Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. X140 The Eagle School
Elementary 08X140
916 Eagle Ave. NY 10456
Principal: Paul Cannon

Dates of Review:
February 14, 2017 - February 15, 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. X140 The Eagle School 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>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 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>
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<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...**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</table>

Findings

The school has created strong supports and structures both at the school and with the community, by providing services and experiences to support both students and parents. Students feel that they are known well by the adults in their school.

Impact

As a result of the school structures, each student is known well and families are provided with outreach that allows them to support school expectations and the adoption of academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- In a meeting with teachers and school guidance and support staff, school personnel spoke about the systems that are in place to support students. Support begins in classrooms with teachers who share the school value of the month, such as perseverance, which is aligned to personal and academic behaviors. In morning line up, school leaders provide opportunities for students to discuss the value and be recognized for exhibiting values such as respect and perseverance. Teachers stated that when a student needs additional support, be it academic or emotional, there is a progressive ladder of support that begins with teachers partnering with guidance personnel as a referral or conference. This supports the teacher with providing services in the classroom or providing at-risk supports for both the student and family. The final step involves partnering with outside social agencies to ensure that all students’ learning needs are met. The school has a strong partnership with a hospital and, as a result, has a mobile unit on site that provides services to both parents and students. In a meeting with students, students shared that they and their family are known well by their both teachers and services providers at the school.

- Parents spoke about the school being open seven days a week, including both before class and after. Parents stated that weekend sessions not only provide additional instructional support to struggling students but are also focused on family outreach and education. One father spoke about the Sunday basketball sessions run by the principal that allow fathers in the community to bond together, learn about men’s health through a neighborhood health partnership, and become informed about childhood development and how they can help their children improve academically and socially. Parents shared that one of the features that is working well to push scholarship is the single sex classes that allow students in the upper grades to focus on instruction rather than having students begin to focus on the opposite sex. Parents feel that this structure creates strong bonds and allows teachers to select reading materials and instructional strategies that better support boys or girls. Parents shared that their children enjoy these classes, and some have made the decision to go to single sex middle schools.

- In a parent meeting, parents stated that the school functions as a large extended community where teachers, parents, and students all learn together in order to promote the adoption of effective personal and academic behaviors. Parents stated that participation begins during the morning line up, which is used as a large community assembly. During this assembly, students are engaged by school leaders in in a discussion of the monthly value. School leaders discuss the value with the community, and students offer examples of how these values are being exhibited in the school community. One recent value was respect and the ways that students and teachers demonstrate and earn respect. Parents are welcomed during these assembly sessions and the value is also shared with parents through the school newspaper, The Eagle. Parents, teachers and students also spoke about participation in outside programs such as an etiquette program that models appropriate social behaviors, anti-bullying programs, and theatrical productions that promote the academic and social behaviors.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 2.2 Assessments | Rating: | Developing |

Findings
Across classrooms, rubrics and checks for understanding are inconsistently used, and the school is developing in its use of common assessments across grades and subjects.

Impact
Common assessments are inconsistently used to adjust curriculum and instruction, students do not often receive actionable feedback on work products, and teachers do not always make effective adjustments to meet students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- In a meeting with six students presenting work from three different subjects, there was evidence of only three pieces of student work with a rubric. While much of the student work showed evidence that teachers had looked at it, teacher review was simply for corrections made with a red pen. Additionally, the rubrics attached to student work were all English Language Arts (ELA) rubrics. While some of the ELA rubrics in the hallway reflected appropriate next steps, many more of the rubrics focused on writing mechanics to the exclusion of elements closely aligned to higher order thinking. Additionally, no content rubric other than ELA was observed in either the small group meeting or across hallway bulletin boards.

- The school had ample common assessments in the form of pre and post on-demand writing pieces, end of unit math exams, and a collection of running records for most of the classes. Despite this, neither school leaders nor teachers could speak about the trends in the common assessments. Moreover, there was no evidence that these assessments have been used to make adjustments to instruction or curriculum for any of the regular day programs or for the school’s early morning or after-school academic intervention programs. One school leader shared that the school had identified several math standards in grade five where students had performed poorly. However, no action had been taken to track student performance or progress on these standards. The school has established a data center in each class where teachers keep binders with data trackers on less in each unit. However, only two binders with information were observed across classrooms. This practice of gathering data and not using it to make adjustments hinders student progress and performance towards goals. This also does not support the school’s instructional focus of supporting teacher development in the use of assessment in instruction.

