Quality Review Report
2016-2017

P.S. 109 Sedgwick
Elementary 09X109
1771 Popham Ave.
Bronx
NY 10453
Principal: Josette Claudio

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

Lead Reviewer: Rosemary Stuart
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Celebration to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Focus to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as Additional Finding. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School


School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

*To what extent does the school...*

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

The school community makes decisions through the lens of their core belief in the partnership between students, parents, and staff. School leaders ensure that there are structures to sustain this partnership.

Impact

There is a safe and inclusive culture that extends from the classroom to the community. Teachers and staff know children well and celebrate the development of academic and personal behaviors that help them prepare for the future.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have put practices in place to ensure that a culture of positive attitudes permeates the school. They have worked with peer schools in the Learning Partners Program to refine their core belief that includes building a culture of leadership within a partnership between students, parents, and staff that acts “with integrity, resiliency, and compassion” as well as encouraging “reflective learners, problem solvers, and independent critical thinkers.” As part of the Positive Behavioral Intervention System, students earn *starbucks* when they exhibit the qualities of the school’s vision. They redeem these awards for school supplies and for chances to win prizes.

- Teachers find creative ways to reinforce positive academic and social-emotional behaviors. Some students proudly wear lanyards with multiple brag tags around their necks. The laminated brag tags celebrate efforts students make to work hard, problem-solve, help other students, collaborate in groups, or do well on an assignment. One classroom teacher has a chart outlining the rules for brag tags that states, “Your teacher wants to brag about the good choices you make.” Students actively practice the habit of persistence. In some classrooms, children wear superpower capes to remind them to keep trying to do their best work.

- Teachers implement units of study on resolving conflict in partnership with the Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility and actively involve students in initiatives to improve the learning environment. One student wrote an essay in which she explained the importance of finding a win-win solution in order to avoid fights. Students in grades three, four, and five receive two full days of training to serve as peer mediators. Teachers refer students to participate in this program and school leaders expanded it to include younger students identified as “peace keepers” in grades kindergarten through two. Students agreed that this program helps them to solve problems themselves. When asked if there was one thing they would like to change about this school, a student replied, “I want everyone to make the right choices,” reflecting a widely-held belief in the strength of members of the school community to support each other. According to the 2016 School Survey, 92 percent of parents feel their child is safe at school and the rate of suspensions is below one percent.

- Classes receive coupons for the school store for high levels of attendance. Teachers, school aides, the parent coordinator, attendance teacher and principal serve on the attendance team and routinely outreach to family members to ensure attendance issues are addressed swiftly. The attendance rate at the school is over 90 percent. Parents agreed that the teachers know their children well and they are informed immediately through email or text message if their child is absent, or if the teacher feels there is an issue that needs discussion. One parent said that her child loves receiving certificates for perfect attendance, and strives to maintain it.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Focus</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality Indicator:</td>
<td>2.2 Assessment</td>
<td>Rating: Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings**

Assessment practices, such as tracking student performance during group work, are not consistently aligned to the instruction and curricula. Some teachers use ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

**Impact**

Feedback to students is not always actionable with some missed opportunities to guide students in improving their achievement. Adjustments to curricula are not consistently made in order to meet the needs of all students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Some teachers track student performance using forms on which they record the teaching point and anecdotal evidence of how students are performing individually and as members of a group. On one tracking sheet, a teacher noted that she had reminded a student to use transition words to show details. On the same sheet, the teacher noted that data from a recent weekly assessment showed “these five students need support in finding text evidence.” In another class, the teacher noted the names of students who had misconceptions about using various strategies, but there was little evidence to determine how this kind of information is used to adjust instruction. The use of these trackers was seen in a few classes, but not consistently across grades and content areas.

- Feedback to students is not consistently actionable and there are often missed opportunities for teachers to provide next steps to students. One teacher praised a first-grade student who had written a story, using invented spelling, and illustrated a multi-page story about pizza. The teacher suggested that the student should “think of a catchy introduction and ending to get your reader’s attention.” Another teacher indicated the performance level for various criteria on an opinion writing rubric for grade three. The student earned a level three for spelling, which includes the description, “The writer got help from others to check his spelling and punctuation before he wrote his final draft.” Although there were multiple spelling and sentence construction errors in the essay, they were not noted or corrected by the teacher and the written feedback did not address them, thus missing an opportunity to provide actionable and meaningful next steps to the writer.

