Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 089 Bronx
K-8 School 11X089
980 Mace Ave.
Bronx
NY 10469

Principal: Ralph Martinez

Dates of Review:
April 25, 2017 - April 26, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Jorge Estrella
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>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School 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>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>
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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>Developing</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>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

All students and staff are engaged in advisories and community circles to support culture building and social-emotional support. The administration provides aligned ongoing professional development.

Impact

As a result, adults and students treat each other respectfully and student voice is welcomed and valued. The adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors is promoted across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers facilitate daily advisory periods for small groups of students and follow the Big Picture curriculum designed to promote student ownership while building trust, respect, and equality amongst students and adults. This time is an opportunity for students to gain experience in team building, problem solving, peer mediation, building friendships, and to understand how their interests intersect with the real world. For example, using the circles of trust approach during advisory, teachers engage students in lessons around questions such as “What creates identity?” and “What is my identity?” These topics have contributed to an increase in student engagement and promote students voice in school activities. For example, students petitioned to the principal for a film and cooking club. Students reported that advisories help them understand themselves and others better. One student said “I used to be very shy and had difficulties making friends, now my best friends are in my advisory class.” Each advisor monitors the academic, social, and emotional progress of students to assure that students are on track to meet grade-level goals. As a result, the school sustains an attendance rate of 93 percent across the school due to students not wanting to miss the sessions, which are held at the beginning of the school day.

- The school has implemented community circles, where students have opportunities to have open conversations across grades, showcase their talents and achievements, build trust, and give shoutouts to peers and teachers. Furthermore, a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program has been established as a systematic approach to teaching behavioral expectations throughout the school. The school matrix explains the schoolwide expectations of positive behaviors that students should be displaying in school every day. As part of the PBIS program, the school holds special assemblies in recognition of academic achievement, leadership, and attendance so that all students participate in these celebrations and have opportunities to contribute ideas, resulting in a common understanding of the high expectations at the school.

- School leaders emphasize respect and responsibility in character education and regularly plan multicultural themes in celebration of the different cultures and backgrounds represented in the school, culminating in community-wide assemblies that promote an inclusive culture and foster orderly and safe classrooms and hallways. As a result, 90 percent of the parents reported in the school survey 2016 that “My child’s teachers incorporate materials about different races, ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, and families into the curriculum to make learning more meaningful.” Furthermore, there are a low number of students involved in discipline related infractions as evidenced in the Online Occurrence Reporting System.

- School leaders ensured that all teachers receive professional development around the Big Picture curriculum which provides the curriculum for advisories. Teachers learned about the theory and key strategies for integrating the curriculum into their advisory periods as well as making connections between best practice in advisory and other content-area classes. In addition, teachers received professional development in using the Mindset book, community circles, and de-escalation. Teachers reported that these supports helped them develop activities to better engage students in lessons while promoting a positive classroom and school atmosphere.
Findings

Across classrooms, some groups of students were highly engaged in the lessons and received supports to successfully complete their assignments and demonstrate higher-order thinking. There were uneven levels of student thinking and participation across the school.

Impact

Inconsistencies across classrooms in providing entry points for all learners, limits opportunities for students to participate in rigorous discussions and become engaged in challenging tasks, thus inhibiting increased achievement for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Classrooms visited revealed that the pattern of teacher-to-student interaction in full class discussions was call and response, with a limited number of students in each class engaged. During full class discussions, teachers called on the few students who raised their hands or students worked in groups, but were not engaged in cognitive learning activities. In a grade eight English Language Arts (ELA) lesson, the teacher’s questions were low level, and provided little wait time. Two students called out or raised their hands to indicate understanding, while the majority of the class, including students with disabilities, did not participate.

- In classrooms visited, some students participated in class discussions where they were able to explore their thinking, justify their conclusions, and use evidence or examples to support their reasoning. In an advisory class, students were conferencing with their partner, then they created a mantra for their partner and shared out the mantra they created with the class. Each presentation was followed by student-led discussions. However, in a grade seven math class, although students were assigned to work in groups, and the teacher was meeting with a small group of students, the teacher led the small group instruction.

- In some classes teachers used strategies to facilitate high levels of student thinking and participation. For example, in a grade eight science class, students worked on a food web and identified the food chain. Students sat in groups and engaged in rich conversations about the flow of energy in different ecosystems and through different types of consumers. During the group activity, students demonstrated high levels of engagement, understanding of the content, and were able to elaborate on potential consequences if the food chain is disrupted. However, in another class, all students were assigned the same set of problems to use the formula for volume to find the volume of rectangular prisms, and only a few students demonstrated that they were able to complete the task. There were several student groups unable to move forward with the task because they did not understand what they were required to do. As a result of these inconsistencies, some groups of students are missing opportunities to meet their learning targets.

