Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 130 Abram Stevens Hewitt

Elementary 08X130

750 Prospect Ave.
Bronx
NY 10455

Principal: Lourdes Velazquez

Dates of Review:
December 8, 2016 - December 9, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Heidi Pierovich
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. 130 Abram Stevens Hewitt 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>
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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>Developing</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## 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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
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## Systems for Improvement

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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional 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>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>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

The school’s approach to culture building, discipline, and social-emotional support has structures in place and is informed by a growth mindset theory of action.

Impact

The implementation of the growth mindset theory of action results in a safe environment and inclusive culture that support progress toward the school’s goals, and the school meaningfully involves student voice. Each student is known well by at least one adult.

Supporting Evidence

- The theory of action across the school is based on a growth mindset and is evident in the school goals and practices. Students have a voice in decision-making via student government. Student government includes grades three through five and holds elections, with debates and platforms. Grade-level presidents meet monthly with assistant principals and the principal. Student government addresses topics such as how they can help pre-kindergarten students to learn how to read, help the custodians to ensure the cafeteria is cleaner, and potential service projects. Student government helps with the Positive Behavior Incentive System (PBIS) Star Bucks by selecting the incentive toys, assembly programs, library books, and a writing program. Student government officers stated, “We make the school a better place.” To decrease the number of incidents occurring staff instituted the K-5 hallway movement, cafeteria, auditorium, and restroom procedures that included uniform procedures to create a safe environment in common areas. As a result of these unified procedures, there has been an increased use of Star Bucks for all grades and an 18 percent decrease in reported incidents. Students spoke of exemplifying star behavior by telling those who put others down, “Kids say, ‘Stop! Don’t be a bystander, be up-stander!’”

- The school’s approach to building culture is rooted in the belief that through a growth mindset each student can be guided to become a reflective thinker and independent learner in a safe and supportive environment. The principal brought a book about the growth mindset to the school to support culture and as a result, all stakeholders include it in their belief system about perceptions of life. Currently the paraprofessionals are using it in their book club and staff incorporate the monthly affirmations. To celebrate students who demonstrate the growth mindset, staff contribute anecdotes that are read monthly during morning announcements. Staff have tied the growth mindset to earning Star Bucks. A teacher’s example celebrated a student who did not want to persist in a writing task, and then did after a peer supported her. Students said that staff are looking for them to show the behaviors of being a team member, accountable, and respectful in their everyday actions.

- City Year Corps members, trained college-aged young adults have designated duties, monitor attendance and provide social-emotional support as well as in-class instructional support for students in grades three through five for English Language Arts (ELA) and math. The attendance committee and Corps members celebrate students with one hundred percent attendance with incentives such as a pizza or dance party. As members of the attendance team, Corps members also review attendance issues and particular students, providing those with needed support. Additionally, Corps members and a community-based organization conduct the after-school program of activities and tutoring. Staff and Corps members conduct PBIS pep rallies to demonstrate positive behaviors and growth mindset. Students unanimously recalled how much fun they had at the rallies and could speak to the impact of the growth mindset message. Parents and students spoke highly of genius hour, where clubs follow an enrichment model once a month, as teachers create a club, such as soccer, baking, salsa dancing, and poetry. This provides students and teachers a shared interest for them to connect and provides students another adult who knows them well, besides their teachers and Corps members.
Findings
The school is developing their use of common assessments to measure student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas. Across classrooms, teachers’ assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact
Teachers inconsistently use results to adjust curricula and instruction or make effective in-the-moment adjustments to meet student learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- New this year is Datacation, a data collection and analysis platform with portals for parents, students, and teacher. As staff are currently being trained, they are not yet using this tool to analyze data and adjust curricula and pedagogy, although several staff members expressed excitement that this new tool will “revolutionize our work!”

