacher interaction. Although students were prompted to answer questions, participation was low. These improperly phrased questions hindered the ability of the students to be cognitively engaged.

- Some teachers use varied strategies and resources for differentiation to promote participation from all learners, such as using Smartboards, but this was not seen consistently across classrooms. Teachers missed opportunities for explicit modeling and presentation of materials to make learning comprehensible for all students. For example, in a math class students received manipulatives to support their work, but the teacher did not directly model how to use them. In a grade four class, students reviewed science concepts and practices for reading a graduated cylinder. While there were five students and three adults in the classroom, students struggled to see the visual of the cylinder on the worksheet. Moreover, the teacher did not provide strategies to identify the milliliters. When a student expressed difficulty seeing the image of the cylinder on the photocopy, thus limiting his understanding of how to read the units, the teacher stated, “You got to trust your eyes.”
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
The school’s curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and integrate rigorous tasks and instructional shifts across grades and subjects.

Impact
Curricula and tasks promote college and career readiness and provide opportunities for all learners to engage in higher-order skills across grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses units from the *Teachers College Reading and Writing Project* and *Teachers College Writing Pathways*. Using pre-assessment data, teachers determine the priority standards for the unit and uses various program resources such as *EngageNY*, *GOMath!* and *Math Solutions* to construct meaningful and rigorous learning experiences for students. Although there is a high level of rigor in the curricula, differentiation was not well captured in the plans. Groups are identified in the plans reviewed for generic structures for differentiation. Questions to extend students’ thinking and provide access for all were not seen in the lesson plans reviewed. This hinders access to the curricula and tasks for individuals and groups of students, including the lowest third, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities. In the student interview, students spoke about the need to be challenged and wanting additional work and extensions.

- The school uses science and social studies scope and sequence. Additionally, science and social studies non-fiction content has been incorporated into ELA units. Performance tasks and project based learning are being integrated into the science curriculum. In the unit plan for grade five social studies, students are tasked to compare histories of groups in the Western Hemisphere utilizing timelines and to form hypotheses about the geological processes that shaped the Western Hemisphere, supporting these using evidence.

- Teachers use learning goals or success criteria to describe the knowledge and skills that students are required to learn. Lesson plans across subjects cite essential questions aligned to Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* and include domain specific vocabulary. Learning targets are aligned to the CCLS and content standards. In addition, some lessons include the use of guided practice and independent practice. A math unit plan includes essential questions, materials, learning goals, standards, and vocabulary. Supports include modeling, small group instruction, visuals, rubrics, word walls, and checklists indicating the expectations for the assigned task.
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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Findings

School administrators have developed structures to communicate and monitor implementation of expectations and provide training to staff to support set expectations. Teachers provide oral and written feedback on student progress towards school expectations connected to college and career readiness.

Impact

Teachers embrace a culture of learning aligned to verbal and written expectations set by school leaders. Families understand students’ progress toward the next level of learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leaders have created high levels of expectations that is communicated to staff via workshops, progress reports, and orientations. In addition, systems of peer-visitation and observations with feedback, including next steps and suggested workshops, emulate a culture where accountability is reciprocal between all stakeholders. Frequent cycles of observations hold staff accountable for meeting expectations for pedagogical practice. The principal shares his expectations with staff during faculty and professional development meetings. School leaders expressed the expectation that teachers understand student data to support students’ continued growth, as evidenced by a review of the professional development plan, agendas from professional learning sessions, and observations of teacher practice.

- Professional needs-based intervisitation, classroom observations, and timely feedback from classroom visits are discussed at teacher team meetings to norm practices, creating a strong accountability structure for meeting expectations.

- Teachers share and discuss student data and progress as well as other academic and social needs with parents. A school calendar is shared with the community and delineates important dates and events. Parents shared that teachers offer guidance and support and regularly send updates on their children’s progress via phone and email. Progress reports, report cards, and parent workshops enable staff and parents to exchange ideas and discuss goals aligned to the school’s expectations for student success. Parents stated that the school offers workshops to help them better understand the expectations of CCLS.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Professional Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders support teachers through frequent cycles of observations, meaningful feedback, and analysis of student work and data. There is an effective system of professional development created using teacher observation data to inform decisions.

**Impact**

Analysis of teacher data and training opportunities increase schoolwide practices, and teachers implement strategies that promote growth and reflection.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders conduct observations frequently based on cycles determined by the cabinet. A review of the feedback given to teachers reveals that school leaders provide resources for support such as next steps, professional development opportunities that include intervisitation, and/or peer coaching. One report includes actual student responses to indicate the level of teacher and student interaction.

- Teachers are assigned to work with peer collaborative and model teachers based on school leaders’ recommendations. Model and peer collaborative teachers are chosen based on Advance data around areas of strength to provide support to their colleagues. Other out-of-school coaches are provided to support staff to hone in on instructional areas for improvement, especially in ELA and math. Teachers reported that support from peer collaborative and model teachers and coaches has helped them learn student data and integrate instructional strategies.

- School leaders have strong systems for management, monitoring, and follow-up to teacher evaluation. The administration provides targeted professional development, peer and coach support, and mentor teachers to move toward best instructional practices for those not meeting pedagogical expectations or for those new to the profession. An analysis of trends in teacher performance ratings identified three components from the Danielson rubric: question and discussion, assessment, and student engagement—where improvement is needed. For example, a school leader stated to a teacher that active engagement is an important use of assessment in instruction.