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


School Quality Ratings

### Instructional Core

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
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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

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

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
### School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>
</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>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

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<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</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>
</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>
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<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>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings
A culture for learning is established that communicates and embeds high expectations shared by the entire staff. Parent-school communication through School Story demonstrates a partnership for these expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness.

Impact
There is a culture of mutual accountability for classroom practice, assessment data, and student work, along with the elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teachers and parents are active in supporting students on their path to college and career readiness through use of goal setting and elevated levels of expectations for all.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders use the Danielson Framework for Teaching to provide high expectations and meaningful feedback to teachers based upon formal and informal observation. The principal has designed a structured observation system with clear and consistent feedback, with teachers taking part in intervisitations, modeling lessons, and focusing on subgroups to move students toward the next level. Teachers are guided and supervised by school leaders and peers with extensive teaching experience, who provide clear expectations for pedagogical and professional practice via verbal and written communication, team meetings, and regular meetings with the principal. Professional learning cycles emphasize high expectations through teacher and mentor-led professional workshops involving teaching practices and assessments connected to strategies for instruction and enhanced student success.

- The parents participate in book clubs with staff and school leaders, on two selected texts to support their children at home. As a result of these text-based conversations, parents and teachers are collaborating in a mentor program for at-risk students in which teachers regularly meet with parents to discuss their child’s progress on specified days and before and after school. Parents and family members also shared that they understand what their children need to accomplish to be successful. In a system of partnership, parents observe lessons, are invited to be participants in the lesson, learn about student engagement and how to use quality questions to leverage text-based discussion at home. All parents agreed that there is more active participation than ever before and many parents volunteer to assist in school-wide activities such as in the computer lab and lunchroom.

- There are on-line progress reports providing continuous feedback and next learning steps. The school uses an on-line newsletter program called, School Story, where staff members post information to the school community. Parents stated that they use this digital newsletter and understand the information, which is widely shared among the parents. There are translated messages and the parent participation is tracked by the administration. Parents stated that they are consistently involved in the basics of student life, through an activity workbook named Careers are Everywhere. If parents are not online, teachers reach out via phone calls. School records show that, on monthly curriculum nights, 90 percent of parents and families attend to see their child’s work. At multiple points during the year, the principal, teacher teams, and parent representatives monitor the progress regarding instructional core, school culture, and the school’s improvement vision. Reports are developed to address both strengths and weaknesses. Active parents on the SLT, in partnership with teachers, advocated and implemented for schoolwide initiatives and incentive programs to support motivating students to do their best. Such programs include swimming and core-value character development programs to increase student engagement.
## Findings

While teaching strategies, such as the workshop model, are aligned to the curricula, they do not reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best. Challenging tasks do not always strategically provide high-quality supports and extensions into the curricula.

## Impact

Students in most, but not all classrooms, produce meaningful work products and demonstrate higher-order thinking.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, the workshop model, along with the gradual release of responsibility from teacher-directed to student-facilitated learning was observed. For example, in a bilingual third- and fourth-grade class, students were using different strategies to find a common denominator. During the workshop model, anchor charts, models, task cards, and manipulatives were provided across classrooms to support student thinking, though supports were sometimes simply available to students, rather than strategically employed. In most classes, key vocabulary was introduced, such as fraction, denominator and numerator in a fourth grade math class. These language supports promoted group discussions about ways to determine process and answers. In a grade three English Language Arts (ELA) class, students discussed animal habitats and their environments in flexible groups. Students designed a slide show presentation to present to their parents. “We Made a Zoo” was one of the projects, and incorporated what animals need to survive, as well as details reflecting their habitats. Scaffolds and supports were provided to different groups of students, leaving just a few students to struggle with the assignment. While supports were widely available to students, they do not yet reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best.

- Across classes, teachers use the Sheltered Instructional Observational Protocol (SIOP) to scaffold instruction. Strategies, such as increasing the use of pictures and visual media to support students. Mnemonic devices, think-alouds, and paraphrasing were also strategies observed in classroom visits to support students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs). In a fourth grade math lesson, students worked in groups with assigned roles to examine a multi-step problem. The teacher circulated, taking notes and checking in with each group. Discussion cards and key words were at each table and reflected academic language such as division, place value, and cues to give student better access to the tasks which reflected real world situations. The conversation was organized in steps to discuss the problem and the process. The lesson was paced so that students could share their learning with the class, and one group explained how they had made mistakes on place values and corrected themselves. Some students were teaching each other, demonstrating ownership and deeper understanding of the problem. This same high level of student participation was evidence in many, but not all, classrooms.