- In a grade four class, students were engaged in productive conversations discussing the role of African Americans during the American Revolution. During their conversation, students cited textual evidence using passages on loyalist and patriot perspectives. Students used protocols and prompts for accountable talk. In an English as a New Language (ENL) class, students were grouped based on their language acquisition level, and the teacher assigned differentiated work to each group using different approaches to engage students in the lesson such as total physical response, visuals, phonics, dictionaries, and 3D interactive computers where each student was assigned to different tasks. However, in other classes, the range of teaching strategies was limited, with over-direction by the teacher, and an inconsistent level of challenge, hindering the depth of learning.
Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Teachers use student work and assessment data to plan and further refine academic tasks across grades and content areas for all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Impact

The instructional team’s collaborative approach promotes curricular decisions that build coherence across subjects and engage students in tasks that promote thinking and prepare them for college and career.

Supporting Evidence

- Through a collaborative approach, school leaders and teachers adopted a Common Core Learning Standards-aligned curriculum for all content areas across grade levels. A review of curricula documents indicated that teachers in vertical English Language Arts (ELA) and math teams analyze the curricula across grade levels and develop schoolwide adjustments. For example, this year, in an effort to build coherence, the instructional team decided to use the same math curriculum for elementary and middle school.

- Curriculum plans include specific learning targets, multi-level guided questions, and instructional texts that are purposefully chosen for their alignment to the Common Core. In addition, one English Language Arts (ELA) unit of study contained a set of defined strategies aligned to instructional shifts, planned activities require students to engage in multi-step problem solving, argumentative writing, text-based response, and content-specific vocabulary. A grade four ELA unit of study provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate learning through an opinion essay in which they focus on the reasons for a particular opinion.

- Analysis of student work and ongoing review of data from iReady assessments, performance tasks, math baselines, and student writing samples inform teachers of the necessary refinements to the units of study to meet the needs of diverse learners. Supports from instructional coaches and assistant principals ensure teachers analyze student work to identify areas of progress and instructional gaps. As a result of the close examination of student work, school leaders and faculty members designed and implemented instructional strategies to include in lessons to meet the needs of the ELLs and students with disabilities. For example, the use of document cameras for visuals, use of headphones with computers, and the use of computers with interactive 3D technology to support language acquisition and interdisciplinary learning are some of the strategies established to provide extensions and supports to ELLs and students with disabilities.

- The review of lesson plans revealed that teachers used data from iReady to design differentiated learning opportunities in content and process with modifications that include the use of differentiated short text reading material, the use of a variety of graphic organizers for all learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, and provided evidence of targeted groupings as students move toward their learning targets.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments and rubrics that are becoming aligned to the school’s curriculum and assessment policy. Teacher’s classroom assessment practices reflect an inconsistent use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Teachers use rubrics and assessments in the classroom but there is a lack of evidence that these practices are used to consistently make effective adjustments or to provide actionable feedback to students, thus hampering student mastery of learning targets.

Supporting Evidence

- Students reported that they use rubrics and checklists in some classes and stated that teachers “Always give us feedback in the classroom.” However, a review of student work products across subjects revealed inconsistent feedback to students. For example, while some of the feedback is actionable such as “Continue to follow through with showing your work and use the CUBES method when solving word problems” or “Your second paragraph is not strong. Your evidence does not show that Uncle Robert received help. Your second piece of evidence in your last paragraph is not relevant”, the majority of work is assessed using percentages or circled rubrics.

- The principal reported that while teachers are required to check for understanding in various ways, including teacher questions to students, do nows, entry/exit slips, quizzes, conferences, rubrics, skills trackers, and other checklists and then provide them with immediate feedback via conferencing with note taking, this was not evidenced across classrooms visited. Some teachers circulated but took no notes and gave students feedback on procedures rather than on skills and content. For example, in some classrooms, teachers circulated to monitor students’ discussion and written responses and provided feedback or pushed students’ thinking to provide more detail. For example, a grade eight science teacher, during the group work activity, visited each group to check group and individual progress, and provided support for those students who needed assistance by allowing them to explain their thought process or by pairing them with students who have good understanding of the task. In a grade four ELA class, the teacher also circulated about the room checking for student progress but did not allow the students enough time explain their thinking, nor provide feedback to the students. In other classes, teachers were not observed to be checking for understanding.

- In some classrooms, teachers used rubrics and other assessment practices, yet provided limited guidance and feedback to meet the needs of all learners. For example, during a science ecology lesson on the food web, the students were asked to work in pairs and create a food web, and the teacher then provided students a self-assessment checklist. While doing that, students demonstrated familiarity with the self-assessment activity. However, this practice is yet to be implemented in most classrooms. Furthermore, in the meeting with students, most of them did not recall being involved in self-assessment activities.

