Quality Review Report

2016-2017

I.S. 206 Ann Mersereau
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 10X206

2280 Aqueduct Ave.
Bronx
NY 10468

Principal: Rafael Cabral

Dates of Review:
January 5, 2017 - January 6, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Kevin Bradley
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

I.S. 206 Ann Mersereau 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><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</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>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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Celebration</th>
<th>Proficient</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>
</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>Proficient</td>
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</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

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

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

The school’s approach to culture building, discipline, and social-emotional support results in a safe and inclusive environment. Structures are in place, such as the Good Shepherd program, to ensure that each student is known well by at least one adult.

Impact

The school’s safe environment and inclusive culture is conducive to student and adult learning; students and adults treat each other respectfully and student voice is welcome and valued. Students are well known by at least one adult who provides guidance and supports that align with student learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

Good Shepherd services offer CREW: Friends for the Journey, a program for the extended day, afterschool setting that supports students’ social emotional learning. CREW includes lessons on a range of social emotional issues faced by middle school students. Monday through Friday, a majority of the students participate in the Good Shepherd afterschool opportunities. The hallmark of Good Shepherd at I.S. 206 is a connection between day school and afterschool. To build coherence between the programs, Good Shepherd staff comes in early to assist day school teachers in their classrooms and teachers from the day school teach some of the afterschool classes as well. For example, English Language Arts (ELA) and math teachers are involved in offering tutoring sessions for students that align to specific areas related to their academic needs outlined during their day classes. There is also a strong Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) program offering hands on activities for the students, and a partnership with Bloomberg Women In Technology (BWIT) included a field trip offering inquiry-based STEM activities for girls. High school articulation is another offering of Good Shepherd. A student who wanted to get into an arts school was supported by Good Shepherd with an art teacher who helped him to learn how to draw and sketch, while developing his other basic art skills in order to produce an art portfolio, and he ultimately earned acceptance to that high school. Good Shepherd also facilitates meetings of student government and builds leadership skills through Youth Council.

- The school is in its third year of implementing a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program. The school staff met together as a team to refine the PBIS program while looking at the data regarding behavioral issues, and decided to focus on specific areas of the school with high incident reports. As a result, the school has created a PBIS-influenced “Respectful and Responsible Matrix” defining behavioral expectations in common areas of the school. The matrix expectations are posted throughout the school. During class checks, teachers remind students what the PBIS matrix expectations are. The school specifically supports students who are not meeting PBIS expectations and monitors their progress closely with consistent check-ins with teachers and staff. Another shift in the third year refinement of PBIS has been revamping the reward system for students to occur on a more frequent basis. Students get rewarded through PBIS trips, ice cream socials, dances, and on a daily basis a system of rewards ticket is used where tickets can be exchanged for anything in the school store.

- The school’s Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) data reports shows a decline in reported incidents this school year compared to the same time last year. Assessing the school climate, using the OORS data report, the reduction of incidents shows drops in OORS incidents over the last three years. The school reports that the emphasis on PBIS, along with celebrations of student of the month involving both parents and students, have positively impacted the school environment. A parent reported that her daughter “has a greater drive to be a higher academic achiever” since she started attending I.S. 206.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Developing |

Findings

Infrequent cycles of classroom observations from school leaders have resulted in feedback that is not consistently effective. Feedback to teachers is not yet fully connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching rubric.

Impact

While feedback is beginning to support teacher development, it is not elevating school-wide instructional practices and implementing strategies that promote professional growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- Infrequent cycles of classroom observation from school leaders provide occasional feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching. School leadership did not have evidence regarding a calendar or cycle of observations. The principal reported that the goal was to complete the minimally required by contract number of observations by the end of the year. As of early January 2017, most teachers had been observed once during the school year, and the school leadership admitted that they were behind in observations for the year.

- While each rated item on observation reports included documentation from the classroom observation that supports the rating, specific language from the Danielson Framework for Teaching rubric is not listed on all observations. Clear, actionable next steps are also not consistently included. For example, one observation feedback note included, “Please continue building on strategies to enable all students to get involved in discussions and to talk to one another without ongoing mediation from teacher.” However, feedback lacked specific strategies for support or defined resources to assist the teacher in improving their instructional practice. Another example of feedback provided included, “Questions that begin with “Why”, “How do you know” or “Explain how you arrived at that answer” are excellent ways to ensure that children are using their reasoning skills and can lead to rich discussions.” While feedback is beginning to support teacher development, the lack of specific, actionable, time-bound, and prioritized feedback limits its effectiveness.

