Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. X114 - Luis Llorens Torres Schools

Elementary 09X114

1155 Cromwell Ave.
Bronx
NY 10452

Principal: Olivia Francis Webber

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

Lead Reviewer: Edward Hazen
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. X114 - Luis Llorens Torres Schools serves students in grade K 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

*To what extent does the school...*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Celebration</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>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>Proficient</td>
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</table>

#### Systems for Improvement

*To what extent does the school...*  

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Celebration</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
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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>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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>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>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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
The school’s approach to culture building and discipline includes both outreach to families and staff-focused professional learning and activities relative to a philosophy that promotes positive interactions and celebrates the diversity of its students and staff.

Impact
Administrators and staff maintain a safe environment that promotes an inclusive culture where student learning and voice is welcomed and is leading towards the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has adopted the Respect for All philosophy that promotes interpersonal and intergroup respect among and between students and staff, which supports their values and helps them to celebrate the diverse population of the school. There is a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) program in place that emphasizes attendance, academic achievement, positive behavior, and good citizenship that is captured in the school's motto that also serves as an acronym for the school community’s defined virtues of good citizenship, Public School 114 ROCKS (Respect, Organized, Cooperative, Kind, Safe). As an incentive to promote positive behaviors schoolwide, students that are identified by staff members as exhibiting “PS 114 ROCKS” behaviors are recognized at monthly celebrations. Students stated that the program has made a difference because students work harder to earn incentives such as participating in the annual schoolwide basketball tournament.

- The implementation of multiple activities and programs throughout the year such as Respect for All and PBIS, family multicultural events, and communications align with the inclusive nature of the school. Teachers report that all students and staff are treated equally and with respect. Initiatives such as student council and other programs provide students with a voice in schoolwide events and ideas for school-based community outreach and engagement activities such as coat drives, food drives, and other student council-based community services. Parents report that staff and the principal maintain a welcoming atmosphere for families and all work together to ensure the school is secure.

- A student support team consisting of the dean of students, guidance counselors, and social worker collaborate to serve the social emotional needs of students and identify students that are at-risk of not meeting academic standards due to social emotional factors. Structures are in place to ensure that all students are known by at least one adult. The support team coordinates a program in which high need students are paired up with an adult mentor, and it partners with community based organizations (CBO) to refer families with children who require more intensive interventions and supports for further assistance. Students reported that they feel comfortable approaching any staff member in the building if they have an issue that they need to discuss with an adult.
### Area of Focus

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

**Findings**

Across classrooms, teachers use a variety of English Language Arts (ELA) and math common assessment data to set classroom and individual student achievement goals and plan next steps for instruction.

**Impact**

Students are provided feedback with actionable next steps in most classes, leading to some students monitoring progress toward their goals and taking ownership of the quality of their work products. Assessments are used to make adjustments to curricula and instruction at the team level, determine students’ progress toward meeting classroom and individual goals, and plan interventions for struggling students; however, this is not consistent across all content areas.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers use common rubrics and have adopted a schoolwide student grading and feedback policy across grades and most subject areas that is aligned to the school’s curricula. A review of student work samples indicated that most teachers provided students with actionable feedback and next steps for improvement. Specifically, when providing feedback to students, teachers include an area in which the student met or exceeded the criterion for proficiency on the rubric a “glow,” and an area in which they need to improve including next steps to get to the next level a “grow.” While the majority of students indicated that they value and appreciate the feedback provided to them by teachers and noted that it helps them focus on the next steps they need to take in order to improve their work, they also noted that the depth and quality of the feedback varied by content area.

- In kindergarten through fifth grade, teachers use common assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) to identify students’ strengths and weakness, plan small group instruction, and identify reading and writing learning goals for students. Every six to eight weeks, the school’s data coach and lead teachers work collaboratively with individual classroom teachers, cluster teachers, teacher teams, and intervention specialists to review data collected from various ELA assessments including Fundations, the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program (TCRWP), and teacher-created on-demand writing assessments. Data is then used to identify students that are not progressing toward mastering foundational skills in ELA and determine appropriate interventions that will get them back on track to mastery. Although possible changes to instruction by using specific instructional strategies were identified in a review of curriculum maps, they were not evident across classes in a review of lesson plans, nor observed in the majority of classes during classroom visits.

