Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 111 Seton Falls
Elementary 11X111
3740 Baychester Ave.
Bronx
NY 10466

Principal: Celina Gutiérrez

Dates of Review:
January 31, 2017 - February 1, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Daisy Concepción
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. 111 Seton Falls 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>To what extent does the school...</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>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>
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</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Focus</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>Developing</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>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Focus</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>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 Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings

Distributive leadership through vertical teams ensures that the majority of teachers are engaged in professional collaborations where they have a wide latitude in supporting school goals.

Impact

Vertical teams have strengthened teacher's instructional practices and have built leadership so that teachers have a key voice in decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet in a structured inquiry process in both vertical and horizontal teams to look at student work and make both curricular and instructional adjustments in both English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. In one meeting, teachers looked at student work and grouped students into a low, medium, and high group and shared observations about student work at each level. As teachers shared out observations for these students, they looked for patterns in student performance and compared these with their initial predictions about student misconceptions. Teachers looked at the student work and identified student's computational errors, challenges, and use of strategies. They decided on which component of lessons would be repeated based on their observations. Teachers also reflected on their practices and stated that one of the things that they have learned is to monitor “how” they were teaching, as much as “what” they were teaching. Teachers stated that this math is new and different than how they had learned and if they wanted students to incorporate the math shifts, they needed to resist “old” ideas like carrying over when teaching students to re-group. Teachers stated that the new math program strengthened their instructional practice, as they now understand what the Common Core Learning Standards demand.

- In two different teacher team meetings, teachers stated that the new school curriculum in both ELA and math have given them a structured way to engage students. In one group, teachers spoke about how the new ELA curriculum gives students a voice in writing and a way to talk about literature. Teachers spoke about the use of text dependent questions and the use of evidence in both writing and discussion. In another team meeting, teachers spoke about the math rubric in their new math program and how this rubric has allowed students to monitor their thinking and empowered them to talk about math. One teacher stated that he now has a clear understanding of rigor and student conversation and how to plan. He said, “I kept feeling like I was falling behind and I did not know how to meet student needs. With this curriculum and the teacher teams, I now feel like I know how to differentiate to plan more effectively.”

- The entire school is structured in vertical teams that meet across different content and specialty areas. In a consultancy model, teachers meet with one of the school leaders who shares student data trends from observations and progress on school goals. Teacher teams discuss the issues and decide what course of action to take. One teacher on the vertical team captures the data points and next steps draws up a memorandum that is distributed schoolwide. Vertical teams then meet with their grade to begin to work on implement plans. One such memorandum was the implementation of a new school practice to support small group instruction. This memorandum focused on what the school calls the 10-10-10 literacy block which allows a teacher to split up a 30-minute block to provide students with 10 minutes of guided reading, 10 minutes of conferring and 10 minutes of small group instruction including skill building or sight-word assessment. This practice generated by a memorandum by the horizontal team on using lesson planning templates, a rotations schedule template and suggested strategies for implementation demonstrating how teams of teachers have a key voice in decisions effecting student learning across the school.
Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:** 1.4 Positive Learning Environment

**Rating:** Developing

**Findings**

The school is developing an approach to culture-building, discipline, and social emotional supports through the Positive Behavior Intervention System. The school is developing structures to ensure targeted social emotional learning, child development and advisement supports for students.

**Impact**

There are inconsistencies in the approach to student emotional learning and supports have not resulted in a conducive school culture where students and adults treat each other respectfully and student voice is valued. Supports do not consistently align with student learning needs and so not all children are known well by one adult.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In a meeting about the school's approach to culture building and supporting student emotional development, teachers spoke about creating discipline structures to reduce incidents during lunch by having students assigned to lunchroom clean up. One teacher spoke about his beginning work to develop a rubric for Positive Behavior Intervention Support. Another teacher said there were monitors in the upper grades that helped in lower grade classrooms. While there were many discussions, none of these discussions focused on developing student leadership skills or valuing student voices, conversations focused on discipline. In one kindergarten class, an upper grade student appeared at the door as the teacher was teaching. The teacher did not recognize this student as a volunteer and asked what she wanted. When the student stated that she was there as a support, the teacher asked the student to take a seat as she continued to teach. There was no role or expectations for this volunteer who had come to assist in the classroom.

- While the tone of the school is generally respectful and safe, students stated that the tone in the classrooms is not always respectful between students or between students and teachers. Many of the students agreed that teachers’ inconsistencies in dealing with behaviors or with setting up a sense of community in the classrooms resulted in interruptions in their learning. Some students stated that in some classes, it seemed as if teachers were not always invested in their class. This then resulted in some students who would normally behave, being off task. One student said, “If the teacher allows another student to knock things down and say mean things in the class, then this lets us know that this behavior is ok and that makes other students act up, too.”

