Quality Review Report
2016-2017

J.H.S. 144 Michelangelo
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 11X144
2545 Gunther Ave.
Bronx
NY 10469

Principal: Ellen Barrett

Dates of Review:
April 20, 2017 - April 21, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Lenneen Gibson
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

J.H.S. 144 Michelangelo serves students in grade 6 through grade 8. 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>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>Well Developed</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>
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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>Additional Finding</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
School leaders convey high expectations to staff and families regarding professionalism and instruction through multiple mediums of communication.

Impact
School leaders partner with families, communicating expectations connected to college and career readiness to support student progress toward those expectations. Mutual accountability of high expectations for staff is delineated through staff-promoted intervisitation and “share fairs.”

Supporting Evidence

- The school has adopted a “triad of communication” when articulating high expectations connected to college and career readiness and partners with families to ensure students meet those expectations. The “triad of communication” comprises of online grading portals such as PupilPath, the use of an automated system that makes phone calls to the home, a monthly calendar, and the monthly newsletter known as the “Spartan Tribune” that apprises families of their children’s units of study. Weekly parent engagement meetings, notices to the home, back to school nights, high school nights, student-led conferences, parent and student handbooks, report cards, and progress reports provide parents with further communication connected to college and career readiness. The school partners with parents in the Academic Parent Partners Program, which offers a myriad of informational workshops for families on topics such as MyOn training, English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics State exams, and the high school process. During the parent meetings, parents discussed enrichment opportunities their children had access to, such as summer programs in sports and the arts.

- School leaders communicate high expectations for instruction that is grounded in the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For those teachers new to the profession, expectations are conveyed via a New Teacher Academy, a weeklong orientation on the expectations for instruction and professionalism. Moreover, expectations to the staff were evidenced via written communication. Administrators hold quarterly conferences with teachers to discuss quarterly exam data, including trends and patterns of the data, intervention strategies implemented, and goals for subsequent quarters. Measures of teaching practice data were also discussed at these meetings. Expectations for displays of student work, assessment binders, and lesson planning are communicated via written notices, and emails about classroom environment checklists were also delineated by school leaders.

- Expectations for professionalism were evidenced through teacher input on feedback forms from professional development sessions. Peer Instructional Coaches (PIC), in collaboration with the school leaders, published a mini-guide that photographically demonstrated the expectations for professionalism in the classroom, aligned to the classroom environment domain of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teachers facilitated professional development by sharing best practices with the staff through “Share Fairs” that outline the professional work of specific teacher teams and the impact of their work. “Spartan Showcase Day” provided teachers with the opportunity to open their classroom doors to teachers as a schoolwide intervisitation initiative. Additionally, teachers conduct interdepartmental intervisitations of their colleagues to observe best practices and ensure mutual accountability.
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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</thead>
</table>

Findings

Teacher assessment practices reflect the use of checks for understanding and student self-assessment. The school uses State and quarterly common exam data to determine student progress towards goals.

Impact

Teachers’ assessment practices reflect the use of checks for understanding, but these practices do not always lead to on-the-spot adjustments to the lesson to meet the learning needs of all students. The school uses common assessments to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers check for understanding and provide opportunities for peer and self-assessment; however, these practices do not always lead to on-the-spot adjustments in the lesson. In an ELA class, the teacher checked for understanding by conferencing with student groups and used conference notes. Students also used self-assessment cards to signal if they understood the content or needed assistance. But while checks for understanding were conducted during the lesson, no adjustments to the lesson were executed. In a mathematics class, the teacher walked around to the student groups. The teacher realized that a student’s answers differed from the group, so the teacher worked one-on-one with the student to ensure the student understood the content. In a social studies class, the teacher captured checks for understanding data by using a checklist during the lesson and students used self-assessment cards; however, no adjustments to the lesson were made to meet the needs of all learners.

- In an ELA class, the teacher checked for understanding by conferencing with the student groups as they discussed ethical justifications for the United States deploying the atomic bomb. The teacher adjusted the lesson by explaining the effects of exposure to radiation on people. In a science class, students were reading an article, and the teacher checked for understanding by using a checklist, capturing the students’ responses, but no adjustments to the lesson were made. In a mathematics class, students were engaged in a station activity that required them to measure the area of various figures. The teacher checked for understanding by using a formative assessment-tracking tool that chronicled whether students understood how to solve the area of various figures. The teacher adjusted the lesson by posing a student’s question to the class. Despite this, evidence of the use of student friendly checklists and rubrics was not present across the classrooms.