- In addition to the reports resulting from official classroom observations, teachers receive feedback regarding the work sample system, a system of documentation of student achievement and growth. For example, in one such piece of feedback, the principal wrote “In looking at the work sample system for social studies, I would like to see more samples of students’ daily work, assessments and pieces of publishable work.” Additional feedback was seen regarding teachers’ bulletin boards, including, “The students were able to demonstrate a clear understanding of the task at hand and were able to research and present information about the western Hemisphere countries. Please include a description of the task on the bulletin board.”
## 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 CCLS and/or content standards, integrate the instructional shifts, and make purposeful decisions as academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

### Impact

A diversity of learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged to build coherence across curricula and promote college and career readiness for all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Review of curricular documents revealed alignment to the Common Core State Standards and New York State (NYS) content standards where applicable, as well as integration of the instructional shifts across grades and content areas. English unit plans and lesson plans are aligned to Common Core NYCDOE ELA curriculum, Code X and math unit plans and lesson plans are aligned to the EngageNY and Connected Mathematics Project 3 (CMP3) curricula. The school also ensures curricula coherence with the New York City (NYC) Social Studies Scope and Sequence and the NYC Science Scope and Sequence along with NYS Standards.

- Lesson plans across grades and content areas show evidence that academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data so that all students have access to the curricula. The lesson plan for a sixth grade ELA lesson on argumentative essay includes scaffolding instructions differentiated for students with disabilities who will be working with the teacher and English as a New Language (ENL) students working on modified class work with guidance from a peer. Students with differentiated instructions are identified by name in the lesson plan. In an eighth grade math lesson plan on linear relationships and functions, all student materials for the lesson are translated into Spanish for ELL support and the seating diagram, driven by groupings of students during instruction, is defined by performance level on the previous day’s classwork and the prior day’s exit ticket. A lesson plan for a seventh grade ELA lesson on writing an argument includes differentiation during guided practice, with three groupings identified by performance level and differing levels of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questions for each appropriate group. All groups culminate with the same task of answering two short response questions from the reading.

- Curricular documents across grades and content areas evidence consistent alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards and the integration of the instructional shifts. For example, in an eighth grade math lesson plan, students were asked to use a scatter plot to organize data in relation to a real world situation as they determined correlation between hours of sleep each day or night compared with their math grade. In a seventh grade ELA lesson plan, students were asked to use nonfictional text and write an argumentative piece about whether girls should be able to compete with boys on sports teams.
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

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs informed by the instructional shifts that foster higher order thinking. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

Teaching practices reflect the articulated set of beliefs that students learn best through collaborative groups that lead to opportunities to engage in discussions. All learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices reflect the belief that students learn best when they have opportunities to learn in collaborative group activities. For example, during a seventh grade ELA class, the teacher had students working in cooperative groups on designing persuasive posters against smoking that would inform their argumentative writing essays. In her group, a student connected the assignment to real life, “Stop smoking, you could get lung cancer. Imagine your mom in the hospital.” In an eighth grade math class, the teacher had students working in groups looking for positive correlations. A student responded, “I’m helping her, because she’s struggling.” In a seventh grade science class, students were working in pairs to determine frequency of heredity traits linked to genes in parents. After finishing the activity, students worked together to assess their level of understanding via a rubric for the task.

- Across classrooms, teaching practices also reflect the belief that students learn best when instruction is based on questioning and discussion techniques designed to engage students in learning. In a sixth grade science class, students were learning about living and nonliving things. The teacher asked students to discuss what a bird would eat if it was on the ground. Students were able to articulate their learning amongst their group, including noting that a bird breathes, grows from little to big, and reproduces because it lays eggs. A sixth grade math lesson has students being asked to think about the distance between zero and the number as the absolute value of the number and students explain that measures the distance from zero and the number on a number line. In a sixth grade ELA class, the teacher asks students how their evidence from the text helps to explain their point of view in their essays. A student referred to her rubric as she worked with her peer to discuss evidence being used in their essay and both referred back to the text to identify the evidence.

- Multiple entry points allow all learners access to the material. In a sixth grade math class, students were grouped based on assessment data and each groups’ tasks were differentiated. In a sixth grade ELA class, tasks were differentiated and Google Translate was used for English Language Learners (ELLs). An ELL student entered text from the rubric into Google Translate to assess their progress in gathering evidence from the text to support their writing. Additionally, students in classes were seated in leveled groups determined by students’ math and ELA assessment data. For example, in a math class, as students were working on improper fractions, some students were working with a SETTS teacher and other students were in groups based on assessment levels to support each other and engage in peer to peer support of each other’s understanding.
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school’s curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas that are monitored through ongoing tracking sheets.