- When asked how the school is structured so that each child is known well by one adult, teachers spoke about modifications in Individualized Educational Programs and grouping students. When pressed, teachers spoke about incentives in their classrooms and the voting that they had done with students to select a school mascot. Not only were teachers not able to talk about a schoolwide structure in place to support students, most teachers, except for one kindergarten teacher, were unable to share the routines in their classrooms for building community and inclusion. As supports do not align with student needs, this limits the opportunities for all students being known well by at least one adult.

- When asked, “Is there an adult in the school who you can go to if you needed help?” there was a long period of silence in a student meeting. When asked again, students hesitated. With prompting of “Is there one adult here at the school who cares?” Two students said, “My principal. I can go to her because I know that she cares and she listens to what we have to say.” Students chorally agreed that the principal is always available to listen. This was observed multiple times over the review as students came up to the principal to ask to speak with her.
### Additional Finding

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

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula consistently emphasize rigorous habits.

#### Impact

School leaders have made purposeful decisions to build coherence and promote college and career readiness by selecting curriculum that focuses on active engagement through discussion and ensure that all students are consistently engaged in higher-order thinking across grades and subjects.

#### Supporting Evidence

- In first grade, students are engaged in writing a personal narrative focusing on just one scene. Students are expected to write a story in sequence to develop the story and have a strong beginning, middle, and end that use details to help the reader understand the story. This unit engages student brainstorming to generate a list of topics and working with a writing checklist to engage in peer conferencing, as well as the revision process for publishing.

- In second grade, students engage in narrative writing aligned to the Common Core by studying mentor texts to learn how to use story elements such as: setting, characters, plot and problem, and solution to their narratives. Students use description of thoughts and feelings including the use of temporal words to signal event orders. This writing sample goes through drafting, revisions, editing, and publishing.

- In fourth grade, students are exposed to the Common Core Learning Standard of Operation and Algebraic Thinking. Students learn to solve multi-step problems involving two numbers using the four operations. They also learn to represent problems using equations with a letter standing for an unknown quantity. Students learn to assess the reasonableness of answers using mental computations and estimation strategies including rounding.

- In kindergarten, students are understanding New York State Science to identify patterns of change necessary to make predictions about future behaviors and conditions. They also create models such as diagrams and maps to represent various real world aspects to explain or analyze attributes. In one unit, students compare the night and day skis to understand the rotation of the Earth around the sun.

- In first grade, students explore the concept of citizens and community by looking at community workers in their neighborhood. Students learn about the different services provided by community workers and begin to understand rules and laws and the rights of citizens in the community.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teaching practices are beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about increasing rigor by asking higher level questions and having students explain their thinking. However, instructional strategies and activities do not yet lead to consistency in student discussion or work products.

Impact

Uneven engagement limits opportunities to participate actively in peer to peer discussion to deepen student thinking. As such, not all students are able to demonstrate higher order thinking in discussion and in their work products.

Supporting Evidence

- In all classrooms visited, teachers listed the skill, strategy and a range of Depth of Knowledge questions specific to the lesson. Teachers provided opportunities during the student work time for students to share their thinking and provide reasons for their ideas and opinions. Across all math classes visited, the math rubric was on every table and teachers held students accountable to using the rubric to guide their work. This practice was not observed in other subjects including English Language Arts. Most teachers used turn and talk to prompt thinking.

- In a fourth-grade math class, students worked on using various strategies to solve problems. All students were actively engaged in sharing strategies and in proving their solutions. Students were heard using academic vocabulary when agreeing or challenging other’s thinking while the teacher monitored the tables and took notes. At one table, a student was heard saying, "We already proved that we know how to use the break apart method, partial products and regrouping. I think that we should go with the area model because it is the easiest and it will give us time to develop a rule about this problem because if you look here on the rubric, it says that if we want to get a four in this area, we need to come up with a rule that applies to the problem." This degree of high level of student thinking and participation was not seen in other classes.

- In a fifth-grade class, students worked independently on wide range of questions on a laminated key ring while the teacher conferences with a small group. One student was using a map to outline what she had read in the chapter. Students wrote in their reader response notebooks, others used post its. When asked how they will use questions in their learning, students stated that they just answer the questions and move to the next chapter. They said that their notes were not used in class discussions. Some students stated that they did not understand the book. A review of their notebooks demonstrated very few notes that were related to the book or content.

- In a first-grade math class, the teacher asked students to look at word problems and begin to devise a strategy for solution by having them identify the clue math words like “fly away” to determine what information was known and what information was needed. Students worked in small groups discussing their strategies for determining the solution. All students were engaged in thinking and discussion and the teacher pushed their thinking by asking students to use a different strategy to check their solutions as reflected in the rubric. This type of engagement and background building was not observed in a kindergarten class working on a science lesson comparing the night and day sky. In this class, the teacher prompted the students to think about where the sun goes to at night. Students did not have the background information needed to be able to answer the series of questions that the teacher asked. As a result, turn and talk opportunities were unsuccessful as students were unable to discuss the topic.
Additional Finding

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

While teachers use checklists and rubrics generally aligned to their school's curriculum, there is no coherent approach towards their use. Inconsistency in the use of checks for understanding limits opportunities to access student need.