- Common assessment such as State mathematics data and quarterly exam data are used to determine student progress toward goals, and results are used to adjust curricula and instruction. Results of State mathematics data showed student performance on standards across the grades. The data was used to align the standards, the topics, and the units that covered each of the topics for each grade level. Similarly, ELA State item analysis data was analyzed, and teachers identified the standards that posed a challenge to the students, setting these as the focus across the grade levels during instruction. Quarterly exam data across grades and content areas showed growth. English Language Learners (ELLs) showed an overall 9.6 percent increase on their second quarterly mathematics exam as compared to the first quarterly exam. Students with disabilities across the grades in mathematics showed a 3.2 percent increase on their second quarterly exam. ELLs across grades showed a 12 percent increase in their science second quarterly exam data.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

School curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Units, lessons, and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

The integration of the instructional shifts and the CCLS across grades and content areas results in coherence that promotes college and career readiness for all students. All students have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers integrate the instructional shifts by making purposeful connections between the shifts and the topics in each subject within each grade, resulting in cohesiveness and promoting college and career readiness. Units of study are written using the Atlas Rubicon platform, which also ensures cohesiveness. The instructional shift of focus for ELA, social studies, and science is citing textual evidence, based on data from State exams, Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) test, and quarterly exams. An ELA unit plan entitled “Children of War” required students to cite evidence from Anne Frank’s writing that demonstrated the resilience of children during trying times. A science unit plan required students to read articles on the sun and storm chasers. Using evidence from the text, students were tasked with citing evidence to answer constructed response questions and creating a tornado in a bottle lab experiment using the concepts presented in the articles. Another lesson called for students read articles on simple machines, cite textual evidence to answer constructed response questions, and conduct a rollercoaster lab based on the concepts read. Students also had to answer short constructed response questions on the lab activity. A social studies unit plan on expansion of urbanization required students to write an argumentative piece about which lifestyle was more challenging, industrial, plantation, or frontier life.

- Unit plans and lesson plans as well as academic tasks are planned and refined using student data and work from quarterly exams, performance and culminating tasks, and data from gap analysis. For example, the eighth grade ELA curriculum was revamped to include more literary texts such as World War II poetry. Sample ELA unit plans were modified to include school based inquiry strategies for diverse learners called question-answer-relationships (QAR). This strategy teaches students that two main ways to answer questions from sources are through the text and from background knowledge. This strategy was embedded in ELA and social studies units of study across the grades. Science unit plans showed modifications for diverse learners by including visual (user friendly) scaffolds to organize student writing. Additional science units of study showed a revised pacing calendar of topics and the infusion of environmental “green” labs into the curriculum.

- Units revealed the impact of revision and refinement across content areas, including those to meet the needs of ELLs, students with disabilities, and advanced learners. Mathematics units of study showed the inclusion of additional skills, the provision of a word bank for students to emphasize academic vocabulary, a revised pacing calendar of topics, the inclusion of math journaling, and added station activities. Social studies units of study showed discussion and argument scaffolds translated into multiple languages and translated leveled texts. Lesson plans showed the strategic grouping of students using DRP data and extensions to the lesson for early finishers.
### Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

Teaching strategies such as student-moderated discussions, student-generated questions, and the use of scaffolds provides multiple entry points into the curricula. All learners are engaged in challenging tasks.

**Impact**

Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation. Multiple entry points address the needs of all learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teaching practices such as the use of scaffolds and instruction in a student’s native language provide multiple entry points into the curricula so that all learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks that demonstrate student thinking in their work products. In an ELA class with diverse learners, the aim of the lesson required students to answer their own questions challenging the author’s perspective presented in a text. Students read differentiated articles about the rights of animals based on their Lexile levels. Students in the groups used a scaffold entitled “Reciprocal Reading Focus: Questioning” to create “right there” and “think and search” questions based on the text. Students also used the scaffold to create questions about the author’s perspective and commented on the types of questions their peers had crafted. One student-developed question was, “Why are primates other than humans considered objects?” Students also made the comment, “There is research that shows primates have intelligence.”

- In a mathematics class, the aim of the lesson required students to make connections between theoretical and experimental probability using various probability models. Students were engaged in station activities that required them to determine the probabilities of a pair of dice, playing cards, and colored cubes and to create ratios and the proportional rate of future events. Students completed a station activity worksheet for each of the stations. Students were engaged in student-to-student discussions during the station activity. In a social studies class, students were required to ask relevant questions to help analyze child labor in coal mining. Using textual evidence, students worked collaboratively in their groups to craft questions inquiring what would be the fate of the children if they did not engage in child labor, and “If the children didn’t work, would their lifestyle be different?” Students shared their questions with one another, using accountable talk stems such as, “I agree with…” Additionally, students used a graphic organizer entitled, “The Reciprocal Teaching Graphic Organizer with Question Prompts.”

- In an ELA class, students were required to analyze the ethical justification of the use of the atomic bomb by the United States during World War II. Reciprocal reading, annotation, and a graphic organizer in students’ native languages were used to analyze the Lexile-leveled article students read. They were tasked with generating high and low inference questions and answering student-devised questions such as, “What would be the similarities or differences if Japan dropped the atomic bomb on the United States?” and “How would the argument change?” Students then determined if the student-posed questions were high or low inference questions. In a science class, students all read the same article, entitled, “Another Earth.” Students read the article to one another aloud and annotated it by circling words which were unfamiliar. They also used a “Three Things I Learned” scaffold to deconstruct the article. Although students were in groups, they were not engaged in frequent student-to-student discussions.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Feedback to teachers accurately captures challenges and next steps using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. School leaders utilize observation data to facilitate professional development for teachers.