- Across classrooms, there was consistent use of multiple entry points so that academic tasks challenged all learners, including students with disabilities and ELLs, such as checklists, sentence frames, contextualization via pictures, and visual media, along with consistent use of dictionaries to assist all learners. In some classes, there were extensions to push thinking and broaden the learning experience of some students, though this was not apparent in all classes. Questioning routines were in place in all classes visited. In a grade three ELA class, students were verbally citing text evidence. The teacher asked each student to restate the answer using collaborative discussion methods to build on others’ ideas. Students were effectively using text details and academic vocabulary was emphasized.
**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 the Common Core Learning Standards and focus on academic vocabulary and writing from sources. Curricula and academic task consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills.

### Impact

Coherent Common Core-aligned curricula promote college and career readiness and are accessible for all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers ensure that the curricula and academic tasks are aligned to the Common Core, and there is a focus on academic vocabulary and informational writing. In the upper grades, teachers are focusing on essay writing across the curriculum. All teachers are planning to address academic vocabulary in their lesson plans, and ensure that lessons have content area and language goals, aligned with SIOP. A third-grade lesson asks students to determine the main idea by incorporating key vocabulary into online presentations of animals and their habitats. Essential vocabulary is also a focus to build background knowledge. Vocabulary development is emphasized in teacher planning, and units include vocabulary and visual prompts for writing assignments. A lesson plan for a kindergarten and first grade bridge class for students with disabilities includes using pictures and text to tell a story. The task asks students to cite evidence on a poster board, as well as to share in a partner discussion. Fundations is also being used in kindergarten and grade one to support students in reading and language acquisition. Online reading programs are also used at school, and at home with interactive tasks.

- The integration of the school's focus on academic vocabulary and writing across the disciplines is supported by the inclusion of informational text, and an online library that provides Common Core-aligned texts across the grades. The dual instruction focus of student engagement and intellectual rigor provides students opportunities to read non-fiction texts across all classes. Science and social studies are purposefully embedded into the ELA units of study. The school also utilizes CYCLE Kids to engage all fourth and fifth grade students in learning about nutrition and developing positive physical activity habits.

- The school also emphasizes the instructional shift of application in math. Lessons focus on applying math concepts in real world scenarios, such as baking cookies and sharing pizza, to learn fractions. In math, foundational skills and language standards are included in pacing calendars to focus on a different standard every week. Little Friends of the High Bridge, a science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM) curriculum that spans several grades allows students to explore science and math in their neighborhood, identifying flora and fauna, the connection between animals and their environment, and learning to protect and preserve the Harlem River. The school also partners with the Salvadori Center, a STEAM program for fourth and fifth graders, to show students the relevance of math and science using buildings, bridges, landmarks, and parks. This allows students to engage in hands-on project based learning in real life scenarios in their community, such as visiting parks and designing playgrounds based on information gathered from their visit.
**Findings**

Across classrooms, teachers use or create common baseline and interim assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school’s curricula and are analyzed to determine student progress. Teachers consistently use checks for understanding and students are self-assessing.

**Impact**

Students and teachers receive actionable feedback regarding student achievement and the analyses of the assessments lead to curricular adjustments. Checks for understanding such as checklists, exit slips and common rubrics are used in the classroom to make effective adjustments for all learners.

**Supporting Evidence**

- All assessments are aligned to the Common Core, and content standards. A review of curricula units evidences that the school is embedding the use of assessments into lesson planning, such as using checklists to monitor understanding observed in a kindergarten class. Common rubrics are aligned and uniform across subject areas within grades. Glows and grows are provided and feedback on work with rubric-aligned next steps is emphasized. Feedback to students observed in work products submitted during a student meeting shows that it is accurate, specific and timely. Similarly, students at a student meeting explained that teachers hold individual student conferences based on this type of rubric-based feedback. Students also shared that they work in small groups and the teachers consistently conference with them both as groups, and as individuals and that during these conferences, teachers assess their work and make adjustments to their assignments. As a result, teachers and students have meaningful feedback regarding academic progress.

- Teachers and administrators articulate coherent reasons for assessment choices leading to instructional adjustments. All teachers use data, such as baseline and interim assessments, and use trends from item analysis to identify gaps in learning to inform instructional adjustments that improve students’ performance in the related skill areas. For example, analysis of periodic assessment data showed deficits in students’ ability to cite evidence from multiple sources and present a claim and a counter-claim, so this skill became an area of focus in all upper grades. Teachers identify specific instructional responses, which might include re-teaching content, changing instructional approaches to meet the needs of struggling students, and developing tasks that are more challenging with units of study for the advanced learner.

- All teachers use rubrics and color-coded criteria charts explaining what students need to know and be able to do and to support students as they self-assess. In a third-grade ELA class, the students engaged in a gallery walk to provide peer feedback to each other on their written responses to questions about the text. In other classes, teachers were observed using checklists and conferencing notes while circulating, as students engaged in independent or group work. In a kindergarten and first-grade bridge class working on ELA and science, the teacher checked in with students working in partnerships asking, “Where is your evidence?” The teacher took notes on how the partners were working to find their answers on how bears live. Exit slips are also used by some teachers to assess learning and form re-teach groups for the following
Findings

The school leader and teachers organized into intervisitation teams, support teachers with effective feedback and next steps from the strategic use of frequent cycles of classroom observation. Collaboratively developed feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps and strategically includes reflection on teacher practice and student work.