Impact

As a result, rubrics provide limited feedback to students and there are missed opportunities for teachers to gauge students understanding to be able to make effective and immediate adjustments to meet student learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- In a fourth-grade math class, the teacher gave students a worksheet where she had deliberately embedded several errors such as misaligned problems that involved place value so she could collect data to access what students understood. She asked the students to work in groups to identify and correct the errors. At some tables, students actively discussed the errors while at other tables, students worked independently on completing a brace map. At about ten minutes, the teacher stopped the class and clarified that the focus of the lesson was not completing the brace map, but working on the math problems. This adjustment while effective came late in the lesson and hindered opportunities for students to engage in any discussion to deepen their understanding. In a first-grade class, the teacher used turn and talk as a check for understanding for students looking at a mentor text about scorpions on an interactive white board, but could not listen to student conversations from the front of the room and missed the opportunity to make adjustment to pacing to meet student needs.

- In a self-contained class for students with Individualized Educational Program, the teacher monitored students writing a feature article. Students used a tree map to list out subheadings in their information. The teacher had provided students with a model to follow for their writing. As the teacher monitored the class, she realized that students were at the next step and used a mid-lesson interruption to ask the students to look at the model and think about one thing that they could add to their writing. Students stated that they could add a caption, a picture or a diagram to their subheading.

- There is an inconsistency in the use of rubrics across the school even on the same grades. A review of bulletin boards showed a sample ELA checklist that asked if the punctuation and spelling was correct with categories of “not yet” and “starting to.” Sometimes the checklist contained a clear check and sometimes appeared that the check was made by a child. In a student meeting, a kindergarten student with a similar checkmark stated that she completed the checklist and not the teacher. Both the checklist in the hallway and the one accompanying the kindergarten student’s work did not have any written teacher feedback. An editing checklist for second grade focused on details and dialogue. The use of transition words contained a place for the student and the teacher to check off items but there was no written feedback to the student. On another bulletin board, all the first-grade student work had a narrative progression rubric stapled to the work, but the rubric was completely blank. There was no checkmark in the boxes and no written feedback. Feedback on the math rubric attached to a kindergarten student’s work read, “Evidence of analyzing the situation in mathematical terms and extending prior knowledge is present.” However, on the bulletin board next door, kindergarten feedback was, “You wrote 2 correct and used number sentences and symbols. Next time box the action words.” Thus, across many rubrics, students receive limited feedback to improve the quality of their work.
Findings

School leaders and staff are developing expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations for all students with feedback and advisement.

Impact

As a result, families do not receive ongoing feedback to help understand student progress towards college and career readiness. Teams of teachers and staff do not offer ongoing and detailed feedback and advisement that prepares students for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- In a meeting with parents, they stated that while there is some information on an online grading system used by the school, this online system is updated infrequently so that it is not reflective of student progress. They stated that the information provided by this online system has no context as they are not sure what is being measured and what the grading means. They stated that they know that there are multiple assessments in the school including a program that measures children's reading level, but they do not know the data on their students. They stated that there is not always clarity or transparency in the information that teachers share with them about student achievement. One parent stated that even the "approachability" of the teachers varied from individual teacher to another. They stated that while there is parent engagement on Tuesdays, the responsibility of the outreach lies with the parent. One parent stated, "I am lucky that I am an at-home parent and can be on top of this, but other parents work and they cannot always come to the school to learn about their children's progress."

- In a student meeting, students shared that the team of teachers had not consistently shared with them ongoing feedback that supported their next steps. Students stated that the expectations that have been shared with them focused on behavior and discipline and not on challenging or engaging them. Some students shared that there is a shift happening at the school that is exciting to them and that it is the new math and literacy programs that the school has adopted. Students stated that they are excited to learn to write. They also stated, in contrast, the math rubric gives them feedback that allows them to "learn how to get smarter." It also pushes their thinking and provides clear expectations for performance and how to improve. They find that to be exciting as it prepares them for their next steps.

- In a student meeting, students stated that teacher teams do not consistently communicate how what they are doing connects to their next level of education. A third-grade student stated that she is learning fourth grade material because she is in a class that has both grades so she gets to see how what she is doing prepares her for her next level. This is not the case for most students who could not see how what they are doing connects with career and college readiness. Fifth grade students did not know the expectations for middle school and relied on what friends and family told them to understand this next step just a few months away. Students stated that they had not discussed career exploration. One fifth-grade student stated that he is worried about his future because he knew that he needs to go to college to be a professional football player. He said, “I do not feel that what I am learning here is preparing me for college. I do not see the connection and I am hoping that my middle school can show me that. If my middle school does not prepare me then I will never get to college and I will miss my opportunity, so I will worry about my future.”