Impact

Assessments provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement and the results are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, rubrics and checklists are used as tools to support student growth. Rubrics that are aligned with the curricula are used across grades and content areas. Evidence of students’ use of these tools is posted on classroom walls, on hallway bulletin boards, and reported by the students themselves. As one student shared, “In math class, we use a three point holistic rubric, similar to the rubric for ELA. In addition to the teacher’s feedback using the rubric, sometimes we grade ourselves, and sometimes we grade a classmate’s work with the rubrics.” In an ELA class, students used a rubric to create a poster to persuade a target group to believe their claim and were assessed on their use of three different persuasive techniques, evidence of choosing their language carefully, and the techniques used to get their reasons across to the reader or viewer.

- Across classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher-written actionable feedback directing students to the steps they should take to strengthen their work. Some examples of that feedback were, “I love to see the vocabulary you are using. Remember to edit your writing. I would love to see you paraphrase the evidence you give,” “Excellent word choice, great use of transitions, you followed the guidelines well. Next time, make sure your closing sentence gives closure to your speech,” “You picked a clear side and support your answer with evidence from the text. You need to include a counter argument”, and “One way to improve would be to cite even more detail. For example, ‘he was proving himself and earning respect’ Cite detail to support that.”

- Teachers use common assessments, and the results are used to adjust curricula and instruction. For example, teachers use a Code X critical questions assessment to decide next steps for specific students. As a result of the assessment, the priorities were identified as author craft questions and identifying and determining theme. This resulted in specific groups being identified with a specific instructional focus, such as, interpreting figurative language, responding to questions about author’s craft, practicing using strategy to identify theme, and using transition words. Teachers also use a baseline assessment checklist tracker to document student need in specific areas. Ongoing tracking sheets by content area and domain charts student progress on specific Common Core standards. The final instrument of measurement used to document student progress is class work, homework, benchmark, unit test, quiz, or conference. The results drive curricular and instructional decisions to meet student needs based on assessment tracking. For example, as a result of the common assessments, a math team identified three focus standards for the 2016-17 school year. They also identified specific strategies for addressing students learning needs in these areas, including using a universal graphic organizer for word problems, use easy-to-use numbers in lieu of scientific notation to determine correct operation to use, and illustrations to help understand word problems.
Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share.

Impact

The work of teacher teams promotes the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core, typically resulting in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- During an ELA teacher team meeting, the inquiry team looked at examples of literary essays where students focused on analyzing theme. The inquiry team also identified trends in common learning needs, and student work samples were analyzed compared to the four point NYS Grades 6-8 Writing Evaluation Rubric. Inquiry teams follow protocols and use an analysis of student work note taking tool to provide feedback to colleagues accordingly. Written assessments across content areas serve as data for the inquiry cycle. As one member of the inquiry team reported, “The work of our team is focused on how did the kids do and how well did they do and how can I help them move to the next step.”

- Teacher teams consistently analyze student work. For example, assessment data showed students having trouble with their writing, specifically around connecting literary elements to the text. Teacher teams ultimately decided to use literary strategies such as ICE (Introduce, Cite, Explain) and differentiated strategies, such as graphic organizers and checklists, for students who exhibited additional learning needs. Teachers reported improvement in their instructional practice due to their work in teacher teams. As one teacher shared, “Having input from my colleagues helps me rethink what I’m doing…after input from my coworkers, it helps me to help students in the end, and I grow as a result of the work with my colleagues.” Another teacher spoke about what her work with teacher teams has done for her practice, “I get to visit my peers’ classrooms during intervisitations and look at one of the sixth grade teachers who’s really good at questioning techniques, I learned a lot from other teachers.” Another teacher reported about the impact of teacher teams on teacher support, “We talk about the units and pre-assessments, the benchmark assessment, the final assessment, for teachers who are not familiar with the unit, we can follow up. [One of the teachers] takes pictures in my room, she was the first in to use the graphic organizer that I’m using.”

- Teachers reported that the work of teacher teams has improved student performance, “During our inquiry, we have a rotation of teachers presenting, and we come with feedback as to how ICE and RAFT (Role of the writer, Audience, Format, Topic) was used in our classrooms, and how it helped break it down for my kids, and improved their short response answers by adding the details.” And another teacher offered, “In ELA, we’re constantly talking with each other until we meet again in common prep, and we developed a graphic organizer together, which we see as a need for differentiation to meet our students’ needs.” The teacher teams also meet during a bi-weekly student support meeting on a particular student identified by the teacher team to support students’ social-emotional learning needs, “We look at the problem, and decide how can we break down the problem to better support our students. Our team teaching meeting allows us to plan based on the needs of the students.” The social-emotional supports have resulted in a decline in incidents reported in OORS and improvements in overall learning environment.