- Teachers look at student work and data during common planning time in grade teams. However, there is little evidence to demonstrate adjustments to curricula and instruction based on data. The Collaborative Action Research Project (CARP) vertical team is learning how to delve deeply into the data to determine adjustments for curricula and pedagogy. One such result is that after looking at the New York State assessment data for grades three through five, the CARP team determined that inferencing is area of growth. To that end, the staff have adopted inferencing as the instructional focus. Yet, this level of data analysis is not evident outside of the CARP team. Staff do not consistently use common assessments to adjust curricula and teaching. Teachers use the Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) running records to assess student reading. Teachers provided a few class lists of students’ F&P recording forms, along with a benchmark assessment and comprehension conversation. There is little to no formal analysis to determine the areas of need. An out of classroom teacher supports staff with their understanding of iReady data and how to use it to inform instruction. The staff use iReady to support student learning and the program provides next instructional steps for teachers. Yet, there is little evidence to demonstrate that teachers use these next steps to regroup students and adjust instruction.

- Checking for understanding during instruction is an area of school focus and it varied from class to class. The staff use engagement rings, a method of checking for understanding using stoplight-colored cards for students to self-report their understanding or lack thereof, and this is evident in most classes. In a fourth-grade ELA English Language Learner (ELL) class, the teacher asked students to show their engagement cards if they needed more time on task and she adjusted the lesson by providing additional time for them to finish. In a second-grade writing class, the teacher grouped students based on their self-reporting of understanding how to write a conclusion. Students who self-reported that they had no understanding sat at the back small table to work closely with the teacher. However, the teacher then moved from one group to another conferring with students regarding their understanding of writing the conclusion without making an adjustment. The students in the back table remained waiting and were not engaged in the lesson. In a grade five integrated co-teaching (ICT) ELA class students worked on writing an introductory paragraph. Students provided each other feedback on their hook in the introduction. However, when reporting out, the teacher had the students share their feedback with the whole class. One student focused on the teacher and said, “I like your hook. It was really attractive.” The feedback was not actionable or aligned to a rubric. A student stated, “The rubric is not provided until we are publishing.” Some teachers also note information from conferencing with students, though there is little evidence of how this information and data are used to inform instruction or pedagogy.
Findings
Curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills inconsistently across grades and subjects for ELLs and students with disabilities. Curricula and academic tasks are beginning to reflect planning to engage a variety of learners.

Impact
The curricula and academic tasks inconsistently provide students access to the curricula and tasks to cognitively engage a diversity of learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Administration stated that the Curriculum Overview Blueprint for instruction is meant to “organize schoolwide differentiation…with regard to our two key subgroups,” but instead it provides generic suggestions for all subjects and grades from a “menu of culminating projects to elicit more sophisticated work products” in the scope and sequence. Although the instructional focus of inferencing is documented as higher-order thinking questions in reading and science lessons, it is not consistently employed across lessons, especially math. Curriculum maps demonstrate schoolwide unifying themes across grades and subjects to focus on rigorous habits and higher-order skills. Themes include “Who we are” and “How the world works and sharing the planet.” However, these unifying themes are not always noted in lesson plans. Although most social studies and science lessons note the themes, they are not noted in math and infrequently appear in reading or writing lessons. Finally, essential questions are similar across maps for grades and subjects, though they are not always referenced in lesson plans. For example, the essential question for kindergarten and first grade social studies lessons is “What makes a community?” and second grade is “How does geography influence where people live and why?” Although noted in social studies, higher-order questions and rigorous learning objectives are not yet consistent across grades and subjects.

- Staff and coaches reviewed the curricula and determined that some standards were not being taught at the level of rigor the standard required for the state assessment. To that end, last year staff partnered with National Training Network (NTN) to provide revised and blended curriculum maps for GO Math!, EngageNY, and Key Elements to Math Success (KEMS) problem solving lessons in math. However, there is little evidence to demonstrate the use of ongoing student work and data to plan and refine tasks. After a grade team meeting, a teacher revised the next day’s lesson to include a suggested strategy from a colleague. Yet this was but one example and does not demonstrate a preponderance of evidence.