Impact

School leaders’ feedback to teachers results in improved practice in a number of areas, including those identified as the school’s instructional focus, student-to-student discussions, and implementing checks for understanding. Observation data has been used to design and facilitate targeted professional development, elevating schoolwide instructional practices.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of observation reports showed feedback to teachers articulated challenges and next steps using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. One observation report noted challenges for a teacher in maximizing student engagement and having students monitoring their own progress. Recommendations included providing students with opportunities to record their discussions by jotting down ideas presented and creating student-friendly checklists to monitor discussions. Subsequent observations showed the teacher being commended for high student engagement, with improvement noted in the engagement component. Another observation mentioned that the teacher needed to include an additional layer of differentiation in the lesson by providing occasions for student choice in the selection of which problem they chose to explore. The report also noted that checks for understanding needed to be built into the lesson to address student misconceptions. Subsequent observations stated that the teacher needed to include anchor activities in the lesson to maintain student engagement.

- Additional review of observation reports showed teachers receiving feedback on incorporating checks for understanding such as conferencing with students and capturing the data in conference notes. This practice was to ensure that the teacher is aware of what students are thinking, with the data used to provide feedback to students. Additional feedback to the teacher cited providing instances for students to monitor their own understanding. The observation reports were in alignment with the school’s instructional focus of student-to-student discussions and implementing checks for understanding to foresee student misconceptions. As a result of the feedback to teachers, there has been growth in the measure of teacher practice data in the instruction, planning and preparation, and classroom environment domains of the Danielson *Framework*.

- School leaders use *Advance* data to plan whole staff and targeted professional development. Examples of whole staff professional development included training based on instructional strategies presented in the text *Teach Like a Champion*. Analysis of the measures of teacher practice data revealed that twenty-four out of forty-seven teachers demonstrated challenges in the areas of planning coherent instruction, managing student behavior, using questioning and discussion techniques, and engaging students in learning. These areas were aligned to the same areas of the Danielson *Framework* as well as the areas of using assessment in instruction and growing and developing professionally. As a result of the targeted professional development (PD), a review of on-site teacher survey data revealed that 53 percent of the teachers are now self-selecting their PD. Teachers now see the value of the PD and have a voice in their own professional development.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

Content and grade level teams are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that analyze student assessment data and foster distributive leadership structures.

Impact

Teachers’ inquiry-based professional collaborations result in improved teacher practice and progress towards goals for groups of students. Distributive leadership practices are in place so that teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- A mathematics and science team was observed analyzing unit exam assessment data for attainment of mastery in the area of equations. Teachers used a prescribed protocol to analyze student work. Analysis of class data showed ranges of mastery starting at thirty-three percent to eighty percent. Teachers made predictions and observations based on the student work. Trends noticed in the student work were that students either did not check their work or did not properly use the substitution strategy while checking their work to avoid guessing and checking. The teachers devised next steps that included collaborating with teachers on the upper grade levels to create a bank of strategies to provide support in solving equations. Additional next steps included devising alternative strategies for solving equations, with a focus on substitution to avoid guessing and checking. As a result of the work of the teacher team, the teachers implemented a math journaling initiative to incorporate writing in mathematics instruction. This initiative made student thinking visible and demonstrated an improvement in students using academic vocabulary. Teachers stated that they are able to talk to one another, and their instructional capacity has grown.

- An additional review of teacher team meeting notes and agenda showed ELA teachers conducting data analysis, research, and planning. A data analysis meeting revealed that students demonstrated challenges with skills such as identifying the central idea, citing textual evidence, and understanding text structure. The next steps identified included having students focus on determining relevant textual evidence that would support their comprehension of the central idea. Other meeting notes revealed teachers discussing student work and school specific instructional strategies that supported students while working on their performance tasks. Teachers conducted an intervisitation to observe these practices, followed up with a debrief of the intervisitation during their team meetings, and then decided whether to continue or discontinue the prescribed instructional strategies. Lastly, ELA teachers looked at quarterly exam data and noticed that fifty-eight percent of the students did not meet the standard of central idea. As a result of this data, teachers decided to adopt an instructional strategy that hinges on making connections between the central idea and textual evidence.

- Distributive leadership practices such as Learning Partners Program (LPP) model teachers, Peer Instructional Coach (PIC) teachers, and team leads on teacher teams are in place, giving teachers a key voice in making decisions that affect student learning across the school. The LPP team was observed and the focus of their work is on the school’s teacher teams. An analysis of in-house survey results showed that teachers needed support in questioning and discussion techniques. The team brainstormed ways to use student work to plan professional development for teachers. Additionally, teacher teams engage in share fairs where they present to the school the work they have done and the impact of their teacher teamwork. As a result of these practices, teachers have seen increases in student quarterly exam data and improvement in teacher evaluation data.