- Prior to starting a new math unit, teachers administer a pre-assessment to determine students’ current abilities in order to create math groups that are leveled according to skill level and to set goals for each individual group. After the unit post-assessment, students are re-grouped based on the results of the assessment. Teachers stated that they progress monitor using mini-assessments such as teacher-created exit tickets administered between unit tests to determine if students are on track to meet their math goals. First grade teachers stated that they met as a team to analyze data from common exit tickets to determine which students were struggling with place value and adjust their instruction so that students that were still struggling with the concept were provided with additional support in the form of explicitly teaching the skill in a small group setting. However, this practice is not consistent across all content areas.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum
Rating: Proficient

Findings
School staff has a process in place to ensure alignment of the curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and plan rigorous academic tasks for all learners.

Impact
The curricula reflect planning, tasks with rigorous habits that build coherence across subjects and grades, and supports college and career readiness for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has opted to use supplemental programs and materials to better meet the needs of a wide range of learners. To supplement the reading and writing curricula, the curriculum team adopted the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program (TCRWP) and Fundations. In kindergarten through grade two, teachers use the TCRWP reading component and Fundations to develop phonemic awareness and reading fluency for its emerging readers. In grades three through five, teachers utilize the TCRWP writing component to provide additional writing opportunities across subject areas to engage students in rigorous writing tasks to promote higher-order thinking. As its core math program, the school uses Math in Focus to encourage the use of problem solving as the center of math learning for students. The curriculum team adopted A Story of Units across grades to strengthen specific units of study in math that the team decided were not rigorous enough or reflective of the instructional shifts in their current curricula.

- Academic vocabulary are reflected in most ELA, math, social studies, and science unit and lesson plans. For example, in a fifth grade math unit key tier three words that students must know to succeed are identified, such as “gauge,” “quantify,” and “reasoning.” Additionally, the school has implemented question/formulation/technique as a way of having teachers and students engage in a high level of discourse and accountable talk by formulating provoking questions, evident in the curricula. Teachers have formulated higher-level questions to model for students and embedded them into curriculum maps, unit and lessons plans, such as “Why do you think the author wrote this story?”, and “Your solution is different from/ the same as mine because…” School leaders and teacher teams reported that the development and embedding of higher-level questions for each unit, curriculum map, and lesson plan empowers learners to conceptualize and express their thinking without having to depend primarily on teacher questioning.

- The school’s data coach and lead teachers work collaboratively with classroom and cluster teachers, teacher teams, and intervention and support providers to design and revise curricula and academic tasks so that students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs) are cognitively engaged in the lesson. The curriculum team meets weekly to analyze student work and data to refine grade-level curricula and plan multiple entry points into lessons. A review of lesson plans indicated that many teachers use the work of the curriculum team to plan entry points and scaffolds in English and Spanish, such as graphic organizers, sentence frames, main idea, and word prompts. Planning in a math unit of study included connecting language such as “tens” with concrete and the pictorial experiences of money and fingers. Based on a review of student work, another math unit had suggested strategies to engage ELLs and students with disabilities by coupling teacher-talk with “math-they-can-see,” such as models and gestures, to calculate and explain. For example, a student searching to define “multiplication” may model groups of six with drawings or concrete objects and write the number sentence to match.
Findings

Teaching strategies, including scaffolds such as graphic organizers and verbal and written prompts, serve as entry points into academic tasks for all learners. There is a high level of student participation and thinking across grade levels and classes.

Impact

Teaching practices provide opportunities for all students to fully engage in high levels of thinking and discussion leading to the development of meaningful work products across classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers provided multiple entry points into the lesson by utilizing scaffolds for all students which includes leveled texts for students working in ability-based groups. During a co-taught social studies lesson in which students had to use historical artifacts to make an observation and chart their data to make a claim about the evidence, an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) teacher modeled how to draw inferences from historical documents while the English as a New Language (ENL) teacher provided explicit instruction on how to infer information from the artifacts in Spanish and English using visual aids for entering level ELLs. In a fifth grade math class, students were divided into four groups based on ability and provided with four different sets of manipulatives to help them solve a geometry word problem. Each group also had a resource guide in the center of each table. A student explained that the book is intended to provide support for students when the teacher is busy working with another group.

- In most classrooms, academic tasks are aligned to the curricula and meet the needs of all learners. In two English Language Arts (ELA) classrooms, for example, students were observed working in learning centers in one class and were engaged in collaborative group work based on their skill level in the other. Although student groups were assigned by teachers based on assessment results, students were able to articulate why they were assigned to their group and identified the specific skills that they had to improve in order to move to the next level. Differentiated materials in the form of leveled texts were provided to students based on their ability grouping and language needs. In a fourth grade classroom, students were paired together as a low- and high-learner based on their language acquisition needs. Students were observed using a graphic organizer to assist each other during think-write-pair-share peer activities.

