Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 160 Walt Disney
Elementary 11X160
4140 Hutchinson River Parkway East
Bronx
NY 10475

Principal: Lori Baker

Dates of Review:
January 26, 2017 - January 27, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Heidi Pierovich
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. 160 Walt Disney 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>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### 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>Proficient</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>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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: Proficient |

Findings

High expectations are consistently communicated to staff via the Danielson Framework for Teaching, through training and through ongoing communication in the Disney Dispatcher. The school communicates expectations to students and families and keeps them abreast of student progress toward college and career readiness.

Impact

The school maintains a system of accountability toward expectations amongst staff and helps families understand student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Parents shared the support they receive for the middle school selection process through workshops, fairs and tours, and the completion of the applications via the parent coordinator. Students agreed that the school helps to prepare them for college and career. With the new initiative on STEAM, which stands for science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics, parents and students attended workshops focusing on the staff's implementation of this newly focused STEAM curricula. Another method for preparing students for college and career is through the college and career week, where classes adopted a college, researched and celebrated it. Students spoke about being part of the publishing party, a rotating group of students who completed the writing process and present their work to parents and staff, gaining experience in public speaking, a college-ready skill.

- Beyond the weekly parent engagement contact via phone, email, or in-person meetings, staff also communicates with the home through an online grade book with a parent and student portal called PupilPath. Most parents stated that they are pleased with the level of communication from the teachers and administration. Parents agreed that they are aware of school happenings and events via the seasonal parent newsletter called Parent 411, parent-teacher association, PupilPath, parent-engagement Tuesdays, and even through applications like Remind, which sends notifications to parents about assignment due dates and events. Additionally, parents also shared that they receive a monthly grade-level newsletter from teachers, informing them of upcoming themes, topics, and projects. Parents stated that they would reach out to staff if they have a concern, and found results addressed in a timely manner. There is also a Learning Leaders program where several trained parents volunteer in classrooms. Students stated that they know how they are doing in school in multiple ways. Students agreed that they check PupilPath often. Students stated and parents agreed that the adults go online to PupilPath occasionally. Additionally, students stated that they know they are doing well if on the honor roll.

- Administration provides staff with consistent messages regarding high expectations through the Disney Dispatcher, a weekly publication. The Disney Dispatcher informs staff of the instructional focus, strategies and staff members who use them, professional readings, upcoming events, and the Kudos Korner, a section to provide positive feedback to staff so others can visit those teachers for information or support. Administration delineated school goals, action plans, and next steps in the opening day professional learning session, setting the tone throughout the year.

- The school has a professional learning committee, which is a professional development (PD) committee where teachers create and present PD to their peers, conduct intervisitations, and share best practices. Teachers and other staff attend outside PD and turnkey it to their colleagues. Administration couples professional learning cycles with frequent classroom observations and actionable feedback to ensure that staff is working toward the school's achievement goals.
Findings
The school is developing their use of common assessments to measure student progress toward instructional and individual goals. Across classrooms, teachers’ assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

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

Supporting Evidence
- In a grade three workshop with a push in SETSS teacher, the teachers both collected data on clipboards, using the same coding system to determine the grouping for the intervention-extension (IE). In a grade four class, students were given color-coded and numbered cards and, when prompted, turned up the color and number to reflect their self-assessment and need for teacher support. In a science grade five class, the teacher walked from group to group, checking on their experiments to determine student progress and note issues or misconceptions on a clipboard. However, not all classes collected data or checked for understanding, making adjustments to support student learning. In a fifth grade math class, the teacher asked questions but did not check for understanding across the class, accepting only a couple of answers as if all understood. In a second-grade ICT class, the two teachers met with groups of students while the remainder of the class worked independently while sitting in groups. The teachers did not check for understanding with the other students during the class, who were unsure how to set writing goals, and instead both teachers started taking notes only on their small groups of students as the visit ended.

- Feedback to students is inconsistently actionable. Sometimes, the feedback includes both a positive point and an area for growth. For example, “I like that you accurately adding [sic] and subtracted.” The feedback went on to provide clear next steps with, “Next time, label your units and give a written response.” Often the positive comments are clear. For instance, on a math assignment, a student received feedback that commended her perseverance and ability to estimate sums and differences. However, the next steps in that example of feedback do not provide clarity on how to improve, as it stated, “Remember that the whole is an important component, when determining what is left.” Other feedback included, “I like how you labeled your tables and corrected your mistakes. Let’s try neater handwriting next time.” Another example of feedback that is not actionable includes positive congratulations and unclear next steps, such as “Fantastic work! Next steps, continue to work diligently to persevere and make sense of the problems.” Another example of ineffective feedback was written in script, but the student has not yet learned to read or write script, so the feedback was not actionable because the student did not understand what was written.