- Some students self-reflect on their work and include the steps they will take to improve their work in the future. One student used a literary essay self-reflection form to note that she was proud of finding more details about a character and she would be working on making her writing more interesting. Feedback from the teacher asking the student “to include stories you wrote to prove your point based on the text” was vague. It is not clear how the student’s self-assessment was used to target instructional support in future lessons.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

School leaders give teachers feedback to ensure alignment with the standards, integration of the instructional shifts, and the inclusion of rigorous tasks that emphasize higher-order skills.

Impact

Unit and lesson plans promote college readiness skills, such as computational fluency, and rigorous academic tasks are accessible for a variety of learners.

Supporting Evidence

- All lesson plans reference and have learning objectives, tasks, and assessments that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards or content standards. Teachers use curricular resources from Teachers College at Columbia University and from online sources, such as EngageNY. Teachers at this school are familiar with these materials and have revised and refined their lessons as their students have changed from year to year. In math, the instructional shift of building computational fluency is consistently reflected in lesson plans. For example, a warm up activity in a kindergarten lesson had the teacher display cards with different patterns of dots and spaces, when the children knew the number of dots and the number of spaces, they would silently raise their hand and wait for a signal to say the number aloud.

- The principal gives feedback to teachers on their lesson plans to ensure alignment with the standards and with the instructional focus that was collectively determined for the year. The instructional cabinet determined that there should be a focus on math planning and instructional strategies, which is reflected in the work this school community is doing as part of the Learning Partners Program. School leaders conduct informal observations with a focus on curricular adjustments and give teachers feedback on their planning for higher levels of student engagement.

- Most tasks planned for lessons are rigorous and challenge students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, to engage in higher-order thinking. Many tasks also have real-world and interdisciplinary connections. A grade three science lesson for a class that included students with disabilities on simple machines and inclined planes began with a picture of Egyptian pyramids. The students would be asked to discuss how the heavy stones were lifted to build them. The lesson plan continued with an investigation of the force needed to lift common objects.

- A lesson plan outlined tasks to be provided in English and Spanish for students with different ability levels. Students would be expected to conduct an investigation, using paper models of lengths of wood, to determine the fractions represented by different sized cuts. Another lesson for fourth grade students addressed annotation skills and how they could be used to help ensure that all parts of the question would be answered in an extended written response.
Findings
Teachers group students for instruction to increase opportunities for rigorous student-to-student discussion and high levels of thinking and to provide scaffolded entry points for a variety of learners.

Impact
All students are engaged in challenging tasks and participate in discussions of their thinking and learning.

Supporting Evidence
- Lessons are implemented to increase opportunities for students to engage in student-to-student discussion. Pairs of students in a kindergarten class were tossing cubes onto a mat divided into two sections – the ocean and the beach. They were writing number sentences to represent the sum of the number of cubes that landed on each section. One student said that the result of his toss should be written as four plus four. His partner agreed and said, “We make a great team.” In one class, students responsibly moved into their partnerships to work and one student explained, “I know I am partner A because of the math partners chart” that was posted in the room.

- Students are encouraged to ask questions and explore the learning to reach the objectives. In one lesson, the objective that students would investigate was how the amount of force needed to lift a load decreases with an inclined plane. When the teacher was modeling the procedure the children would use for the investigation, a student wondered, “Does it matter how fast you pull?” The teacher encouraged the students to think of a hypothesis to find out the answer to that question.

- In an Integrated Co-Teaching class, both teachers were working with specific groups of children. One group was discussing how to identify character traits through annotation of the text, *The Discontented Rock*, while the other group was discussing the descriptive words that enrich the setting of the story. This same strategy was used in a math lesson on partitioning a whole into fractions during which ELLs worked with the support of the English as a New Language teacher while other students worked independently. Charts in classrooms with ELLs emphasized the development of social and academic vocabulary in both Spanish and English. A chart used in a social studies lesson showing pictures of natural resources and a map of the thirteen colonies was labeled in both languages. A classroom adapted to be used by students preparing to perform the musical, *Annie*, has signs over the chairs arranged along one wall that remind students “This is your audience” and “Esta es su audiencia.”

- In a grade three writing class, students were highly engaged in looking for details from *Otter in the Cove* to extend and add elaboration to their writing. Students were self-motivated and clear on the expectation that they make a plan for their writing, include details from the text that must “make sense,” and write at least four to five paragraphs and more than one page. A first-grade student produced a ten-page illustrated book of facts about sharks. She noted, using inventive spelling, that sharks are sneaky and when their fins stick out of the sea they scare people away.
Findings
School leaders, teachers, and parents communicate effectively and regularly about professional expectations and what children need to prepare for college and career.