- The school’s population includes 22.6 percent ELLs and 23.0 percent students with disabilities. Evidence of access to the curricula shows inconsistent use of multiple means of representation, action, and engagement as well as differentiation of task, product, or a way into the lesson. Of the lessons reviewed, a couple of plans demonstrate use of flexible or data-determined grouping and lists the students in each group. One provided students with leveled books and maps to work in pairs, while another provides all students with sentence frames in an anchor chart. One provides tier three students with sentence starters from an anchor chart. Although in math lessons there is evidence of use of the reteach or enrich worksheets, there is no evidence of supports for these. In a majority of lesson plans the differentiation provides non-specific options for potential students such as, “Verbal sharing and hands-on with objects promote discussion making it easier to write about or draw.” In many lessons, groups of students who need support such as ELLs, students with disabilities, or those in the lowest third, have the same assignment but are in cooperative pairs with a teacher, paraprofessional, or volunteer for guidance or assistance. Most lessons do not provide extensions for those ready for a challenge, but instead students are expected to independently complete the assigned task.
Supporting Evidence

- Staff and administration stated in different terms their beliefs about how students learn best. Administration stated the belief is “students construct, test, and revise or confirm their understanding about how the world works.” Staff and paraprofessionals listed a variety of student-centered activities including self-exploration, as well as using supports such as manipulatives, thinking maps, graphic organizers, and sentence starters. Most staff agree on a focus on real-world connections and highlight student engagement and discussion through equity of student voice, small group work, and engagement rings. Additionally, staff are establishing the use of Thinking Maps across the school. Currently, all classes are employing the maps but they are not yet tailored to meet the needs of student groups.

- In a second-grade math class for students with disabilities, students used manipulative rods of ten and individual units, writing their answers on white board slates. Additionally, the teacher used a new strategy gleaned from the previous day’s teacher team meeting whereby she gave a student a cup to count the units to ten, a skill she was having difficulty mastering. In a fifth-grade math class students used whiteboards with columns for tens-places to support student understanding. Similarly, in a third-grade social studies class, students read from three different leveled texts on Nigeria and most students read independently. They also had different maps, yet students did not know the difference between them. Groups of students in a fifth-grade math lesson discovered how to find the solution to a word problem by applying the SOLVE method: studying the problem, organizing the facts, lining up a plan, verifying the plan, and examining the results. At one independent group, a student modeled for peers, while at others an adult did so. The ELL students were silent, not able to explain their process using SOLVE in English or Spanish, as they had no scaffolds in place to support that explication, though they had a bilingual paraprofessional who translated for them. Similarly, in a fourth-grade ELA ELL class, the fast pace of the teacher’s modeling of using class-wide sentence starters for their introductory paragraphs left several beginning ELLs not as engaged as the remainder of the class. Thus, there were missed opportunities to support groups of students in high-level tasks.

- Although students had opportunities to turn-and-talk, some level of rigor and questions provided students with uneven and low-level Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK). In a kindergarten social studies class for students with disabilities, the teacher posed low-level DOK closed questions where the answer held one direction of thought such as, “What is a special holiday you celebrate with your family?” Students turned to a partner, answered with “my birthday,” “Christmas,” or “Chinese New Year” and stopped. They had no prompt to help them to discuss and be cognitively engaged. Similarly, in a fourth-grade science class, the teacher posed an unclear question to students for a turn-and-talk, during which the class organization was not conducive for partner work. Although they tried to answer, not all students were engaged and their excitement about conducting a lab waned because of the slow pacing. In a fifth-grade math class, students were engaged in stations for math café. Although students knew to go to stations and solve problems, they did not know why they were doing this task.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide them with training to achieve such. Expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness are communicated by staff and school leaders as they partner with parents.

Impact

Staff and families are a part of a culture of mutual accountability that supports student progress toward high expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers stated that they consistently communicate to families regarding their children’s progress toward expectations. Communications include phone calls, emails, texts, backpacked letters, grade-team newsletters, the parent handbook, notifications through ClassDojo, iReady, and MyON. Parents shared that they contact teachers directly, via ClassDojo, or on parent engagement day. Each method allows them to receive direct responses to support them helping their children in organizing their notebooks, completing homework or projects, or in providing additional supportive assignments. From such communiqués parents stated that they partner with the staff to collaborate in their children’s academic growth. One parent stated and others agreed that, “ClassDojo has always been great to see how my child is doing that day or week as teachers send messages about behavior, participation, and pictures of school work. We always have a conversation regarding my child’s work and next steps for support at home.” Parents spoke of learning ways to support their children in the areas in they are having difficulty.