- Teacher teams use common assessments and performance tasks across grades and subjects. For example, staff use developmental reading assessment (DRA), iReady, and assessments within programs like GO Math!. Staff gives a baseline for DRA at the beginning of the year and a total of four times over the course of the year. This data is used to inform English Language Arts (ELA) groups. In math, teachers use data from a quick check to determine grouping. However, there is only some evidence in all other subject and grade team agendas of using data from common assessments to inform instructional planning or pedagogy. Although teachers use data to inform intervention and extension groups, it is unclear as to how they are tracking student growth toward goals. Therefore, schoolwide, all teachers are not yet able to track student performance and progress towards meeting instructional and individual student goals.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills, including newly adopted STEAM curricula across grades and subjects for all students including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

**Impact**

The faculty builds coherence and promotes college and career readiness for all students through rigorous curricula in all subjects that are meant to be cognitively engaging.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The staff and administration have adopted Common Core-aligned texts. For ELA they are using ReadyGen for reading and Teachers’ College Writing Program for writing and for math they align Exemplars to GO Math! The school had been selected to receive the Teachers College Writing Project as part of a district initiative. The staff and administration have determined through data and anecdotal evidence that the ReadyGen program does not meet their students’ needs and will be adopting the full Teachers’ College Reading and Writing Program for next year. Furthermore, staff uses “I can” student-friendly standards statements across grades.

- To provide all students with rigorous curricula, administration and staff have embarked on new curricula focused on STEAM. The administration and staff formed a team, called the STEAM team, with one representative from each grade, to work on the curriculum maps. Although music, technology, science, and art have always been offered, staff has now built coherence across the subjects by planning with themes. Staff uses Google Docs to house the curricula and maintain adjustments, comments and feedback from administration.

- Lessons are planned using the workshop model, where the teacher demonstrates using the “I do” method, then the class works together in a “we do” activity, and then independently students engage in a “you do” task. Additionally, lessons are planned using a seven-day cycle to provide all students with rigorous curricula. To this end, daily time is integrated for intervention, whereby each day six and seven in the cycle are exclusively planned for intense intervention and enrichment. These lessons are called intervention-extension (IE). Additionally, math problem-solving is on a five-day protocol, where step one is highly scaffolded with much teacher modeling of reading and understanding the problem. In step two after the teacher models, the student teams solve the problem together with roles in the team. Step three includes comparing the teacher model with the rubric, where the problem is solved incorrectly and students analyze the mistakes and discuss ways to solve it. Step four has the team solve the same problem with different numbers, while step five has students work individually to solve the same problem with different numbers. Staff determined that this process supports students’ understanding. With a student population of approximately 27 percent ELLs and students with disabilities, staff intentionally plan curricular documents that emphasize higher-order skills for all students by incorporating differentiation to make them accessible for all. For example, in a grade four math lesson, groups are determined by correct student responses to specific exercises and then the plan has students move to a group with extensions, on-level work, or online work on the computers for below grade level. In a grade three ELA lesson plan, students with different levels of understanding of finding the main idea have different group assignments, with increasingly higher levels of identifying main idea and key details from reteaching to enrichment with independent reading books. Staff planned purposefully leveled tasks to ensure curricula are rigorous for all learners.
Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best. Lessons inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula, so that tasks and discussions are not always accessible to all students.

Impact

As defined by the instructional shifts and the Danielson Framework for Teaching, all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, are not yet sufficiently engaged in high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Staff believes that students learn best through “practices that provide multiple entry points into differentiated curricula and consistent engagement in challenging tasks that will lead to the students demonstrating of the use of higher-order thinking skills.” The higher-order tasks are expected to draw students into discussions with each other and when questioning, teachers are to probe for clarification. Students are supposed to know why they are doing the work and why they are in their groups. However, these practices are inconsistently implemented across classrooms.

- In some classes, the level of rigor and questions was evident and provided students with peer-to-peer discussion opportunities, while in others it was uneven. In a few classes, students worked on finding the main idea and supporting details, which is a school-wide focus. For example, in a grade three reading workshop with a push in SETSS teacher, students were engaged in finding the main idea with the special education teacher, who provided an anchor chart about main idea, which supported student learning. Additionally, in another grade three ELA class, during an IE lesson, students were placed in groups with leveled texts where they were practicing finding the main idea and supporting details. Yet, in a second grade, ICT writing workshop, the two teachers each met with small groups of students while the rest of the class sat in groups. Students in those groups were to use an information checklist to select writing goals, but how to select goals was unclear. Thus, many students said they were guessing, were unsure, while others sat confused not knowing what to do, why, or how to do it. Similarly, in a fifth-grade math class, the teacher modeled using an exemplar on the board but then asked questions that moved from teacher to student and back to the teacher again, in a ping-pong fashion. The teacher accepted answers without probing further or encouraging student-to-student conversation.