- Although some teachers use several strategies to check for understanding, they are not utilizing the assessment data received to modify or make effective adjustments during instruction to meet the learning needs of students. For example, during the grade four ELA class while students were discussing African Americans during the American Revolution, the teacher was taking notes of their interactions, and at the mid-point of the conversation, the teacher redirected the discussion to ensure all students engaged in the conversation. However, the practice of using formative assessment information to make on-the-spot adjustments to the lesson was not observed in other classrooms.
Findings

School leaders promote teacher professional growth and reflection with effective feedback grounded in the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* rubric, leading to improved schoolwide instructional practices. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations for students that are aligned to college and career readiness and provide ongoing feedback to families on student progress.

Impact

Faculty and staff receive training on schoolwide expectations and are held accountable. Families are well informed about the progress their children are making to meet expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to faculty and staff via staff handbook, weekly newsletter, ongoing professional development sessions, and faculty meetings. Faculty members are provided with opportunities to attend off-site and in-house professional learning sessions to promote the improvement of pedagogical practices schoolwide. Professional development supports the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, focusing on questioning and discussion techniques, as well as preparation to strengthen curricular coherence across grades with a focus on the instructional core. In addition, the principal communicates high expectations to staff through frequent cycles of observation and feedback to teachers aligned to the school's instructional focus and to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* via formal and informal observations followed with actionable feedback. For example, “Higher-level questions should be included in your lesson plan. This will help you be prepared to ask students challenging higher-level questions. To support you in your next steps for future lessons and your delivery of instruction, we will meet every Tuesday afternoon...” Teachers reported that professional learning opportunities are offered in different formats. They have twice a month professional learning opportunities on Mondays, targeted intervisitations, as well as one-one-one support from instructional coaches and school leaders.

- School leaders and teachers use multiple ways to communicate with families regarding learning and next steps for students. For example, families regularly receive teacher notices, phone calls, school monthly calendars, and student progress reports. Parents stated that the online grading platform provides them with 24-hour access to their children's progress and any concern that needs their immediate attention, in addition to emails they regularly receive informing them about student academic progress. They also praised the opportunity to have student-led conferences during the parent-teacher conferences as well as having and advisor as a point person to address the academic and social-emotional needs of their children. As a result, in the 2016 school survey 93 percent of the parents indicated that “My child's school communicates with me in a language and in a way that I can understand” and 93 percent of teachers say that teachers at this school work closely with families to meet student needs.

- The school provides ongoing workshops to parents with a focus on academic expectations and supporting students at home. For example, grade six teachers present the math curriculum to parents and provided them with strategies such as games to support the foundational skills that students need in order to meet grade six common core standards. The school also offers parents’ workshops to help them understand students’ grades and scores, as well as workshops for high school articulation. In addition, teachers provide workshops for parents on how to use the online grading platform. As a result, parents are informed about their children’s progress and partnering with the school’s staff to support their children to the path to college and career readiness.
**Quality Indicator:** 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development  
**Rating:** Proficient

**Findings**

The majority of teachers participate in collaborations to share best practices and look at student work and data, thus driving ongoing refinement of curriculum and resulting in a shared accountability for student success. Teachers adjust instructional plans aimed at addressing diverse learner needs. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have built leadership capacity.

**Impact**

As a result, a positive culture of professional learning communities has taken root with increased trust in distributed leadership. There is enhanced communication about instructional outcomes and trends across subjects and grades, that elevates the instructional capacity of teachers.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The majority of teachers collaborate in professional teams. Teachers are divided into grade bands that meet twice a week. Teachers use this collaboration time to engage in norming and analysis of student work through inquiry practice, development and evaluation of common assessments, implement schoolwide instructional practices, embed schoolwide goals, and continually promote improved achievement for all learners. For example, during teacher team meetings, teachers discuss instructional planning artifacts and analyze class performance data. They also share how to better engage students, including ELLs, through the use of scaffolds, such as bilingual glossaries or graphic organizers, or strategies to incorporate technology into lessons. The 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 students' outcomes and teaching practice.

- Teacher teams participate in book study sessions that further support the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Teachers engage in text conversations about their teaching practice around suggested ideas from the text *Academic Conversations: Classroom Talk that Fosters Critical Thinking and Content Understandings* by Marie Crawford and Jeff Zwiers, *Teach Like a Champion* by Doug Lemov, and *The Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* by Carol S. Dweck. Teachers meet bi-weekly and use protocols to share and deepen their understanding of their assigned chapter, in alignment to their teaching practice. Teachers reported that their participation in collaborative teacher team meetings and the book study sessions has contributed to elevating the level of conversations about instruction, while promoting meaningful partnerships to support their professional growth. In addition, the school is part of The Learning Partners Program where teachers and school leaders are involved in interschool collaborations where faculty members have opportunities to share best practices and enhance their professional network. As a result of these collaborations, school leaders reported that planning for effective instruction has showed improvements as reflected in *Advance* reports.

- 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, teacher teams were able to decide on the implementation of an early reading intervention program to support first grade students. In addition, school leaders, within each grade level, have established a rotation system of facilitators with the goals to build capacity among staff. Also, based on observation data, teachers participate in intervisitations to share best practice.