- Teachers were observed using a questioning format technique (QFT) to engage students in productive cognitive struggle using high levels of discourse. In a math class, for example, the teacher modeled a QFT then had students develop their own questions to pose to each other to challenge their thinking. Students were observed asking each other questions such as “I agree because….” and “I noticed that….” After reading a passage about mandating school uniforms in an ELA classroom, students were required to work together in groups to list pros and cons from the text regarding mandating school uniforms and record their thoughts using a T-chart. Students then had to make an argument for or against school uniforms and develop QFTs that would persuade their peers that their argument was the stronger one.
### Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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#### Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations to staff through professional learning opportunities, and staff provides feedback to parents on their children’s academic progress in school.

#### Impact

Systems of accountability for staff and ongoing communication with families ensure that they are aware of and can support their children to progress and be college and career ready.

#### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate their expectations at the beginning of the school year with the distribution of the faculty handbook and identification of specific schoolwide yearlong instructional goals. Teachers are reminded of the instructional foci and goals via email and memoranda around the reading and writing workshop, higher order questioning, and providing multiple entry points into lessons for all students. In addition, weekly professional learning and collaboration sessions serve as a means of communication and offer training to support staff members in meeting these goals. Sessions provide teachers with support on the writing workshop model, how to implement the curricula effectively, and training on how to effectively conduct and analyze running records so that the assessment is accurate and used to determine appropriate grouping and scaffolds for instruction.

- School leaders conduct post-observation debrief conversations with teachers to provide guidance in reaching the school’s expectations. Written feedback on reports with next steps for improving the quality of teaching provide support in areas of growth such as ensuring lesson plans contain scaffolding based on data. A review of reports reflects feedback on ensuring lesson plans are written with activities to engage diverse learners and ensure planning reflects higher-order thinking tasks. In addition, school leaders conduct frequent instructional walks and provide feedback that includes explicit next steps with a timeframe for the return visit date to establish a system of accountability. Sample feedback includes statements such as “use explicit instruction to model procedures for students” and “consider adding an extension activity for students.”

- Parents reported that the school uses multiple ways including the digital message boards in the front and back of the school, the school’s website, the monthly school calendar, memoranda, phone calls, and parent teacher meetings on Tuesdays to share information about the school’s goals and grade-level expectations for the year. Workshops that provide parents with an insight into the academic expectations for students such as an opportunity to score sample student assessments have been provided. Additionally, opportunities for parents to view math lessons with strategies to assist their children at home are offered. Parents reported that teachers are helpful in sharing timely information on their children’s progress in school.
Findings
The majority of teacher teams are engaged in structured inquiry-based collaborations that align to the school goals and allow for distributive leadership where teachers have a voice in decision-making.

Impact
Increased instructional and leadership capacity have strengthened and improved teacher practices which affects student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- A fifth grade teacher team was observed using a protocol to analyze student work and generate pedagogical strategies that members could use in order to improve the quality of student work. Two teachers noted that they were having students devise high-level questions to ask themselves or their group before analyzing texts and found that was helping students become better at citing text-based evidence. Consequently, the team agreed to further the work of developing questioning techniques students can use to generate high level, relevant questions related to a topic of study or discussion across the entire grade and across subject areas.

- School leaders state that they are implementing the Teachers College workshop model to increase the amount of time teachers spend conferencing with students and for them to get actionable data that can be analyzed in ‘real time.’ Thus, teachers who share students can use the information to customize individualized instruction for intensive intervention or work with students in a small group setting to address common skill deficits. Additionally, teachers have identified grade-level standards that have the most impact on student achievement as a way of developing interventions at the team level.

- Grade-level teacher teams meet weekly and review the work of targeted groups of students, analyze trends in areas of strength and growth for students and plan curriculum accordingly. All teachers are expected to administer a pre-assessment at the beginning of every unit of study in math in order to establish instructional groups and set achievement goals for the groups. A review of teacher team agendas and minutes indicate that after the post-assessment, students are re-grouped approximately every three weeks. Teachers report that students’ progress toward meeting their math is tracked by using a variety of formative assessments including exit tickets and anecdotal records from one-on-one conferencing with students. Two first grade teachers reported that looking at student grade-level data as a team has helped them identify instructional strategies that can be used to support struggling students.