- Teachers’ assessment practices inconsistently reflect checks for understanding and, when used, are mostly a thumbs-up or thumbs-down check, with some turn and talk. This practice does not allow the teacher to gauge what students understand and where their comprehension is interrupted. When turn and talk is used, teachers do not always listen, such as in an integrated co-teaching class on folktales. Some students completed their conversation and sat on the rug unengaged waiting for the teacher. In almost all classes teachers do not track or record student conversation or student performance on class work products. In one math class, the teacher walked around with a clipboard and took notes. When asked what she was recording, the teacher stated she was recording who understood and who did not. When questioned further as to what process, strategy or standard she was collecting data on, the teacher could not answer. A look at the clipboard showed she had written student names but there were no criteria for assessment or learning objective measured to demonstrate what they had mastered or needed help with. With no check for understanding, teachers cannot always make effective adjustments to their lessons, such as looking at trends in the data to create instructional groupings or provide varied entry points. They are also unable bring this kind of data back to teacher teams to adjust grade level curricula.
## Additional Finding

### Quality Indicator:

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<tr>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders have developed curricula that is aligned to their instructional philosophy, the Common Core Learning Standards, and the instructional shifts. Curricula and tasks emphasize rigorous habits.

**Impact**

School leaders have made purposeful decisions to build coherence and prepare students for career and college readiness through a focus on argumentative writing. Across grades and subjects, tasks consistently require all students to engage in higher-order thinking.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In a grade four unit on identifying theme, students are reading a fable and determining the theme. Students engage in close reading of the text and select evidence that best supports their identified theme. Students make inferences from the text and write a summary of the story that includes an explanation of how the story supports the theme.

- In a kindergarten math unit on addition and subtraction, students learn strategies to use counters, fingers, mental images, and drawings to represent numerical values and provide explanations of expressions and equations. Students are engaged in solving word problems with a ten frame, and they focus on decomposing numbers. This lesson includes video supports, the use of dry erase boards, instructional grouping, and the use of manipulatives such as stack beads and pegs. Students employ these materials to show understanding of two numbers that make up 7. They are able to explain two different ways to reach 7 and can discuss how each different approach could be correct.

- In a grade three science unit on simple machines, students study mechanical energy and simple machines such as levers and inclined planes to understand concepts such as gravity and friction as well as to see how these machines help us in our daily lives. Students learn to make observations, collect data, and use these to write informational reports explaining their findings and connecting their findings to their lives. This lesson includes several videos, hands-on demonstration materials, and some note-catching tools.

- In a grade five literacy unit, students engage in an author study and read various poems by Langston Hughes to examine characteristics of poetry and understand how the structure of a particular poem helps create meaning. Students are exposed to various literary devices including rhyme scheme, repetition, figurative language, and mood. Students use close reading of the text and annotation to lift lines from the poems and use these to discuss theme. This unit includes opportunities for students to engage in Socratic seminars to discuss the use of literary devices and make connections to their lives and their own writing.

- The English Language Arts curriculum focuses on student writing, starting with informational and opinion writing across the grades which then leads to argumentative writing and the use of evidence to support a claim or thesis.
### Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teaching strategies, including questioning and scaffolds, inconsistently provide multiple entry points into curricula with limited student discussion and completion of student work products.

**Impact**

Uneven student engagement hinders high levels of student participation and thinking, including students’ ability to demonstrate higher-order thinking in discussions and work products.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In an all-girls grade four math class, students engaged in unpacking a math word problem by using close reading skills and underlining important information. Students used academic vocabulary to discuss division and what to do with the remainders. Students used the text book and anchor charts as references and discussed strategies for identifying multiples. While all students in this class participated and demonstrated higher order thinking in both discussion and work products, this was not the case in a grade five literacy class engaged in a Socratic seminar. In the fifth grade class, students sat in a fishbowl fashion with the inner circle discussing Langston Hughes’ “Dreams” and the outer circle sitting as spectators. Students used accountable talk to learn about metaphor, selecting a line from the text and discussing it. While one student was able to explain the difference between a simile and a metaphor, the conversation did not progress past two observations—one about a barren field and another about a broken winged bird. These students continued to repeat the same observations over and over without deepening the conversation or allowing other students to join. There were no supports observed in this lesson other than the text and a notation for English Language Learners that “figurative language is used to make writing more interesting and fun.” As a result, the majority of the class did not engage in the discussion and were unable to demonstrate higher-order thinking.

- In a grade three science class, students struggled to understand an unclear task concerning mechanical energy. The teacher asked students to chart out examples of work, and students generated answers that were different from the ones he wanted. The teacher continued to pose questions, such as, “Why is pushing the wall not work?” While the teacher’s lesson plan demonstrated the desired objectives for the lesson and definitions that he wanted students to comprehend, no entry points were observed in this lesson to reach that understanding or clarity. In a conversation with students, they shared that while this was a continuing lesson in the unit, they had not built background knowledge on this topic, and students had no notes or supports to reference. As a result, students were unable to participate in this lesson or demonstrate understanding.

- In one third grade math classroom students used academic language to share the strategies that they used to solve word problems. Students engaged in brainstorming to make connections between the manipulatives that they were using and the mathematical concepts that these represented. Students discussed open ended questions, such as, “Why do you think that this is called the distributive property?” Students shared the order of operations and demonstrated their thinking with attention to precision as they discussed how to address the use of parentheses. However, in second grade classroom students sat silently in front of an interactive white board watching a Scholastic Magazine short film on the Civil War while their teacher shared misinformation with them. The teacher showed students a picture of the Confederate flag and told them that this was the British flag. She then told the students that the Civil War was the war where the American troops and President Lincoln fought to get the British out of the United States.
**Findings**

School leaders use varied means to consistently communicate high expectations for professionalism and instruction based on the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to their entire staff. School leaders communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness to families.