Impact
Mutual accountability for student progress is ensured through the strong partnership between school leaders, teachers, staff, and parents.

Supporting Evidence
- The principal communicates expectations for teachers in the staff handbook and in weekly messages. A recent message explained the alignment between the school's instructional focus, the component of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* component regarding engaging students in learning, and the schools' professional development goals. The message reminded teachers about the need to differentiate instruction by “engaging students in data driven, small group work, and partner talk.”

- School leaders and staff hold each other accountable for building the culture of learning and support that includes the wider school community. Staff members noted how responsive the school leaders are in sustaining community partnerships that impact the entire community, such as Edible Schoolyard. Teachers and staff extend this program into the classroom, with the support of school leaders, so that it influences the writing curricula in addition to providing healthy food choices and nutrition education.

- School leaders provide training to support teachers in improving their practices. School leaders organized professional development on topics such as conferring with students, promoting small group work, developing foundational reading skills, and conducting inquiry work. School leaders also hold teachers accountable through the formal and informal observation process. One observation reminded a teacher about the instructional focus for the year and suggested some strategies the teacher could use to ensure students maintain engagement during independent reading. Another observation directed a teacher to be more explicit about how she could modify instruction based on data collected during the mini-lesson.

- Teachers partner with parents to increase the academic performance of their children. There are workshops for parents to learn what their child will be expected to do on State tests. One workshop had parents look at samples of their children’s short responses and compare them to an anchor paper exemplary response. Parents then used the short response scoring rubric to determine how many points their children would earn and to plan ways to help them develop skills needed to be successful on the tests. When parents expressed concern that not all classroom libraries had a sufficient variety of leveled texts, school leaders worked with teachers to address this concern. At a recent book fair, teachers noted that many parents were aware of their children’s reading level and asked for books to challenge them.

- In addition to describing the expectations for attendance, behavior, and daily procedures, the parent handbook outlines academic expectations for students and gives parents information about supporting their children. For example, parents are encouraged to answer their children’s questions but to allow them to do their own assignments. In addition, the handbook informs parents of the reading levels that represent benchmark goals for quarterly progress by grade.
### Additional Finding

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

**Findings**

Teachers are engaged in regular team meetings that include collegial Teaching Rounds. Teams of teachers look at student work to analyze learning needs of their focus students.

**Impact**

Teaching practices improve and become stronger through inquiry and sharing of best practices among team members.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers participate in Teacher Rounds, which are modeled on the grand rounds practices of the medical profession. Teachers observe a colleague teaching a lesson followed by conversation to examine the practices and student learning outcomes from the lesson. The teachers are urged to think about the problem of practice that is observed during the Teacher Rounds “as a learning opportunity rather than a problem you have to solve.” One teacher noted that she had adopted a practice of posting academic vocabulary for each lesson. She noted that her students are now using the words more frequently and independently in their writing, and that they are no longer asking her “how do you spell this word.” Another teacher noted that when a new instructional strategy resulted in zero out of five students improving their short written responses, she changed the strategy to one that takes “test language and puts it in kid friendly language.” After this adaptation of practice, three out of five students improved this skill.

- A team of kindergarten teachers were observed using the Collaborative Assessment Conference Protocol to look at student work from general education students as well as students with disabilities to determine if expectations for the unit were accomplished. The task was to draw and write or explain what was illustrated about dogs. Teachers noted that some of the children were able to draw dogs and other objects like toy bones and food dishes. Other children were able to draw a circle and elaborate in conversation with the teacher. Using a chart that illustrates the development of drawing and transcription and a rubric for informational writing for kindergarten, they determined the grade level reflected in the work of each student from pre-kindergarten to grade one.

- After analyzing student work as a team, members made connections between the work of the students who were the focus of their inquiry work, and other children in their classes. They determined several strategies to implement with their whole classes, such as using stencils for shapes, and utilizing a process for students to use student-centered discussions that included having the student “say to yourself, say to a partner” and then “say to another group.” Teachers indicated that they refined their curriculum map to spend more time on this informational writing unit before moving into the persuasive writing unit and that this change has led to more students demonstrating grade-level writing skills.

- Teachers, including cluster teachers and special education teachers, meet in common planning teams and inquiry teams by grade and by content areas. Teachers agreed that working in collaborative groups has helped them to “make the curriculum realistic” and to develop facility with different strategies that they learn from each other. A new teacher explained that she had started working at this school as a substitute teacher and chose to work permanently at this school, from among several other offers, because she was “impressed by the collaboration; that was the environment I wanted to be part of.”