- Differentiation and multiple entry points are expected across classes. In a grade four IE math class, the students were in data-determined groups working on division problems with tiered work and manipulatives, which was first modeled by the teacher. Then students discussed how to solve the problem and worked in groups. Similarly, in a grade three IE ELA class, students worked in groups based on data to find the main idea and supporting details; they were each provided with tiered tasks, including scaffolds and extensions, depending on students’ needs. Though students worked together to gather text evidence to answer questions, students did not know why they were in groups or why they were doing the lesson. Additionally, in a grade five math special education class, students worked on problem solving using an acronym to support the steps, yet there was an inequity in student voice, as some dominated the conversation, leaving others without opportunity to share their thoughts. Similarly, in a grade one IE ELA class, students were asked low-level questions and asked to go back to text to find answers but the mini-lesson focused instead on the content, not the skills to do so.
Findings

School leaders support the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with effective and actionable feedback from frequent cycles of classroom observations using student work and data. Feedback accurately denotes areas of strength and time-bound next steps, based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact

Feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice and supports teacher development to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- Feedback to teachers includes areas of strength and improvement with next steps, aligned to the school’s instructional focus. Most observations provide positive feedback and areas to improve, as well as a deadline for these improvements to be made prior to another observation. For example, in a kindergarten teacher’s reading workshop observation the areas to improve included managing student behavior and incorporating guided reading, along with a couple of examples of how to do so. Further, there is a timeline for the staff member to contact the administrator regarding the implementation of the next step by the next visit. This format is consistent throughout the observations reviewed, across subjects and grades.

- Periodically, administration sets learning walks for the instructional team, which includes administration and the instructional leads for literacy, math and special education. The purpose of one learning walk was to visit grade four during literacy to focus on student engagement, an area of schoolwide focus from the Danielson Framework for Teaching. New teachers have a trained, new teacher mentor who is an academic lead and provides conferences, communications, modeling, and opportunities for intervisitation and classroom support. Staff agreed that this has supported growth of their practice.

- Cycles of frequent observations provide administration a vehicle to support staff’s implementation of high expectations. Administration uses the Danielson Framework for Teaching components to determine areas of school-wide focus on questioning and discussion, to ensure that Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) is used to plan questions. Additionally, administration determines areas that need PD support. Not only are there intervisitations but also opportunities for teachers to visit other schools. For example, staff has visited showcase schools to observe STEAM in action and turn-keyed to staff their new learning. In addition, several teachers visited two other schools to observe their implementation of the problem of the day for math. After staff agreed to adopt this, the instructional leads supported staff members in implementing the problem of the day. Further, visiting teachers then turn-keyed their learning to their colleagues during PD. Teachers stated that they appreciate receiving PD from knowledgeable colleagues. Staff members also visit colleagues’ classrooms to observe particular implementation of instructional strategies or standards. Afterwards, the visitor completes a debrief tool and notes when they will implement the new strategy.
Findings

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

Impact

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

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are engaged in several teams, including but not limited to grade, professional learning, professional learning, positive behavior incentive system, STEAM, instructional leads, and the new data team. Teachers have common planning time built into their schedules to meet two times in a seven-day cycle, for collaborative work during the school day and to engage in professional learning. Often teams plan for the intervention-extension day, when they provide students support or extension based on their individual needs, using flexible grouping.

- One of the teacher teams demonstrated the protocol for analyzing student work and data, from which they determined the areas of need, created an action plan, discussed next instructional steps, and set a check-in date to review student performance. Team members stated that this protocol has helped them to positively affect student achievement. For example, the students in this grade are improving on simplifying fractions, from a one or two on the rubric, to a two or three. The team is focused on dividing fractions. Improving student facility with fractions is a schoolwide focus and goal.

- Teachers facilitate the team meetings with the support and collaboration of its members. Instructional leads join these meetings. Teachers are empowered to make decisions that support student achievement. For example, in the first grade staff noticed that many students had very low scores on the benchmark scores on DRA, developmental reading assessment. Staff determined the need for a program to address students' needs in phonics, decoding, and comprehension. To this end, they decided that the Fundations program would support students' needs and brought this request to the principal. Now the staff has Fundations and students' scores are starting to demonstrate an upward tick.