- Staff provide workshops for parents such as learning about the Common Core Learning Standards and the new schoolwide implementation of Thinking Maps. Parents shared that they used Thinking Maps in the parent association meeting and during a parent organization training for parents. Additionally, administration supports adult education with free English as a Second Language classes for parents. Staff also provide workshops for parents to understand the middle school application process. Students discussed attending school fairs and shared how helpful these are in understanding college and career readiness. Some students spoke about working with tutors after school and of career day where students dress as professionals in their interested career. Additionally, staff and students spoke about the growth mindset that supports students in developing social-emotional skills that are the foundation for college and career readiness. Parents stated that educating their children is a partnership with the school. Almost all the parents in the meeting are in their second year as Learning Leaders, trained parent volunteers who support teachers in the classroom. Other parents support the school as computer technology and library aides.

- The administration provides consistent communications to all staff through a multitude of measures including bulletins, staff handbook, morning announcements, and professional development. Some of these include schoolwide expectations and non-negotiables such as the implementation of Thinking Maps. Support by administration to implement these expectations comes through a consistent cycle of observations and actionable feedback aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Data collected then informs the professional development plan where the full-time UFT Teacher Center (UFTTC) coach, professional development team, and administration create and present the professional development. The professional development team and UFTTC collaborate, demonstrating a mutually accountability for staff growth. The administration provides coaches from several agencies including Generation Ready, New York Historical Society, NTN, and the New Teacher Center. Additionally, administration and the teachers’ union representative collaborate and as the representatives stated, “We have mutual respect and we make sure things get done. Teachers’ voices are respected.”
Additional Finding

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

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in organized, inquiry-based professional collaborations. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Professional collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, strengthening the instructional capacity of the teachers who have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are engaged in a several teams, including grade, vertical, Collaborative Action Research Project (CARP), and English as a New Language (ENL) teams. Grade team teachers use a protocol for looking at student work and use the information to determine next steps in their teaching. Teachers stated that their function in grade teams is “to look at the pre-assessment, student conferences, and student work to collectively help one another [improve teaching] by sharing best practices.” Teachers involved in the CARP vertical inquiry protocol are in the process of being trained to delve deeper into the data analysis and revise Common Core-aligned curricula. From the CARP needs assessment, team members determined that more than fifty percent of students in grades three through five are struggling with questions that involve inferencing. To this end, the CARP team has determined that inferencing needs to be the instructional focus. Teachers’ voices positively impact student learning.

- Distributed leadership is evident in multiple ways including facilitators, mentors, and leaders. Teacher leaders were trained as facilitators of meetings for grade teams, CARP, and the writing project. To employ the inquiry protocols, teacher leaders were trained and turned-keyed this skill through implementation during team meetings. An outside provider is training a select few teacher leaders to serve as mentors for new teachers. After each professional learning opportunity, participants reflect on their training via a digital survey. The professional development team uses the survey results to inform the next opportunity. A teacher manages the PBIS program, showing ownership when discussing the strategies and results. A paraprofessional explained how she is wholeheartedly involved in the professional development to improve her student-centered work and is involved in a book study on the growth mindset. She stated, “How can I support students in developing their growth mindset if I do not grow my own?” Teachers’ voice is respected and they are empowered to make key decisions that affect student learning. It is evident in that each grade-level teacher team has a teacher serving as the leader who facilitates each grade team meeting. Additionally, these teacher leaders sit on the cabinet where they meet with administration and then turnkey that information to their grade teams.

- Teachers spoke about how looking at student work has improved their instructional practice. One teacher stated that the teacher team members have been essential to her work as a new teacher. Another teacher stated, “The impact of teacher team work is really powerful teaching, even as this is my fifteenth-year teaching and first year here, I am learning this school’s expectations from my colleagues, especially from the ENL teacher. She shares strategies for my ELL students and it positively impacts our teaching and sharing of best practices.” Others concurred that they see their own growth as they too have adopted shared strategies.