Impact

Strategic cycles of observation by the school leader and teacher teams elevate schoolwide instructional practices. Feedback to teachers align with their professional goals and promotes teacher understanding of their own practice using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal believes adults learn best when provided clear, effective feedback with next steps garnered from strategically frequent cycles of classroom observations. Teachers engage in feedback sessions with administrators and receive a rationale aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching relating to their practice directly. Verbal feedback from the principal's low-inference notes is shared on the same day. Teachers self-assess on their practice using a schoolwide reflection form and collaboratively plan improved instructional practice with school leaders. For example, after a cycle of observation, one teacher, in alignment with her goals, developed a plan with her supervisor that focused on revising lesson plans to include student self-reflection, incorporate higher-level questioning techniques, and use a more rigorous rubric. Individual teacher action plans translate into observable, effective strategies toward their personal goals. Observational practices have elevated instructional practices by increasing opportunities for engagement of all learners in group and peer discussions and reinforcing the expectations for classroom practice, as outlined in Danielson Framework for Teaching.

- Observations reviewed noted next steps such as recommending an intervisitation of effective teacher practice within the grade, applying a new instructional strategy, and giving a timeframe for when an administrator will return to observe teacher progress. This practice clearly articulates expectations for teacher reflection and provides strategic support for professional growth. Similarly, for new teachers, there is a structured new teacher institute that provides time for mentoring, lesson planning and peer observations with experienced teachers, who tailor visits to their classrooms based on new teacher professional goals.

- In addition to observations conducted by school leaders, teacher leaders and coaches frequently analyze student work and data as part of the observation cycle. Coaches and grade team leaders observe teachers and share summaries of their conferencing notes at staff meetings to improve instruction. Then they organize peer classroom visits so that teachers can observe the practice during intervisitations and learning walks. Teachers are given opportunities to support themselves and one another through self-reflection, observation, and modeling of other strategies while they are also encouraged to take risks with new methods. These actions foster trust and empower teachers to share practices and change behaviors. The vast majority of teachers have been observed formally and informally in frequent, strategic cycles. Each learning walk has a specific focus, such as student engagement or differentiation. During a question and answer session, teachers stated that this sharing has made expectations clearer, highlighted best practices, and has "informed their growth."
### Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations, focusing on the development of academic vocabulary, writing from sources, and application in math. Leadership structures are in place to promote shared leadership.

### Impact

Inquiry-based professional collaborations result in strengthened teacher instructional capacity. Shared leadership structures ensure that teachers have a voice in key decisions, such as curricular planning and adoption of instructional strategies across classrooms.

### Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers meet on inquiry teams multiple times a week to refine the curricula, and ensure that academic vocabulary and writing supports are in place across the content areas. In addition to literacy-focused teams, there are also math-focused teams. Teachers systematically review student data and refine curricula units to embed the SIOP strategies in planning across the grades and subject areas. The Tuning Protocol is used to assess student work, discuss connections to the Common Core, and make timely adjustment to instruction. All inquiry teams share a common theme of “Collaboration with Intellectual Engagement.” Improved instruction, as a result of inquiry team efforts, led to the number of students demonstrating proficiency or exceeding the standards on the New York State ELA and Mathematics exams in 2016 to increase by three percent.

- Lead teachers facilitate professional learning workshops and ensure that teacher teams use protocols to engage in collaborative learning, and meet with administrators to develop next steps for improving classroom instruction. As a result of this work, many teachers have embraced a common understanding of instructional expectations, elevating instructional quality throughout the school. Teachers lead meetings and select agenda topics geared toward increasing pedagogical practices and promoting coherence. Teachers hold themselves accountable for student growth and higher-level student discussions through their inquiry team meetings. Observation data in *Advance* shows strengthened teacher instructional capacity in questioning and discussion techniques, and student engagement. The instructional team, comprised of a teacher from each grade and instructional coaches, is involved in all decision making aspects of curricula, assuring distributive leadership in the school. The team leads the work of ensuring that all teams embed the SIOP model in units to support the instructional shifts.

- At a grade-five teacher team meeting during the review, teachers examined an assessment from the previous unit and compared growth in writing. Teachers analyzed student writing pieces, noting progress for groups of students, and determined targeted strategies to further increase performance. Teachers noted from their analysis that students across the grade are providing more details, strengthening their writing and verbal arguments. This sharing of student work and instructional practices, typical of other teams in the building, are improving teacher practice.