**Impact**

School leaders provide teachers with training and have a system of accountability for their expectations. Online programs provide families with ongoing feedback on student progress towards college readiness.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders communicate high expectations through many avenues such as emails, memoranda, professional development sessions, grade meetings, and through the school newspaper, *The Eagle Weekly*. A review of these documents shows that there is a consistent emphasis on the school goals of increasing writing across the curriculum, engaging students in academic conversations, and using assessment in instruction. A review of the Monday professional development schedule reveals that teachers receive training towards meeting school expectations. A review of teacher observation reports demonstrates that teachers are held accountable. For instance, one report recognized that the teacher provided opportunity for some students to discuss, but noted that he should have opened the discussion to others. The report went on to state that "students could have benefitted from having a turn and talk, brainstorming with one another and then sharing" and asked the teacher to "circulate and monitor understanding as well as provide individualized targeted feedback prior to sending students to work independently."

- Parents stated that there are multiple modes of communication at the school to provide them with ongoing feedback about student performance. Parents cited the various online communication programs at the school including an online platform that stored student grades, recorded missing homework, and gave both teachers and parents a forum to email and text each other. Parents stated that they also receive parent-friendly progress reports and graded student work, which serves as a basis for discussion during the Tuesday parent engagement time. Additionally, parents shared that school leaders have dedicated resources to helping parents understand the school’s expectations, such as helping them to understand the curricula and the school grading policy.

- Parents shared that one of the ways that they learn about college and career readiness is through the Classroom Learning Walks conducted by the various school leaders. Parents shared an environmental checklist that listed items they should see, such as student work with feedback, evidence of Common Core aligned lessons, and leveled libraries for differentiation. The principal selects grades for the walk and invites parents to participate. Parents rate classroom practices as ineffective, developing, or highly effective. Once the walkthrough is complete, the principal and parents discuss instructional trends. Parents stated that these walks not only supported their understanding of the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts, but helped them hold teachers accountable to meeting the standards and served as a basis for having conversations with teachers during the parent engagement sessions. Parents stated that these Learning Walks also served as an entry point to discussing student work with their children. They expressed a desire to collect and examine standard-setting student work samples to deepen their understanding of the Common Core Learning Standards and rigor in work products.
### Findings

Teachers are engaged in inquiry-based work supporting the schoolwide instructional focus on writing. These professional collaborations are supported by distributive leadership structures that allow for teacher leadership.

### Impact

Teacher professional collaborations have resulted in a strengthening of teachers’ instructional practices. Distributive leadership structures support the work of teacher teams in promoting achievement of the school goals by allowing teachers to have a voice in key decisions affecting students.

### Supporting Evidence

- In one teacher team meeting, teachers examined student work from their recent on-demand argument essays. Teachers identified what learning targets in this unit were secured and areas where students needed extra support. The teachers focused on elaboration of evidence as the next learning step for students. The teachers selected strategies for paragraph expansion and discussed the use of mentor texts to provide students with exemplars to pattern their writing. Teachers shared that recognizing the demands of their writing rubric has strengthened their understanding of what good writing looks like, and they are better able to clearly identify next learning steps for students.

- A review of teacher team meetings shows that teachers are discussing student work and teacher practices aligned to the school goal of increasing writing in both literacy and math. For instance, minutes from a grade two team reveal that teachers discussed including a math journal where students would be able to reflect on the strategies learned. Notes from a grade four meeting also show a focus on writing as well as an additional school goal of differentiating for diverse learners. Teachers stated that a recently adopted program to support student writing, focused on using organizers to help students generate ideas and collect notes, has strengthened their instructional practice on Common Core aligned writing. Teachers agreed that there is schoolwide focus on writing as a way of deepening student thinking.

- Teachers shared that there are strong distributive practices at the school that allow them to have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning. School leaders survey staff about professional development needs which are reviewed by the school’s staff development committee. These topics are then combined with trends garnered from observational data. When grade three teachers saw an opportunity to take students from a bridge grade three/four class and provide more targeted supports and grade appropriate instruction by allowing some of them participate in a literacy or math block in another class, they spoke with the principal. He agreed and allowed those students to be departmentalized during these periods. Grade leaders in the school identified an opportunity to refine the school progress reports to better support parent conferences during the school Super Tuesday parent engagement sessions, and the principal supported this decision. After the teachers in the school looked at student writing pieces, they asked the principal to begin the school year with narrative writing instead of the district suggestion of informational writing, as they believed that narrative would be an easier genre with which to start the school year. The principal agreed and this change was reflected in the school curriculum maps.